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Tese de doutorado em Memória Social e Patrimônio Cultural

FESTIVE RITUAL TRADITIONS AS OBJECTS OF CULTURAL  
TRANSMISSION, SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL CONTROL:  
CHALLENGES AND TRANSFORMATION

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Tese apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Memória Social e Patrimônio Cultural do Instituto de Ciências Humanas da Universidade Federal de Pelotas, como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de Doutor em Memória Social e Patrimônio Cultural

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## Resumo

CURBELO KNUTSON, José Andreas. **Festive Ritual Traditions as Objects of Cultural Transmission, Social Integration, and Social Control: Challenges and Transformation.** 2022. 440f. Tese (Doutorado em Memória Social e Patrimônio Cultural) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Memória Social e Patrimônio Cultural, Instituto de Ciências Humanas, Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Pelotas, 2022.

O objetivo desta tese de doutorado é examinar às formas em que rituais festivos tradicionais têm servido como marcos sociais de memória coletiva e também como veículos de transmissão cultural oral e coesão/integração social dentro do mundo Atlântico, um contexto temporal e geográfico marcado pelos processos de migração e hibridização cultural. A tese também visa determinar os efeitos de pressões políticas, econômicas, demográficas, e – sobretudo – tecnológicas na sobrevivência e adaptação de rituais festivos tradicionais locais, suas significações e ressignificações, e os sistemas de valores que representam e reforçam. Utilizando às metodologias de história oral, observação participante, e documentação audiovisual, os seguintes temas de análise interseccionam os casos de estudo selecionados dos interiores de Uruguai, Espanha e Portugal (regiões marcadas pela emigração/imigração): Território, Coesão social e integração, Migração, Memória Coletiva. Tomando em conta à natureza multifacética de rituais festivos tradicionais locais (música, culinária, dança, comensalidade, significados políticos/religiosos, etc.) os estudos de caso são apresentados da seguinte maneira: *La Janda/Campo de Gibraltar*, Cádiz (*chacarrá* ou *fandango tarifeño*), *Sotavento algarvio* (*bailaricos* rurais com acordeão, *charolas*), norte de Uruguai (bailes rurais com acordeão, *kermesses*, bodas e outros eventos religiosos-étnicos de coletividades imigrantes). A tese providencia informação histórica e cultural sobre as sociedades representadas em cada estudo de caso, análise crítica e comparação sobre os fatores e dinâmicas que têm influenciado, ao longo do tempo, à resiliência, adaptação, ressignificação, e/ou esquecimento das expressões culturais em cada estudo e caso.

**Palavras-chave:** memória coletiva; transmissão; rituais festivos; acordeón; Algarve; Cádiz; Uruguai

## Abstract

CURBELO KNUTSON, José Andreas. **Festive Ritual Traditions as Objects of Cultural Transmission, Social Integration, and Social Control: Challenges and Transformation.** 2022. 440f. Thesis (Doctorate in Social Memory and Cultural Heritage) – Graduate Program in Social Memory and Cultural Heritage, Institute of Human Sciences, Federal University of Pelotas, Pelotas, 2022.

The object of this doctoral thesis is to examine the ways in which festive ritual traditions have served as social frameworks of collective memory as well as vehicles of oral cultural transmission and social cohesion/integration within the Atlantic world, a temporal and geographic context marked by the processes of migration and cultural hybridization. It also seeks to determine the effects of pressures of political, economic, demographic, and - above all - technological nature on the survival and adaptation of local festive ritual traditions, their meanings and resignifications, and the value systems they represent and reinforce. Utilizing the methodologies of oral history, participant observation, and audiovisual documentation, the following themes of analysis intersect the selected case studies from the interior regions of Uruguay, Spain and Portugal (all regions marked by emigration/immigration): Territory, Social cohesion and integration, Migration, and Collective Memory. Taking into account the multi-faceted nature of local festive ritual traditions (music, foodways, dance, commensality, political/religious significance, etc.), the case studies presented are as follows: *La Janda/Campo de Gibraltar, Cádiz (chacarrá or fandango tarifeño)*, *Sotavento algarvio* (rural dances with accordion, *charolas*), northern Uruguay (rural dances with accordion, *kermesses*, weddings and other religious-associated events within immigrant-descended groups). Historical and cultural background is provided about the societies represented in each case study, and critical analysis and comparison is carried out regarding the factors and dynamics that have played a part throughout time in the resilience, adaptation, resignification, and/or oblivion of the cultural expressions in each case study.

**Key-words:** collective memory; transmission; festive rituals; accordion; Algarve; Cádiz; Uruguay

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this doctoral thesis is to examine the ways in which local musical festive ritual traditions have served as social frameworks of collective memory, as well as vehicles of oral cultural transmission and social cohesion/integration, within small communities in the contemporary trans-Atlantic world - a temporal and geographic context profoundly marked by the processes of geopolitical conflict, economic crisis, technological revolution, migration and cultural hybridization. This thesis also seeks to determine the effects of pressures of political, economic, demographic, and - above all - technological nature on the survival, resignification, adaptation and continuity of local musical festive ritual traditions and their importance and social role within their communities of origin (and in diaspora).

The justification for this thesis is multi-faceted. Firstly, it attends to the need to better comprehend the significance of cultural expressions such as festive ritual traditions within an important global phenomenon: migration and the human cultural diasporas it produces worldwide. The geographic regions selected for study in this thesis are linked by centuries of historical, political, economic, cultural and migratory processes: the Iberian Peninsula and the River Plate region of South America. (Figure 1)





Figure 1 – Map of Uruguay and Iberian Peninsula

Source: ESRI

The selection of these two regions enables a better analytical grasp of the larger political, economic, and social currents as expressed on both sides of the Atlantic, currents whose effects on populations have provoked diverse migratory movements throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century for various motives, taking local musical festive ritual traditions into diaspora and bringing about their adaptation, transformation, syncretism, and resignification (or gradual decline) both afar and in their places of origin.

Secondly, this thesis responds to the need to examine the disruptive and transformative processes that mechanization and technological evolution (and revolution) have enacted, within the past decades, on the sociocultural fabric of local communities, as demonstrated in their festive ritual traditions, traditions that possess unique abilities to encapsulate the inherent social dynamics and tensions of communities. Thirdly, this thesis also responds to the need to examine the role and effects of culture, in our case, local ritual festive traditions, in the processes of depopulation of nations' interiors as well as rural-urban exodus (processes which have proven endemic to Spain, Portugal as well as Uruguay).

Fourthly, this thesis examines the importance that local ritual festive traditions have had in producing and reinforcing collective practices of reciprocity and solidarity in the face of factors such as economic hardships, geopolitical conflict and repressive political, technocratic contexts, that have tended toward community division, atomization, and disintegration.<sup>1</sup>

The methodology utilized in this thesis was based on oral history collection and audiovisual documentation of live performances and events, combined with documentary research in local archives and libraries. In the case of the interior of Uruguay, the methodology also included participant observation with the author executing diatonic button accordion at formal and informal musical events, as well as learning melodies by ear from informants. In the case of Spain and Portugal, the author's role was limited to interviewer and documenter. The criteria for the selection of interview subjects was based on their long trajectories in participation in their respective local musical festive ritual traditions. Priority was given to interview subjects of more advanced age with living memory of migratory processes in recent history, but several interviews with younger people were also carried out, generations that convey knowledge transmitted by their elders. Consultation with key, local community members was first carried out to identify valuable interview subjects within their respective traditions.

The selection of case studies to be examined in this thesis was based on certain criteria. Firstly, priority was given to the condition of rurality and origin in small communities of nations' interiors. Secondly, preference was given to areas that historically have had high indices of emigration/immigration in recent history. Thirdly, priority was given to areas bordering other nation states to be able to highlight cases of cultural difference and hybridity. Fourthly, preference was given to living, practiced traditions that have deep historical roots and involve general participation on behalf of the community. Fifthly, multi-dimensional festive ritual traditions were sought out (involving performing arts, gastronomy, commensality, popular poetry, etc.), festive rituals infused with various meanings for its participants: civic, political, regional, ethnic, religious, etc. Sixthly, traditions

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<sup>1</sup> A YouTube documentary "*Impactos del éxodo rural y la emigración en rituales festivos: Una mirada desde Uruguay, Portugal y España*" (Impacts of Rural Exodus and Emigration on Festive Rituals: A perspective from Uruguay, Portugal and Spain) produced by the author and Prof. Dr. Santiago Amaya-Corchuelo (UCA) can be found here: <https://youtu.be/rJiZ7T7Usa8>

transmitted orally through family structures were preferred. Seventhly, festive ritual traditions with elements in common were sought out, mostly in pertaining to their social roles such as providing ritual ludic socialization for dispersed rural communities. Lastly, priority was given to areas in the Iberian Peninsula that had emigration to South America and to areas in Uruguay that received immigration from Europe in recent history.

In regards to the research trajectory of this thesis, fieldwork was carried out in different phases, beginning in 2001, and consisted of *in situ* audiovisual documentation of oral history narratives, informal performances, as well as audiovisual documentation of live festive ritual events and their environs. Firstly, it was from 2001-2021 in the Uruguayan departments of: Artigas, Salto, Paysandú, Tacuarembó, Rivera, Cerro Largo, Rocha, Florida, Durazno, Treinta y Tres, y Montevideo. The focus of this fieldwork were the various ethnically-diverse festive traditions traditionally animated by free-reed instruments (accordion, *bandoneón*, etc.) in Uruguay's interior, particularly in the border regions with Argentina and Brazil.

The first part of the 2001-2003 work in Uruguay was an independent ethnographic research project (employing digital audio and photography), which eventually evolved in to cultural entrepreneurship in the form of coordinating international tours of Uruguayan, Argentine and Brazilian musical artists, producing albums, and co-producing an album of traditional Uruguayan accordion and bandoneon music with Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, the non-profit record label of the Smithsonian Institution, the national museum of the United States of America.<sup>2</sup>

The fieldwork of 2001-2003 also informed undergraduate academic production through the Elliott School of International Affairs of The George Washington University (GWU) in Washington, D.C., advised by Prof. Alexander Dent of GWU's Anthropology Department.<sup>3</sup> The 112 page research paper

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<sup>2</sup> The 2012 release "Button Accordion and Bandoneón Music from Northern Uruguay-Los Gauchos de Roldán" (SFW40561) can be found here: <https://folkways.si.edu/los-gauchos-de-roldan/button-accordion-and-bandoneon-music-from-northern-uruguay/latin-world/music/album/smithsonian>

<sup>3</sup> The work "Accordion Diplomacy: A Buffer State Musical Dilemma" in the 2012 Elliott School Undergraduate Papers publication can be found here: [https://www.academia.edu/73843086/Accordion\\_Diplomacy\\_A\\_Buffer\\_State\\_Musical\\_Dilemma](https://www.academia.edu/73843086/Accordion_Diplomacy_A_Buffer_State_Musical_Dilemma)

produced in 2009 was titled "*Ocho bajos y dos hileras: Revitalizing the rural Uruguayan accordion and bandoneón tradition*" and analyzed tactics for the public sector and civil society transmission of traditional Uruguayan accordion and bandoneon music, based on synthesis of field work, international case studies, and UNESCO directives.

In the paper a plan to action was proposed, which entailed: the creation and distribution of multi-media content, integration into educational structures, the promotion of scholarship of the genre, and encouragement of aesthetic and cultural quality and innovation rooted in tradition in the artistic creation and interpretation of the genre, the engagement of audiences through live performance and the participation in domestic and international performing arts touring circuits, and finally the cultivation of technical skills and knowledge related to free reed instruments themselves. These actions proposed in 2009, have been carried out in varying degrees by the author, in collaboration with distinct international public sector entities and academic institutions in the years that followed.

The impetus behind this initial fieldwork and later academic production is the author's family heritage on his father's side. His Uruguayan father, born in a large family whose ancestors emigrated from Lanzarote, Canary Islands and established themselves in Uruguay's rural south: Florida, Canelones, etc., immigrated to the United States in the 1970's. In the author's fieldwork in this initial period he was able to interview a direct relative who still executed diatonic button accordion and had lived memories of ancestors who were accordionists.

The second part of the fieldwork in Uruguay 2015-2021 was carried out through the graduate program in Social Memory and Cultural Heritage of the *Universidade Federal de Pelotas* (UFPel), while the author was on scholarship from the *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* (CAPES) of Brazil, and the Brazil Scholarships Program *Programa de Alianças para a Educação e a Capacitação* (PAEC) Organization of American States (OAS) - *Grupo de Cooperación Internacional de Universidades Brasileiras* (GCUB).

This later fieldwork in northern Uruguay incorporated audiovisual documentation with improved digital equipment, and was partly supported through the *Paraformal Na Fronteira Brasil-Uruguaí* initiative of the *Laboratório de Urbanismo UFPEL* (LabUrb) funded by Brazil's *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (CNPq), enabling *in situ* research to be carried out along the breadth of Uruguay's land and fluvial border with Brazil.<sup>4</sup>

The author's 2017 dissertation "*La música de acordeón y bandoneón del norte de Uruguay*" was based on his fieldwork in both periods.<sup>5</sup> The master's dissertation presented an overview of the music and culture of northern Uruguay and examined the primary modes of transmission of the musical tradition of accordion and bandoneón: family, primary orality, mediated orality and institutional learning. Employing the lived memories of accordion and bandoneón players of varying ages and from different areas of northern Uruguay, the dissertation analyzed the workings of the social dances that have been the most important environment for the exercise of this musical tradition. The social role of these dances in northern Uruguayan communities was described and the various logistical aspects of the organization and production of these social dances were presented. Also analyzed, were the factors that have contributed to the decline of social dances using accordion and bandoneón in northern Uruguay, which include legal, economic, technological and social factors. Finally, the current transformations in the use of accordion and bandoneón in northern Uruguay were examined.

In tandem with this later fieldwork, the author has been a protagonist of various academic and cultural projects financed by Uruguay's Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) such as production of albums of traditional Uruguayan accordion and bandoneon music,<sup>6</sup> creation of an online archive that socialized a selection of his field recordings: *Archivo 8 Bajos*,<sup>7</sup> and coordination

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<sup>4</sup> The *Paraformal Na Fronteira* website can be found here: <https://paraformalnafronteira.wixsite.com/fronteira>

<sup>5</sup> The 176 page dissertation can be found here: [https://wp.ufpel.edu.br/ppgmp/files/2016/11/DISSERTA%C3%87%C3%83O\\_CURBELO\\_2017\\_21\\_09.pdf](https://wp.ufpel.edu.br/ppgmp/files/2016/11/DISSERTA%C3%87%C3%83O_CURBELO_2017_21_09.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> The liner notes to the album "*Los Gauchos de Roldán: Baile en Ña Matilde*" (Ocho Bajos, 2018) can be found here: <https://losgauchosderoldan.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/LIBRILLO-gdr-final-para-web.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> *Archivo 8 Bajos*: <https://archivo.8bajos.org/>

of performances of traditional Uruguayan accordion music in rural public schools along with digital educational content creation in partnership with Uruguay's innovative *Plan Ceibal*.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the author, not merely an observer, has been actively involved in somehow shaping the path of the Uruguayan cultural expression he studies. Also, his fieldwork included work done for the *Universidad Católica del Uruguay* in Argentina regarding the cross-border mediatized transmission of traditional Uruguayan accordion music.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, fieldwork was carried out from 2019-2021 in the province of Cádiz in southern Spain, most specifically in the areas of La Janda, and Campo de Gibraltar regarding the local *fandango tarifeño* tradition, popularly known as *chacarrá*. The fieldwork carried out on the Iberian Peninsula in 2019-2020 was conducted through funding from the *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Programa Institucional de Internacionalização – Universidade Federal de Pelotas* (CAPES PrInt – UFPel) program, in conjunction with the *Universidad de Cádiz* (UCA), and the author was advised by Prof. Dr. Santiago Amaya-Corchuelo of UCA.<sup>10</sup>

Thirdly, fieldwork was carried out, from 2019-2022, in the Algarve, in southern Portugal, concentrating on the village of Bordeira (Santa Bárbara de Nexe, Faro) - known as Portugal's accordion capital - and its *charola* tradition, but fieldwork was done near the border with Spain as well, in and around Castro Marim, another important accordion center as well as regions in central and northern Portugal. Of particular importance was the audiovisual documentation of *charolas* during a January season (January 1<sup>st</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup>, approximately) in

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<sup>8</sup> Videos of the 2021 project "*El acordeón diatónico en las escuelas*" can be found here: <https://youtu.be/lj3o5ueqEbA> <https://youtu.be/3SdFsL94-ag> This initiative will be described later in this thesis.

<sup>9</sup> The chapter "*Paisaje cultural sonoro como escenario de transmisión oral mediatizada: El programa radial El Viejito del Acordeón*" in the book "*Paisajes sensoriales: un patrimonio cultural de los sentidos (México-Uruguay)*" (UNAM/UCU, 2020) can be found here: <https://liberi.ucu.edu.uy/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10895/1438/Paisajes%20sensoriales.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

<sup>10</sup> Information about the author's participation in the CAPES PrInt – UFPel program can be found here: <https://wp.ufpel.edu.br/print/2022/04/11/1200/>

Bordeira and other localities such as Loulé and the Bom João neighborhood of Faro.<sup>11</sup>

Audiovisual and oral history fieldwork was carried out pre-pandemic as well as at various moments during the COVID-19 pandemic, and was supported by CAPES PrInt-UFPel, Uruguay's *Instituto Nacional de Música*, and the research group "*EcoMusic – Práticas sustentáveis: um estudo sobre o pós-folclorismo em Portugal no século XXI*" of the *Universidade de Aveiro* (UA) and the *Instituto de Etnomusicologia* of the *Universidade Nova de Lisboa* (INET-md) funded by Portugal's *Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* (FCT).<sup>12</sup> This additional funding assisted in producing two research trips to Portugal in 2021. During the 2020-2022 period, the author presented at several academic events regarding his research in Portugal, as well as coordinated community round tables of *charola* practitioners in Bordeira, again moving beyond the role of mere observer to being a facilitator of the cultural expressions he investigated.<sup>13</sup>

This thesis is part of the research project "Sustainable practices: a study of the post-folclorism in Portugal in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (PTDC/ART-FOL/31782/2017), supported by the Operational Program Competitiveness and Internationalization and the Lisbon Regional Operational Program, in its FEDER/FNR component, and the Foundation for Science and Technology, in its State Budget component (OE).

In both Spain and Portugal, bibliographic research was carried out concomitantly with field work from October 2019 to January 2022.<sup>14</sup> In Portugal, bibliographic research was carried out at the following institutions: National Library of Portugal, Municipal Library of Faro, the Documentation Center of the Municipal Museum of Faro, the Municipal Library of Loulé, *Casa Museu do Acordeão* in Paderne, and the library of the *Universidade do Algarve*. In Spain,

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<sup>11</sup> The three events documented were: *Encontro de Charolas e Janeiras* (January 4th, 2020, Loulé), *Centenário das Charolas de Bordeira* (January 6th, 2020, Bordeira), *Encontro de Charolas Clube de Futebol "Os Bonjoanenses"* (January 12th, 2020, Faro)

<sup>12</sup> EcoMusic: <http://ecomusic.web.ua.pt/>

<sup>13</sup> Information about the 2022 round table event "*Do Centenário à pós-pandemia: Resiliência de um ritual festivo português – Charolas de Bordeira*" can be found here: <http://ecomusic.web.ua.pt/announcement/do-centenario-a-pos-pandemia-resiliencia-de-um-ritual-festivo-portugues-charolas-de-bordeira/>

<sup>14</sup> Both field work and bibliographic research in this period were made difficult - though not impossible - due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

bibliographic research was carried out at the library of the *Universidad de Cádiz*, and the Municipal Libraries of Tarifa, Barbate, Algeciras and Puerto de Santa María, all in the province of Cádiz.

Chapter One of this thesis presents the contemporary discussions on the themes of analysis that intersect our objects of study: *Territory, Social cohesion and integration, Migration, and Collective Memory*. In Chapter Two, the historical, geographic, and social contexts of the traditions studied are described, contrasting and tracing connections and similarities between both sides of the Atlantic. Chapters Three, Four and Five present the case studies of the selected local musical festive rituals, Spain, Portugal and Uruguay, respectively. In Chapter Six the different trajectories of each tradition examined are compared and contrasted, in terms of their dynamics of oblivion, resilience and adaptation.



## 1 THEMES OF ANALYSIS

The general themes of analysis utilized in this thesis, that transect the local festive musical traditions of the three geographies studied: northern Uruguay, the *Sotavento Algarvio*, and the south of the province of Cádiz, are four. Firstly, is the concept of *territory*, the social, natural, and productive geographic space in which local musical festive rituals occur and have meaning to their participants. Secondly, are the qualities that are inherent to the local musical festive rituals themselves, those related to their characteristics as vehicles of *social cohesion and integration* of groups, as well their transmission from one generation to the next in the form of traditions.

Thirdly, are the dynamics of the processes of *migration*, whether in the form of rural exodus, exile, state-sponsored settler colonialism, international migration, etc., through which local festive musical traditions are transported in diaspora and adapted, transformed, hybridized and re-signified both abroad and at home. Lastly, is the concept of *collective memory* and the role of festive ritual traditions to serve as *sociotransmitters* (CANDAU, 2012) and social frameworks for the formation of collective and individual Memory and Identity of communities (HALBWACHS, 2004), at times expressed in activation of Cultural Heritage. (PRATS, 1998) This chapter will briefly bring to light contemporary discussions on these aforementioned concepts.

### 1.1 Territory

Festive ritual traditions of communities involving food, dance, visual arts, competitions, music, socialization, commensality, etc. are found in localized geographies of origin, as well as within migratory diasporas. Even in diaspora, those festive traditions take on a geographic dimension, occurring in spaces different than that of their origin, and are juxtaposed with cultural practices of other groups, as well as being subject to the gaze (and perhaps co-participation) of members of other societies.

Above all, these multi-faceted festive ritual traditions, often simultaneously including music, poetry, and sonic elements, take place within a sensorial geographic territory which holds specific meaning for those who reside in it, especially for those families who have resided for numerous consecutive generations in one determined locality. This article observes tradition in its place

of origin, tradition in diaspora, as well as tradition in its place of origin that has been influenced by its community's migratory diaspora.

Because the musical dimension of our object of analysis is so important, we commence by examining the sonic nature of territory. The term "*soundscape*", employed to define the sonic environment of a territory or space, was coined by R. Murray Schafer, who utilized it in his description of the technological evolution of human societies as expressed through the transformation of their sonic environment: from natural to mechanized. (SCHAFER, 1997) According to the author, "[...] the general acoustic environment of a society can be read as an indicator of social conditions which produce it and may tell us much about the trending and evolution of that society". (SCHAFER, 2012, p.98)

In counterpoint to Schafer, anthropologist Steven Feld combined acoustics and epistemology to form what he calls *acoustemology* to describe the relations, perceptions and human meanings of sound within an environment. In his words, "acoustemology engages acoustics at the plane of the audible [...] to inquire into sounding as simultaneously social and material, an experiential nexus of sonic sensation". (FELD, 2015, p.12)

We look now at other conceptions of "territory", beyond the sonic sphere. More than physical landscapes, Appadurai (2003, p.31) proposes the territories in which human culture flows be classified among: *ethnoscapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, *mediascapes*, and *ideoscapes*. He sustains that these are the "building blocks of what [...] I would like to call *imagined worlds* [...] A fact of the world we live in today is that many persons on the globe live in such imagined worlds (and not just in imagined communities)", referencing Benedict Anderson. (Ibid.) Those "imagined worlds" of different human collectivities grow and expand their geographical reach through the phenomena of migratory diasporas and global growth in communications and financial technologies, among other factors.

Appadurai (2003, p.32-34) defines *ethnoscape* as the "landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live" which includes movements of populations such as domestic and international labor migrants, etc. With the term *technoscape* he refers to the globalized nature of technology and cross-border technology transfer, and in tandem, *financescape* is the

intricate global web of capital flows. Also, in relation to each other are *mediascapes* and *ideoscapes*, *mediascapes* made up of the ideas and images communicated through global media technologies, and *ideoscapes* being the movement and propagation of human ideologies.

In this thesis we conceive of "territory" in these various definitions: a physical, natural geographic space inhabited by humans, a sonic environment full of meaning and memories for its inhabitants, but also territory as defined by Appadurai as globalized, multi-dimensional flows of human culture that constitute "imagined worlds" for different human groups. This approach will be key when we deal, for example, with ex-ruralites in diaspora within an urban industrial environment in which their home social "territories" - which have served as frames of reference for the formation and reinforcement of their identities - primarily exist within their memories. This will also be important in examining the international migratory diasporas covered in this thesis, some of whose members are able to return to their place of origin, however many are not, again leading their home social "territories" of identity formation to exist primarily in their memories.

## **1.2 Social cohesion and integration**

In the past and today, local festive rituals have played key roles in the social cohesion and integration of communities, particularly smaller communities, such as those examined in this article. These traditions can be considered to be the physical manifestations of values held and shared by a determined community during a certain period of time. Sociologist Randall Collins emphasizes the importance of group participation in rituals for the cohesion of communities:

The central mechanism of interaction ritual theory is that occasions that combine a high degree of intersubjectivity, together with a high degree of emotional entrainment – through bodily synchronization, mutual stimulation/arousal of participants' nervous systems – result in feelings of membership that are attached to cognitive symbols, and result also in the emotional energy of individual participants, giving them feelings of confidence, enthusiasm and desire for action in what they consider a morally proper path. (COLLINS, 2004, p.42)

Collin's conception of ritual interaction is applicable to the cases of the festive traditions examined in this thesis, which become "cognitive symbols" around which its physical participants, and their feelings of group membership,

revolve. Historian William H. McNeill (1997, p.37), in turn, emphasizes even further the importance of the "bodily synchronization" dimension of ritual, as well as collective participation, which he sustains creates a kind of "euphoria" among all involved, as well as "binds the community more firmly together and makes cooperative efforts of every kind easier to carry through". Further, McNeill (1997, p.47-48) makes particular note of the ramifications that group participation in collective ritual dance has in fomenting the harmonious realization of reciprocal, collective work (agropastoral and otherwise) by a community's members.

These concepts are illustrated in the diverse trans-Atlantic ritual festive traditions examined later in this thesis. These collective traditions examined belong to groups that have wildly varying criteria for "belonging": ethnicity, migratory history, religion, sociopolitical beliefs, professional trade, endogamy, geography, civic identity, etc. and the expressions of collective solidarity and reciprocity fomented by these traditions also take varying forms.

### 1.3 Migration

Norum and Reig (2019) rightly state that migration has been a formative phenomenon for humanity since our origin as a species and throughout all historical periods. In his preface to their text *Migrantes*, anthropologist Ramón Sarró Maluquer states, "The paradox is that everybody occupies a place, to which they feel they belong, and everybody comes from somewhere, most likely from a place very far from where they are at". He continues:

A human being is made in a specific place, with whose members they identify with and construct a feeling of «us», but a human being is also made from experiences, personal or historically accumulated, lived in movement. History tells us that without migration we would not exist [...]. (Ibid.)

It is from this perspective that this thesis takes on the topic of migration, an undercurrent in all the phenomena studied in this text. Here, migration is conceived of as a continuous, and cyclical process, transporting, transplanting, adapting, fusing cultures and ideas around the globe, as well as forging cultural identities through the very act of migration (at times considered by certain groups as a "foundational myth" that binds them together). These migrant identities are central to many groups and their own self-perspective of their place in an ever-

shifting, and dangerous world. In our case, this migration also encompasses rural exodus to urban, industrial areas, a phenomenon that is not limited to the Iberian Peninsula or Uruguay, but is found on a global scale.

Though formative of identities and serving as an anchor to memorial processes, migration does not come without its psychological cost. Grinberg and Grinberg (1984, p.26) write, "Migration is one of the contingencies of life that exposes the individual that goes through it to states of disorganization which demands a posterior reorganization, which is not always achieved". The abrupt transplantation from one country to another could be considered no less jolting for a migrant than the change from a pre-industrial rural environment to an urban, industrial one. Grinberg and Grinberg (Ibid.) also state:

A deprived migrant, with the prolonged loss of trustable objects in their environment, also suffers from a decrease in creative capacity. It depends on their capacities to counter that deprivation and overcome it, which can restore their abilities. (GRINBERG, 1984, p.26)

This traumatic character of migration is taken into account in this paper, especially in the dimension that the "reorganization" process in a new migratory environment involves cultural symbols recognizable by the migrant, at times in the form of festive ritual traditions.

#### **1.4 Collective memory**

This thesis also draws from concepts related to collective memory, as elaborated by Joël Candau and Maurice Halbwachs. Candau (2010) (2012) classifies human memory into *protomemory* (procedural, repetitive memory), *memory* itself, and *metamemory*, which is humans' abilities to make sense of their own memorial process. To him, individual memory processes are made collective through sharing via "*sociotransmitters*" which are sensorial elements, such as monuments, smells, language, performative expression, etc., that convey meaning between individuals. Candau (2012, p.77) also stresses the importance of *strong memories*, such as those generated by traumatic events, in the solidification of collective memory and identity of groups (at times, these *strong memories* can act as "foundational myths of origin" for certain collectivities).

The memorial process, which is fundamental to the formation and reinforcement of identity, occurs within what Halbwachs (2004) calls "social frameworks of memory", which are shared social contexts such as community and educational institutions, etc., it is within these social frameworks - that include numerous individuals - that collective memory is forged. These social frameworks of memory are thus very important to be present to fully evoke the collective memory of groups, something which is extremely difficult to do in their absence. Collective memory, which lives in the minds of individuals throughout the duration of the existence of a group, is not to be confused with history, which is the documentation and vestiges which are left after members of a group pass on and its living collective memory ceases to exist.

Another important observation of Halbwachs (2004) is that memories are never recreated or relived by individuals *per se*. All memorial processes take place in the moment of remembering, conditioned by the current tensions and dynamics of that moment. All memories of the past are, thus, evoked *in the present*. This is extremely important to keep in mind in studies, such as this thesis, that are heavily based on live-recorded oral history narratives about life trajectories.

These concepts surrounding collective memory, its formation, sharing, and communication, will be key in this thesis, which is primarily rooted in recent oral histories of living informants. These informants and their small communities of origin, for the most part, have had their individual and collective memories partly shaped within social frameworks of memory in the form of festive ritual traditions (some of popular ethno-religious character, others not) possessing *sociotransmitters* in the form of performative expressions (music, popular poetry, dance, etc.), culinary practices, etc. in festive ritual contexts. Many of the informants have experienced migration within living memory or have received the transmission of memories of migration from the preceding generation. In these processes of migration, those individuals' early social frameworks of collective memory, formative of their identities, were uprooted and disrupted, at times reconstructed – if they were able to return to their community of origin, after retirement, for example.

Also, in the migratory process, new social frameworks of memory were created as migrants found belonging in new groups in new locales. In this thesis, a diversity of migratory situations will be examined: domestic rural to urban migration with maintenance of connections with rural places of origin, forced international migration with eventual return to place of origin, international migration with few chances for return to place of origin, etc. In these migrations, profound changes occur within the migrants themselves as well as their communities of origin that some eventually return to or maintain connection with. Also occurring in these migratory processes are attempts to recreate communities of origin in new locales, perhaps being able to construct social frameworks of memory based on what existed in the lived past of migrant groups.

## **2 HISTORICAL / GEOGRAPHIC / SOCIAL CONTEXTS (SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES, CONNECTIONS)**

In this chapter we intend to briefly describe the background historical, geographic and social contexts of the cultural expressions examined in this thesis, as well as the connections between them. Firstly, we call attention to elements in common between the three cases: Campo de Gibraltar in Cádiz, southern Spain, *Sotavento Algarvio* in southern Portugal, and northern Uruguay. It is these shared elements that will permit a more insightful and accurate comparison of the diverse trajectories of each cultural expression.

The southern Iberian Peninsula, for millennia, has received waves of traders, settlers, and conquerors of diverse cultural origins. This phenomenon is expressed in the region's festive traditions, many of which build upon much older traditions from previous civilizations which have been re-signified and recycled over the centuries. Northern Uruguay is also a geography of amalgam and hybridization of different ethnicities, though much more historically recent, but also expressive of the same international migratory and transatlantic colonial processes at work. Its cultural traditions also reflect this diverse, layered cultural mixture.

Both the southern Iberian Peninsula and northern Uruguay have been profoundly shaped by global migratory processes, which are a constant factor in both regions' modern history, within the context of the developing and transforming modern trans-Atlantic world. Whether this migration took place in the colonial period - in which the River Plate was a scenario of conflict between Spain and Portugal that led to competing dominance and settlement of territory, or during the European migratory boom of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this international migration put into motion a constant cyclical flux of cultures, languages, ideas, traditions, and cultural practices between both sides of the Atlantic. This also further developed and gave form to trans-Atlantic migratory diasporas.



In tandem with international migration, both regions have historically experienced marked internal movement from rural to urban areas. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century this movement came to be characterized by rural exodus and depopulation of small communities of nations' interiors, with the subsequent social and cultural decline in those locales. This phenomenon is shared both by the southern Iberian Peninsula as well as northern Uruguay (though each case has its unique particularities), and also has created migratory diasporas of ex-ruralites in urban centers. Spain, Portugal and Uruguay are all currently markedly characterized (almost in an exaggerated fashion) by rural interiors of relatively low population density and aged populace. (ALAMEIDA, 2016; ALMEIDA, 2018; BORGES, 2009; DEL MOLINO; 2016; LEEDS, 1983; PANIAGUA, 2015; PIÑEIRO, CARDEILLAC, 2014)

Another element in common with the three geographies selected are their condition as border regions, historical zones of contact and conflict between cultures and political powers: Campo de Gibraltar, Cádiz possessing a maritime border with northern Africa and a land border with Gibraltar, U.K., the *Sotavento Algarvio* bordering Andalusia, and northern Uruguay bordering both southern Brazil and the littoral zone of Argentina.

Lastly, are the three regions' shared experiences in going through recurrent economic crises, political instability, violent civil conflict, application of geopolitical economic schemes, authoritarian regimes, and subsequent processes of re-democratization in recent history. These dynamics have served as motors for migration and rural exodus, and have affected the continuity, adaptation or decline of community festive ritual traditions and of communities themselves.

Utilizing three case studies from Spain, Portugal and Uruguay, this thesis will examine the dynamics of oblivion, transformation, and resilience of festive ritual traditions, and the traditions' ability to remain as vehicles of intergenerational cultural transmission and social cohesion as well as social frameworks of collective memory, faced with these aforementioned challenging contexts of migration, rural exodus, economic and political instability, authoritarian governments, overarching geopolitical machinations, and, last but not least, technological change.

## 2.1 La Janda/Campo de Gibraltar, Cádiz

Located at the southernmost point of continental Europe, together, the *comarcas* of the province of Cádiz: *La Janda* and *Campo de Gibraltar* are bordered by water on three sides: the Gulf of Cádiz to the west, the Strait of Gibraltar (joining together the Atlantic and Mediterranean) to the south and the Alboran Sea to the east. *La Janda* forms part of the basin of the Barbate River which empties into the Gulf at its eponymous city. Its coastal areas are made of beaches (now of value for tourism) and salt marshes (historically important for the local fishing industries). The interior of both *comarcas* includes the beginnings of the Baetic mountain range, and is comprised of various Mediterranean vegetation systems.

We limit our analysis to the southern portion of these *comarcas*, between Barbate and the Bay of Gibraltar, where the port city of Algeciras is located, south of the rugged *Parque Nacional Los Alcornocales*. This area is currently primarily encompassed within the municipality of Tarifa. (Figure 2) (Figure 3) (Figure 4) This region has seen the constant flux, throughout history, of varying groups arriving to trade, dominate, settle, and exploit the region's natural resources. Each group has left its cultural imprint to some degree or another (whether they are expressed in archeological vestiges, or not), most often building upon the remnants of previous civilizations, a dynamic evidenced by the region's toponyms, a mixture of Pre-Roman, Roman, Islamic, and Castilian elements, among others. (PASCUAL BARREA, 2011)



Figure 2 – Map of the Strait of Gibraltar  
 Source: *National Geographic Mapmaker*



Figure 3 – Detail of map of the Strait of Gibraltar – Rural and coastal places of origin of interviewees

Source: *NatGeo MapMaker Interactive*



Figure 4 – Detail of map of the Strait of Gibraltar – Locations of recurring *fiestas* according to interviewees

Source: *NatGeo MapMaker Interactive*

Of strategic importance for sea-going Mediterranean civilizations since Antiquity for comprising the meeting point of the Atlantic and Mediterranean oceans, this area was considered to be the end of the known Mediterranean world of the time. Human presence in the area of the Strait of Gibraltar and human exploitation of the rich marine life resources of the Strait (which constitutes the closest maritime border between the European and African continents) can be documented back to Prehistoric times. Much later, between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries B.C. the Tartessian civilization developed in the region, which was later influenced culturally and economically by the ocean-going Phoenicians from the Eastern Mediterranean who extended their trade networks, in search of metals and other goods, into the region and formed permanent colonies such as that of Gadir (modern city of Cádiz). (FORNELL, 1996, p.27)

It was the Phoenicians who initiated the method of fishing red tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) later coming to be known as *almadraba*, which came to define the region's fishing industry and its early participation in international trade. The methodology they used involved siting schools of tuna as they made their way through the Strait of Gibraltar on their annual migrations from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean to spawn, and placing nets in their path, eventually dragging them ashore to slaughter and process the tuna. The Phoenicians established a prosperous salt-fish export industry. (CARRERAS ET AL., 1988, p.53)

In the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., the Phoenicians from the Eastern Mediterranean lost their Iberian colonies to the emerging Phoenician-descended maritime power, Carthage. After the Second Punic War between Carthage and Rome (218–201 B.C.) these areas again changed hands to the victorious power - Rome. Within the imperial commerce system – which could occur safely and smoothly due to Rome's dominance of the Mediterranean - the region (especially the Roman settlement *Baelo Claudia*) was widely-known for continuing the fishing tradition of the area and exporting a fermented product made of salt, aromatic spices, *caballa* (*Scomber scombrus*) and tuna called *garum* to Rome, the imperial metropolis. (FORNELL, 1996, p.30)

After the shifting of Roman power to the East, the fall of Rome, and barbarian invasions, the area lost its economic dynamism based on salt-fish product exports and became more ruralized. (FORNELL, 1996, p.33) The area became dominated by Visigoths of Christian faith. (CARRERAS ET AL., 1988, p.72)

In the years following the Muslim domination and settlement of Spain beginning in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. and the subsequent Christian attempts at reconquest, the area around the Strait of Gibraltar came to conform a vast shifting borderland between the Christian and Muslim worlds, disincentivizing increased long-term human settlement due to the persistent conflictive environment. In 1307 nobleman Guzmán "El Bueno" was awarded privileges and territories by Spanish King Fernando IV, for his defense of the city of Tarifa against the Moors. Among these privileges was the exploitation of the *almadraba* fishing of red tuna in the Strait. The Guzmán family territories and royal privileges coalesced in the Duchy of Medina Sedonia, the noble house that will exclusively control the area's *almadraba* industry until 1817. (ARAGÓN FERNÁNDEZ, 2009)

The coastal areas of this region were dangerous in this period (14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) due to the activity of pirates of Berber and Turkish origins, whose primary motive was to capture people for ransom or sale to slave markets. (Figure 5) This necessitated the fortification of localities on the coast and the strengthening of a system of warning towers (*almenaras*) to advise residents of impending attack. This rendered the seasonal *almadraba* industry a very risky activity for its participants, therefore the workers that arrived yearly to the *almadrabas* such as Barbate and Zahara de los Atunes were from various walks

of life, many on the margins of the law. (Ibid.) This diverse influx of workers from various surrounding geographies also brought an eclectic mix of cultural, festive, and musical practices to this region. (VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.20-21) (Figure 6)



Figure 5 – Beach of Bolonia with a view of Tangiers, Morocco across the Strait of Gibraltar (Bolonia, Cádiz, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 6 – Castle of Zahara de los Atunes, used for protection of the *almadrabas* (Zahara de los Atunes, Cádiz, 2020)

Photo: José A Curbelo

The rural interior of the northwest portion of the region examined has been marked by a long history of *latifundios* and production of livestock: cattle (for consumption and for bull-fighting), hogs, goats and sheep. Cereal production historically has also been important, as well as horticulture. This region of Tarifa

has had history of more landless rural workers, while the more mountainous northeast has traditionally been made up of small plots of family-owned subsistence farming. (RUIZ VALVERDE ET AL., 2016, p.95)

Agropastoral practices and spatial organization were inherited from the various layers of civilizations that had occupied the territory over time: Romans, Berbers, etc. Many of these agropastoral systems survived into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hernández-Palomo Peña (2006, p.231) notes that, "The agrarian property structure is complex and dichotomous in rural Tarifa. On one hand you have the extensive *latifundios*, and on the other hand you have the small rural properties".

Throughout history, rural Andalucía has produced human capital to embark on migratory ventures, most often provoked by economic necessity. Though Andalucía had previously participated in the colonial-era migration to the Americas, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a new wave of emigrants began to leave the region to Latin American nations. Provoked by local agricultural crises brought on by phytosanitary factors and their economic repercussions in Spain, and exacerbated by the lack of opportunities afforded to the working classes by the entrenched local oligarchies, this migratory movement was incentivized by the developing American nations such as Brazil and Argentina, who were displaying new-found economic dynamism in their agricultural sectors as they further integrated into the global economy. During this period of emigration in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, another motivation for emigration for young men was to avoid being drafted to fight in Spain's colonial wars in northern Africa. (DE MATEO AVILÉS, 1993)

In mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, emigration to the Americas was eventually overtaken by that to urban centers of Spain and post-War, industrialized Western Europe, however the motivation remained the same: fleeing economic and material hardships in Andalucía's rural interior. This contemporary rural exodus, a phenomenon that had already existed for centuries in some degree or another, was provoked by a number of factors. The period immediately following Spain's bloody Civil War (1936-1939) was characterized by the Franco government's policy of attempts at national economic self-sufficiency which had eventual repercussions in the form of decreased food production, depressed salaries and precarious working conditions for rural lower classes, rationing of basic

foodstuffs, and, in tandem, the creation of a black market of food and other goods (which benefitted certain interests who were close to the regime). (DEL ARCO BLANCO, 2020).

Later, government policies of rapid national industrialization and urbanization further contributed to the processes of de-population of Spain's rural interior, the growth of marginalized suburban populations in the cities, and the lopsided territorial imbalance of population experienced by Spain to this day. This contemporary rural exodus migration created a nation-wide diaspora of ex-ruralites from the country's interior concentrated in urban, industrial centers such as Madrid and Barcelona. Many of these diasporic migrant collectivities maintained connections with their places of origin, as well as with the cultural traditions of those places which had served as anchors of memory and identity for those groups for generations. (DEL MOLINO, 2016) Among the diversity of those cultural expressions in this rural diaspora is *chacarrá* or *fandango tarifeño* from the extreme southern portion of *La Janda* and *Campo de Gibraltar comarcas* of the province of Cádiz.

## **2.2 Sotavento Algarvio**

The region of the Algarve in extreme southern Portugal, though bathed by the Atlantic, possesses natural and climatic characteristics that are much more Mediterranean in nature. Geographers divide the Algarve in to three distinct zones: the littoral zone, concentrating the region's port cities and much of its population, the intermediate *barrocal* zone, and the mountainous *serra* zone to the north which separates the Algarve from the rest of Portuguese territory, a characteristic that had contributed, throughout history, to the region's relative cultural and economic isolation and its orientation to maritime Mediterranean cultural influences. The portion of the Algarve examined in this thesis is the eastern portion, *sotavento algarvio*, separated by a fluvial border with Andalusia, Spain - the Guadiana River.<sup>15</sup> [Figure 7]

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<sup>15</sup> Borges (2009) summarizes his interpretation of the difference in denomination of the Algarve's two halves, "Based on the climatic conditions created by the dominant winds, the littoral area is





Figure 7 – Map of the *Sotavento Algarvio*

Source: *National Geographic Mapmake*

With human presence in the Algarve since the Stone Age, the region saw the emergence of indigenous Bronze Age cultures such as the Conii. Much like Cádiz, the Algarve saw the arrival of ancient Mediterranean maritime cultures with the aim to trade and eventually settle: Phoenicians, and later Greeks and Carthaginians. Later, the region was conquered by the Romans and incorporated into their empire, settling and building upon previous settlements to establish rural productive establishments, towns, cities, ports, roads and other infrastructure, such as the *villa* Milreu found within the *concelho* of Faro. Like other Mediterranean cultures before them, the Romans brought their belief systems, which eventually included Christianity. (LENK, 2019)

At the fall of the Roman Empire, the region was settled by Germanic Visigoths, also of Christian faith. With the Muslim invasion in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D.,

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in turn divided into *Sotavento* and *Barlavento*, approximately east and west of the coastal town of Albufeira, respectively". Albufeira is about 35 km. west of the city of Faro.

which took advantage of a period of in-fighting among Visigoth kingdoms, the Algarve earned its name ("Algarve" stems from Arabic "*gharb al-andalus*" meaning western Andalusia). Arab and Berber settlers built upon the Mediterranean agricultural traditions already existing in the territory of Algarve, inherited from previous cultures, and contributed developments in irrigation and in other areas, expanding agriculture and horticulture in Algarve, economic sectors that have managed to stay relevant to current day. (ALAMEIDA, 2016; BERNARDES, OLIVEIRA, 2006; LENK, 2019; TEICHNER, 1993, 2015)

After a long period of military "reconquest" and settling of reconquered areas by Christian kingdoms of the north of the Iberian Peninsula, with the assistance of military orders, Muslim domination of Portugal was ended in 1249 with the taking of the city of Faro from the Moors. Later, the Algarve became a strategic bulwark against advances and threats stemming from Portugal's peninsular neighbor and rival: Spain. (BIRMINGHAM, 2003)

From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onward, Algarve gained increased prominence in Portugal's overseas exploits in Africa, the Americas and elsewhere. Also, fomented by the proximity with Andalusia – location of Sevilla, Spain's primary port for American colonization and trade – and the informal bonds forged over generations between Algarvians and Andalusians in matters such as the cross-border fishing and contraband trades, many Algarvians participated as captains and crew on Spain's lucrative colonial and commercial trans-Atlantic shipping routes with its newly-conquered American colonies. This dynamic increased during the period of the Iberian Union (1580-1640) which united both Spanish and Portuguese empires under the Spanish crown. Many Algarvians eventually established themselves in American territories claimed by Spain. (MATEUS VENTURA, 2005, p.184)

This Algarvian migrant presence in the Americas increased in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With rural Algarve being dominated by small, family-based rural properties in a relatively arid Mediterranean landscape, it was already common for migrants to find seasonal agricultural work in other parts of Portugal and also in Spain to supplement their household incomes. (BORGES, 2009) Eventually this migration was extended internationally. Migration from Algarve to Brazil and Portuguese Africa was predominant in the latter half of the 19th

century, however Spanish-speaking Argentina came to be, by far, the preferred migration destination for Algarvians in the first decades of the 20th Century. (BORGES, 2003) Aside from adverse economic conditions at home, these migrations were motivated by perceived higher wages in countries of destination as well as official governmental incentives to promote European immigration on behalf of growing American states such as Brazil and Argentina. Also, recurring cycles of political and economic crisis in Portugal in this period led many to seek more promising horizons abroad.

The evolutionary path from absolutist monarchy to a more liberal political and economic system throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries proved to be a tumultuous process for Portugal, on the periphery of Western Europe, however in possession of an extensive global colonial empire from which the ruling class profited. The period during Portugal's First Republic (1910-1926) was marked by political and economic instability and periodic violence. Portugal's participation in the First World War (1914-1918), on behalf of the Allied Powers, was also a traumatizing experience for many Portuguese who were killed, injured, made prisoner, or suffered the economic and psychological consequences of the conflict both in the theatre of war - in Africa or Europe - and at home. (VIEIRA RODRIGUES, 2019)

Constant turmoil during Portugal's liberal First Republic paved the way for the military dictatorship which seized power in 1926. Eventually evolving into the *Estado Novo* (1933-1974) under the leadership of António Salazar - and in the last years, Marcello Caetano - this dictatorship took on fascistic, authoritarian, anticommunist, and corporatist characteristics and engaged in surveillance and repressive tactics to quash dissent and maintain the submission of the populace as it carried out its political, social, military and economic projects. (PEREIRA, 2014; PEÑA RODRÍGUEZ, 2012; MELO, 2016; ROSAS, 2001; GAMA, 2009)

Another great priority of the regime was to maintain and defend Portugal's overseas colonies at any cost, even during a period in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that globally trended towards decolonization. A consequence of this were the colonial military campaigns that were carried out in the 1960's and 1970's (with the context of the Cold War as a backdrop) against local independence efforts, conflicts that eventually provoked the exodus of hundreds of thousands of

Portuguese settlers and their descendants to the metropole in the aftermath, as well as hundreds of thousands of young Portuguese being drafted into protracted, bloody guerilla wars far from their homes and families. As with other regions of Portugal, the Algarve saw many recruits sent to war, including a group from the *freguesia* of Faro: Santa Bárbara de Nexe, a location that will be examined later in this text in the case study in regards to its musical traditions. (COELHO MESTRE, 2017)

After the Portuguese Colonial War – whose end was brought on by Portugal's 1974 democratic revolution - the lived experiences and memories of Portuguese ex-combatants, much like the history of the Colonial War itself, went through a process of silencing and forgetting. This occurred, partly out of national shame surrounding this episode in Portuguese history, occurring at the end of the dictatorial *Estado Novo*, one of the last dictatorships in Western Europe. (CAMPOS, 2014)

During the period of the Colonial War, thousands of Portuguese emigrated abroad, many to avoid being drafted, the majority emigrating to industrialized Western Europe - primarily France. This mainly clandestine migratory movement had already begun to occur in the 1950's. Between 1957 and 1974, 1.5 million Portuguese emigrated, with over 900 thousand going to France alone. (PEREIRA, 2014, p.26) This massive movement further grew the ranks of the Portuguese population in diaspora. People from Algarve also emigrated in large numbers in this period, with many stoneworkers and stonemasons from the *concelho* of Faro finding employment in civil construction in Paris and other French cities, as well as previously in urban, industrialized Portugal: Lisbon and Cascais earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Changes were also occurring at home, in the Algarve, with the region's reconversion into a tourism-based economy. Traditional agricultural production and fishing industry models began to lose ground to tourism in Portugal in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, as contributors to the nation's economy. (COSTA, 2013; PALMA BRITO, 2009) Tourism had formed a strategic component of *Estado Novo* policies to generate economic gain, but also as a propaganda tool to project an official vision of the regime to foreign and domestic tourists and enforce a

state-controlled, nationalistic narrative of Portuguese history, heritage, idyllic rurality, etc. (CADAVEZ, 2011)

Within these efforts to promote tourism in Portugal was the "beach and sun" model, as occurred in Francoist Spain, which came to be epitomized by the Algarve by the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This accelerated development of lucrative coastal tourism geared towards foreigners exacerbated the already existing dynamic of rural exodus and depopulation of the Algarve's rural areas in the *barrocal* and *serra* zones, already decimated by the phenomenon of emigration. (PALMA BRITO, 2009)

The period after the April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1974 revolution that brought an end to Portugal's dictatorship and the posterior processes of rapid decolonization of the nation's overseas territories was also affected by the ravages of the global economic crisis of the 1970's. This combination of factors not only saw the forced movement of population from ex-Portuguese colonies, but also the return of many Portuguese emigrant workers from Western European nations whose economies were feeling the strain of the economic crisis. (OLIVEIRA ET AL., 2016, p.14)

The intention of return in Portuguese migration, in its varied and changing historical contexts, has always been present in emigrants' plans. Oliveira et al. (2016, p.14) observe how this hope of return has had a structuring force on emigrants' life narratives, whether the emigrant actually achieves to definitively return to Portugal or not. Lewis and Williams (1985, p.181) noted, in the mid-1980's, that returned Portuguese emigrants tended to go back to their original, home communities. Often returned migrants, before going back, had already invested capital in acquiring land and constructing residences in their much-longed for communities of origin.

It had been very common that Portuguese migrants definitively returned only upon retiring in their countries of destination after decades of employment abroad, being able to receive retirement payments in Portugal. Even before retirement, these emigrants would commonly return from abroad to their home communities during work vacations and participate in and be emotionally invigorated by their local cultural expressive traditions and festivities on key dates, vehicles of Memory and Identity for these migrants. (MALHEIROS, 2016)

Such is the case of the *charola* tradition of Bordeira, as examined later in this thesis.

### 2.3 Northern Uruguay

The geography now comprising the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, in the southern portion of the South American continent, is divided from Argentina by a fluvial border that measures more than 880 kilometers along the Uruguay River and River Plate. The nation's East possesses coastline on the southern Atlantic Ocean, and the nation possesses more than 1,000 kilometers of border with Brazil made up of rivers, lagoons and dry land border. The particular area that will be generally examined in this thesis is the northern portion of Uruguay, north of the Río Negro which bisects the country. [Figure 8]



Figure 8 – Map of Uruguay

Source: *National Geographic Mapmaker*

The territory of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, originally referred to as the "*Banda Oriental*" (Eastern Bank of the River Plate) at the time of European colonization, was populated by nomadic indigenous cultures such as the *Charrúas* prior to the arrival of Spanish explorers to the region in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Though belonging to the vast colonial territory in South America claimed by Spain, as demarcated in the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, and incorporated into its newfound global empire, the *Banda Oriental* originally did not pique the interest of the Spanish Empire for failing to offer the possibilities for vast material gain such as found in the Andean region, source of valuable minerals such as silver and gold, which were extracted and exported back to the metropole. (REYES ABADIE ET AL., 1974; ZUM FELDE, 1967)

This condition was to gradually change with time as cattle and horses were soon introduced by the colonial authorities into the *Banda Oriental* and explosively reproduced within the area's extensive virgin *pampa* grasslands. (Figure 9) This new bovine natural resource, eventually primarily exploited for extraction of hides for export and domestic use, would come to provide the base material for the development of the embryonic economic and social structures of the new human societies of the *Banda Oriental*, originally a mixture of indigenous and peninsular elements. (Ibid.)



Figure 9 – Rural interior of Tacuarembó (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Franciscan missions were founded in the western portion of the *Banda Oriental* along the Uruguay River with the aim to evangelize local indigenous groups. Already-Christianized natives were brought from Paraguay,

further north, to assist in the settlement process based on ranching. (ZUM FELDE, 1967, p.18) According to Zum Felde:

Within these reductions the mixture of Spanish and indigenous people begins to take place [...] This Hispano-Paraguayan element introduces the habits and practices of Quichua-Guaraní origin: the *poncho*, the *chiripá*, *yerba mate*, sod houses, and a great part of the vocabulary that is incorporated into the Spanish language, as spoken by the Hispanic-Indigenous population. (ZUM FELDE, 1967, p.18)

After the period of the Iberian Union (1580-1640) which saw the joining of the Portuguese and Spanish empires, Portuguese *bandeirante* incursionary expeditions into the continent's interior in the South brought them into conflict with the Jesuit Guaraní missions. (REYES ABADIE ET AL., 1974, p.21) Also, in 1680 the Portuguese founded the fortified port settlement of Colonia del Sacramento at the mouth of the River Plate, directly facing the Spanish port settlement of Buenos Aires. Colonia del Sacramento threatened the trade monopoly and strategic maritime and fluvial domination that the Spanish Empire maintained in the River Plate region, opened up the region to contraband with other maritime powers, and was a step towards the Portuguese goal of extending their colonial rule in South America to its "natural" southern border: the eastern bank of the River Plate, a goal that will be achieved briefly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the Cisplatine Province. Colonia del Sacramento will prove to be a persistent bone of contention in the numerous territorial conflicts between the Spanish and Portuguese empires up until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. (FRANZEN, 2005)

With the Portuguese threat present at the doors of the port of Buenos Aires, the entry point into the northern interior Spanish colonial territories reached by the Paraná and Uruguay Rivers, Spain decided to found a military port settlement at Montevideo in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to counterbalance the Portuguese presence at Colonia del Sacramento. Montevideo grew to become a relatively prosperous port within the Spanish Empire, competing constantly with its rival, Buenos Aires, and obtained a monopoly on the commercial importation of enslaved peoples from the African continent who were destined for various industries in the River Plate region and further inland. This trans-Atlantic trade further grew the region's population of African origin, coming from various African regions such as Angola, Mozambique, Dahomey, etc. (BORUCKI, 2010; FREGA, 2020)



The *Banda Oriental* came to form a border zone between the Spanish River Plate Viceroyalty and Portuguese Brazil. Montevideo, in the south, was the territory's trans-Atlantic connection with Europe and came to house many significant communities of foreigners: French Basques, Spaniards, Italians, etc. The rural interior of the north comprised a diffuse, ill-defined, culturally porous, frontier area with Portuguese Brazil with low population density, vestiges of regional indigenous populations, and provided conditions that fomented contraband trade with the Portuguese. (REYES ABADIE ET AL., 1974)

The process of independence of what will become the Oriental Republic of Uruguay was long and drawn-out. Initiating in the period in which Spanish king Ferdinand VII was deposed in 1808 by Napoleon in his invasion of the Iberian Peninsula - a moment which then saw the proliferation of independence efforts in the Spanish possessions in the Americas - the independence of Uruguay was finally achieved through a British-negotiated treaty in 1828, effectively creating a small, international commerce-friendly buffer state between the large, powerful independent states of Argentina and Brazil.<sup>16</sup> During those conflictive, chaotic twenty years, the *Banda Oriental* ended up forming part of the Portuguese Empire's (then Brazil's, beginning in 1822) Cisplatine Province from 1817 to 1828. (ZUM FELDE, 1967)

Internal civil conflict in Uruguay, utilized as proxy wars by various partisan interests in Argentina, Brazil as well as foreign powers such as France, will ravage the country until past the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, giving origin to Uruguay's traditional political parties, founded by local, rural-based strongmen: *caudillos*. In general terms, the *Blanco* party came to represent the traditionalist, rural elements of the nation's interior, and the *Colorado* party came to represent the waves of European immigrants arriving to urban, cosmopolitan Montevideo throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in to the 20<sup>th</sup>. (Ibid., p.229) This sociopolitical divide will dominate Uruguay's often-violent political conflicts into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>16</sup> The British envoy involved in the negotiations for the creation of Uruguay, Lord Ponsonby, was later involved in the negotiations for the creation of another strategic buffer state: Belgium.

These partisan conflicts culminated in the revolution of 1904 which is put down definitively by *Colorado* president, José Batlle y Ordóñez, who is considered the father of the modernization of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, strengthening the nation's public institutions and enacting sweeping European-inspired progressive social reforms. Prior to the Batlle presidency, crucial progressive reforms in the education sector, historically dominated by Catholic religious orders and directed at the country's elite, were already being carried out during the Latorre dictatorship, spearheaded by José Pedro Varela, author of the *Ley de Educación Común* of 1877. Inspired in European and North American models of the time, these reforms worked towards universal, mandatory, non-religious education for Uruguayan students, both in the capital and the rural interior. (OROÑO, 2016)

Uruguayan public education was a tool to acculturate and instill national sentiment in the children of recent immigrants, hailing from diverse countries of origin. Another motive for the expansion of state-led education in Uruguay's thinly populated interior was to strengthen the Montevideo central government's state presence and rule of law *vis á vis* Luso-Brazilian influence and the Portuguese language in the north. Since the colonial period, the Portuguese and Luso-Brazilian presence in northern Uruguay was viewed by the central administrations in Montevideo as a threat, first to the Spanish colony, and later to the sovereign Oriental Republic of Uruguay. (CURBELO, 2012) The limited power of Uruguay's central government, housed in Montevideo, to govern its relatively deserted, rural northern interior throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century permitted the growth of already-existing Luso-Brazilian possessions and population and the general Luso-Brazilian domination of the region's social and economic spheres, bordering the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. (CARBAJAL, 1948; PELLEGRINO, 2013)

Among the socioeconomic structures and dynamics brought by these Luso-Brazilian elements to rural northern Uruguay, primarily focused on large-scale *latifundio* ranching, was the maintenance of the institution of slavery, officially abolished by Uruguay in 1842 and in Brazil many decades later, in 1888. During this period, on many Brazilian-owned ranches in northern Uruguay, *de facto* slavery was maintained, with many slaves sold across the Brazilian border as

well. There were also many Brazilian slaves who fled to Uruguay to seek freedom, yet the Brazilian Empire pressured the fledgling Uruguayan nation to allow for recapture and return of escaped Brazilian slaves by slave-hunters, who would also take free Uruguayan-born black people to traffic in Brazil. (PALERMO, 2008) In addition, many Brazilian ranchers established in northern Uruguay engaged in contraband of cattle, across porous, dry land borders, to Brazilian processing facilities for commercialization.

Its history as a conflictive, semi-deserted territory - bordering between the Spanish and Portuguese spheres of influence - that provided the conditions for contraband and refuge for social groups on the margin of authority (Figure 10) (such as the remnants of Uruguay's indigenous population and escaped slaves), as well its history of *caudillos*, of both Uruguayan and Luso-Brazilian origin, that imposed their economic and political will within their quasi-feudal domains, gave northern Uruguay unique characteristics *vis a vis* the more Europeanized south whose epicenter was Montevideo. Where, on one hand, northern Uruguay demonstrates rich ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity (further diversified by cross-border migration from Argentina and European immigrant collectivities arrived in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century), which is expressed in the region's cultural traditions, on the other hand, northern Uruguay has generally trailed behind the south in economic development and modernization, with a traditional dependence on archaic *latifundio* agropastoral models that generated scarce stable employment opportunities for the rural poor and working class and maintained political and economic dominance of a rural oligarchy. (AROCENA, 2011)



Figure 10 – Interior of Rivera department (Rivera, Uruguay, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, after abolition of slavery in Brazil and the opening of territories previously dominated by indigenous groups in Argentina, both of these large, growing South American states embarked on official campaigns to attract and incentivize European immigrants to play the role of frontier agricultural settlers, cheap labor in sectors such as the coffee export industry in São Paulo, and generally as vectors of European influence in nations that sought to rapidly "Europeanize" and minimize the impact and influence of their *mestizo*, indigenous and African-descended populations in the "modernizing" development of these relatively new American nations as they moved into the international sphere of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (DE MATEO AVILÉS, 1993)

In the period of the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> - with a reduction during the First World War - millions of Europeans emigrated to the Americas motivated by a diversity of trans-Atlantic push-pull factors. Whereas the United States received the bulk of this migratory wave in North America, Argentina and Brazil were the primary destinations of millions of European migrants to South America. (PELLEGRINO, 2014, p.7) Within this southward-bound mass migration, the small Oriental Republic of Uruguay was often a pass-through point with migrant groups moving onward from Montevideo

to their desired Argentine and Brazilian final destinations. However, a significant number stayed, as well as many passed first through Brazil and/or Argentina to eventually establish themselves in Uruguay.

Motivated by previously-forged trans-Atlantic family, ethnic, and community networks, pushed by adverse economic and political contexts in their countries of origin, and incentivized by the relatively high wages and opportunities for social mobility (in comparison to their home countries) found in Uruguay's small but developing export-oriented agro-industrial economy which enjoyed relatively new-found political stability in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, important amounts of immigrants from Western and Eastern Europe, and later, also from the Middle East, arrived and settled in Uruguay in this period. They added to the amounts of regional immigrants and previous trans-Atlantic immigrants that had steadily contributed to the development of the Uruguayan population since colonial times: Canary Islanders, various African groups, Galicians, French Basques, Genovese, etc. (MORÓN, 1946, p.28)

Though the bulk of these immigrant groups of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries will concentrate themselves in and around urban Montevideo and Uruguay's agrarian south (ALJANATI ET AL., 1970, p.38; PELLEGRINO, 2014, p.11), certain collectivities will encounter factors that will incentivize them to settle and establish themselves socially and economically in the less-populated border region north of the Río Negro, primarily in the fertile littoral region along the Uruguay River bordering Argentina, in the departments of Río Negro, Paysandú and Salto. Connected to trans-Atlantic ocean trade routes via the fluvial transportation system of the Uruguay River - ending in the maritime ports of Buenos Aires and Montevideo on the River Plate - these departments will attract ethnically and religiously diverse collectivities of agriculturally-adept immigrants with the participation of distinctive groups such as Russian religious minorities from the southern Russia/Caucasus region, Volga Germans, and German Mennonites.

In its beginnings, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of the greatest challenges (aside from the conflictive geopolitical situation in the immediate region) facing the government of the fledgling Oriental Republic of Uruguay was to increase its population to be able to effectively settle and govern its vast rural territory, with

much of the sparsely-populated area north of the Río Negro dominated *de facto* by Luso-Brazilians. Early state attempts at proactively recruiting settlers from the Old World began in the 1830's with private initiatives by entrepreneurs such as Samuel Lafone. These initiatives, bringing groups such as Canary Islanders and Basques, often ill-prepared the new migrants and obliged them into repayment of the expenses of the ocean crossing, as well as indentured them, by contract, into years of work at a specific establishment or for a determined employer for below-standard wages. (THUL CHARBONNIER, 2017)

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the gradual evolution of policies and strategies to foment European immigration for the specific purpose of founding agricultural communities ("colonies") in Uruguay's undeveloped rural interior, certain relatively successful examples stood out, contrasting with the innumerable failed or scarcely productive attempts at agricultural colonization in this period. In the southern department of Colonia, members of the persecuted Waldensian religious minority, hailing from the northern Piemonte region of Italy, founded an agricultural colony, as did Protestant and Catholic settlers from Switzerland (as part of a private colonization scheme run by Swiss bankers). (MORÓN, 1945, p.35-36) These communities grew and continue to exist, maintaining, to some degree, their linguistic, ethnic and religious distinctiveness *vis a vis* general Uruguayan society. This ethnic and religious "*otherness*" also has ramifications in the economic and productive spheres. (SANSÓN, 2010)

The experiences of the Waldensians and the Swiss in Colonia were the precursors of similar immigrant agricultural colonization initiatives of religious/ethnic character carried out in the littoral region of northern Uruguay in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Groups fleeing religious and political persecution and violence, as well as catastrophic economic conditions, in Russia, such as the New Israel sect led by Basilio Lubkov and groups of Lutheran Volga Germans, established themselves in rural northern Uruguay in this period (as also occurred in the interior of Argentina, southern Brazil, and eastern Paraguay).

All these immigrant groups – just as the collectivities that had preceded them – brought their music, ritual festive traditions, language and material culture. Their newly-transplanted cultures will come to be juxtaposed with those of other immigrant-descended groups as well as American cultures within the context of

rural northern Uruguay, wedged between the culturally-porous borders of Argentina's Mesopotamia region and the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. The processes of interaction, friction, and hybridization of these diverse cultural influences will come to shape the unique regional culture and social structure of this geographic area, located far away from the macrocephalic cosmopolitan port capital of Montevideo. (PELLEGRINO, 2014, p.10)

In the acculturation and integration processes of these distinct racial, ethnic and religious groups in rural northern Uruguay - among other factors - social ludic events such as dances, and the Uruguayan public-school system - epitomized in the solitary rural school of a dispersed agricultural or agropastoral community - proved to be crucial vectors. Mendoza de Arce states:

It is evident that the spread of international forms of dance and music proved to be an important factor in the acculturation of immigrants (in rural Uruguay), at a moment [...] when a fusion process was still underway. [...] In this manner, music and dance played an important role within the forced sociability imposed by the (rural) environment and its demands, thus fulfilling the function of forming local groups. (MENDOZA DE ARCE, 1972)

Oftentimes, these two factors: social dances and public schools were one and the same. In rural Uruguayan communities the public school has often been the sole presence of the State in areas of low population density, aside from police, military and judicial outposts. Serving much more than educational and civic purposes, the rural school came to be the social center of dispersed, rural Uruguayan communities, and was often the scene for holding social dances for local residents. (PIÑEIRO, 2002, p.215; RIELLA, VITELLA, 2005, pp.133-134) Oftentimes these social dances took the form of benefit events and they were organized by associations of local residents to fundraise for expenses incurred by their local public school. These *kermesses* would involve music, dance, ludic activities, as well as sale and auction of food products contributed by local residents such as roasted piglets, turkeys, or chickens, home-made sweets or cakes, etc.

In areas of predominantly immigrant colonization in rural Uruguay, it was common for a determined ethnic collectivity - depending on their group's degree of endogamy and cultural insularity - to impart independent educational and religious instruction to their youth in their own respective language: i.e. Russian,

German, etc. Mandatory Uruguayan public education was exclusively imparted in the Spanish language and officially discouraged the use of other vernacular languages, such as Portuguese, or *Portuñol*.<sup>17</sup> (OROÑO, 2016)

In the form of local repercussions of global geopolitical conflicts, during certain periods of Uruguayan history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, relatively recently-arrived, culturally-distinct immigrant collectivities maintaining cultural and family ties to their countries of origin, came to be suspect and persecuted by Uruguayan state authorities at certain periods. Such was the case of German descendants in World War Two and Russian descendants during the Cold War, similar to what occurred under Getúlio Vargas's *Estado Novo* in Brazil. (MARTÍNEZ, 2010) This State-sponsored hostility had its effect on the continuity of language, cultural practices, and cultivation of historical memory within the affected immigrant enclaves in Uruguay's rural interior.

Also, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, agrarian immigrant colonies in rural Uruguay began to experience an exodus of segments of their population to the nation's urban centers: large departmental capitals, and, most particularly, the industrialized port capital of Montevideo, as did the rest of the communities of the rural interior of Uruguay. Currently one of the most urban-dwelling countries in the world, since its early history Uruguay demonstrated characteristics of high urban concentration of population and very low population density in its rural interior. (PELLEGRINO, 2013, p.189) This was partly due to the predominance of the traditional model of economic activity in the interior based on archaic ranching practices carried out by quasi-feudal socio-productive structures. The constant violent conflicts in Uruguay's historical consolidation as a sovereign nation also discouraged populationally-dense rural settlement.

With the modernization process of the Uruguayan ranching industry in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which saw demarcation and fencing of properties as well as rationalization of economic and productive practices, landowners drastically reduced the number of employees on their establishments and discouraged the employment of ranch-hands with wives and families, effectively curbing social

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<sup>17</sup> Hybrid dialect mixing elements of both Portuguese and Spanish. *Portuñol* possesses numerous global variants, depending on the geographic location of the point of cultural contact between Portuguese and Spanish speaking cultures: Uruguay-Brazil border, Spain-Portugal border, etc.



reproduction within the ranching socio-productive environment. This increased the amount of landless, rural poor, who continued to reside in precarious rural settlements. (PIÑEIRO, 2002, pp.207-208; PIÑEIRO & CARDEILLAC, 2014, p.56)

As the nation increasingly industrialized in the decades of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Uruguayan state's public apparatus also grew. Opportunities for employment in government administrations and in the state-protected industrial sectors, were largely concentrated in the capital Montevideo, or larger departmental capitals, such as Paysandú. This imbalance of opportunities between these urban centers and Uruguay's rural interior fueled an important rural-urban exodus which has continued, to some degree, up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and accentuated the pre-existing urban predominance of Uruguay's population. This dynamic follows general global tendencies, though is particularly marked in Uruguay's case. This rural exodus served to expand and grow the populations of peripheral suburban communities of low socioeconomic level surrounding Uruguay's important urban centers. (PELLEGRINO, 2014) During this process, these rural migrants have brought their culturally-diverse festive traditions, foodways, material culture, value systems, etc. into a new urban (or marginalized suburban) environment where they have been adapted and re-signified.

### 3 CASE STUDY - CÁDIZ

#### 3.1 *Fandango Tarifeño (Chacarrá)*

In this section we focus on one specific, unique cultural tradition from the province of Cádiz in Andalucía, Spain: *chacarrá* or *fandango tarifeño*. A product of the confluence of cultures from other parts of Andalucía, and other regions of Spain, brought together in the movement of population groups (by land and by sea) involved in the economic exploitation of the rich fishing resources of the Gulf of Cádiz and the Strait of Gibraltar throughout modern history (especially the *almadrabas* capturing migrating red tuna), as well as exploitation of the area's rural agricultural resources, *chacarrá* took root in the rural areas of the region and spread throughout the rugged hinterland of its coastal areas. (DE VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.21; HERNÁNDEZ-PALOMO PEÑA, 2006, p.232)

The rural *fiestas* where *chacarrá* took place were multi-faceted, all-encompassing social events that, for generations, were the primary entertainment and ludic form of socialization of agrarian communities of this region, encompassed by the *comarcas* of *La Janda* and *Campo de Gibraltar* in the far southern Spanish province of Cádiz. (HERNÁNDEZ-PALOMO PEÑA, 2006, p.235; QUERO, 1993, p.16) The *fiestas* involved multi-generational family participation, popular religiosity, traditional foodways, music, dance, improvisational song, comic theatre, rural sports, and various other facets, and they could last a few consecutive days and nights. Often, *fiestas* were timed with the agricultural and Catholic liturgical calendars and were also conducted after completion of collective agropastoral tasks such as hog butchering, cattle branding, and cereal harvests. [Figure 11]

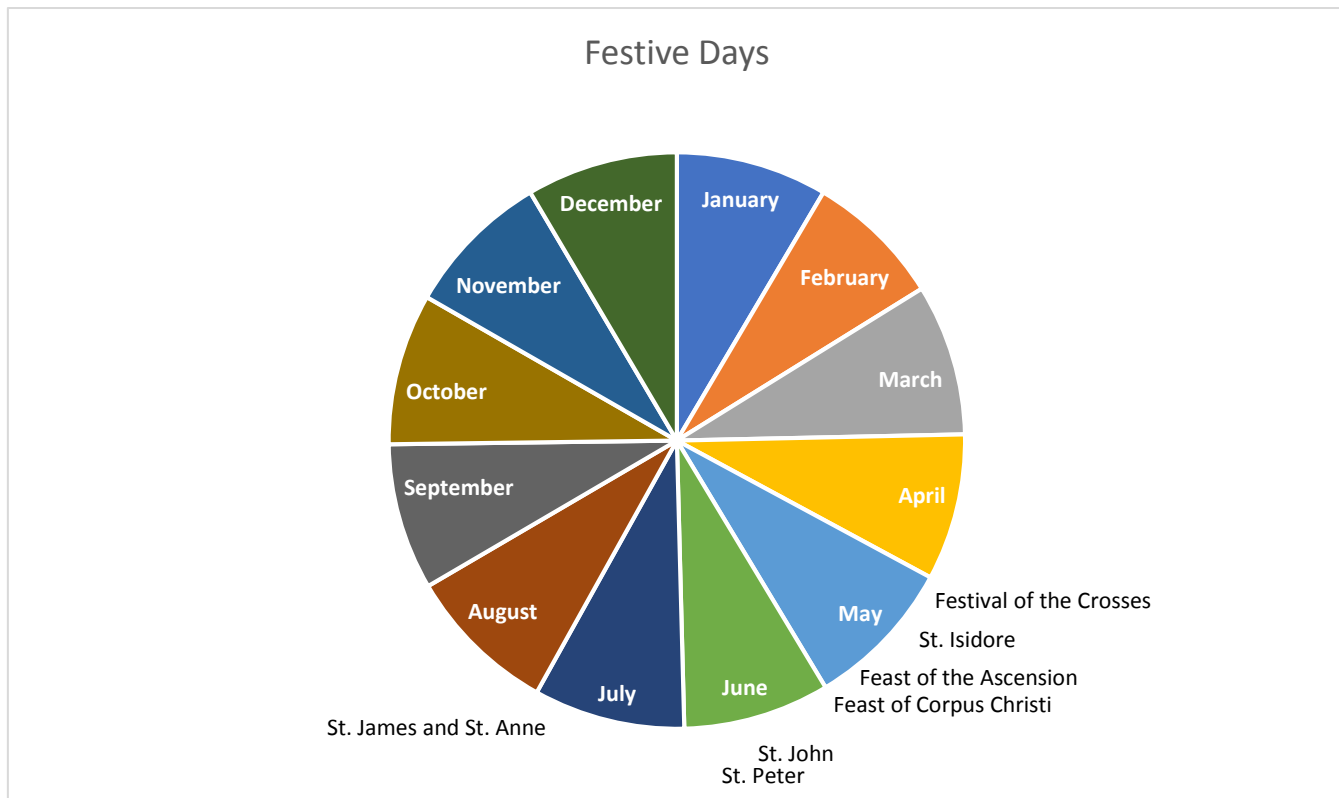


Figure 11 – Yearly cycle of spring and summer festive days of religious and agricultural significance on which *fiestas* were held

Source: Alfonso Alba Escribano (2019)

*Chacarrá* from Tarifa forms part of a larger *fandango* complex of festive rituals of music and dance that developed in the Spanish Atlantic world in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and became popularized throughout Spain and its colonies, generating innumerable local variants. (MANUEL, 2015; VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.19) Ethnomusicologist Miguel Ángel Berlanga (2015) specifies the Andalusian modes of *fandango* as "*fandango del sur*" (southern *fandango*), establishes that they are anterior to *flamenco*, and identifies some of the core elements of the foundational *fandango* festive ritual involving music and dance: occurring on weekends or festive dates, practiced in domestic spaces, providing opportunity for intermingling of the sexes and courtship, improvised lyrics often regarding local residents and occurrences, as well as presence of internal mechanisms for dealing with inter-personal conflicts that could arise during the festive event. (Ibid., p.176) Structurally, he notes that *fandangos del sur* (with great regional variation) are composed of ternary rhythms and sung accompanied by instruments such as guitar and various percussion instruments (bottle, tambourine, cymbals, etc.). The lyrics are improvised by soloists and are

interspersed by strictly instrumental segments ("*falsetas*"), all the while couples dance in the center of the festivities. (Figure 12)



Figure 12 – Presentation of the *Asociación de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* (Tarifa, Cádiz, 2015)

Source: Film documentary "*Fandango Tarifeño: Cultura Viva*" (ImagenTa, 2015)  
<https://youtu.be/9VdhYu52dvE>

Originally referred to as "*fandango tarifeño*" or "*fandango a lo Tarifa*", according to some historians (VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.16), the term "*chacarrá*" was coined in the 1940's, a period when there was a strong military presence in the region of Tarifa as the Franco regime constructed strategic defensive fortifications along its southern littoral border. Inspired onomatopoeically by the percussive sounds of its music, the term "*chacarrá*" was created - perhaps condescendingly - by military members from other regions of Spain, and came to be popularly used in the region to refer to "*fandango tarifeño*". (Ibid.) (GURREA CHALÉ, 1992, p.22; TIZÓN BERNABÉ, 2009, p.21; QUERO GONZÁLEZ, 1993, p.17)

While some researchers point to possible origins of the characteristics of rural Tarifa's *chacarrá* in the historical presence of itinerant agropastoral workers of Moorish descent from the mountainous interior of neighboring Málaga, and the cultural expressions brought by this group. (GURREA CHALÉ, 1992, p.20-21; HERNÁNDEZ-PALOMO PEÑA, 2006, p.232) Vicente Lara (1982, p.20) emphasizes the importance of the maritime population movements produced by the regional *almadraba* fishing industry, as vectors for the introduction of cultural

expressions that contributed to the formation of *chacarrá*. According to Vicente Lara:

The continuous movement of these waves of people between Tarifa, Ayamonte, and the Guadalquivir Valley must have forcibly influenced in the formation of *chacarrá* in many of its aspects: music, lyrics, dance, or the traditions associated with its interpretation. [...] The wave of people from different places that came to work in the *almadrabas* on Tarifa's coast introduced the *fandango* that took root both on the coast and in the countryside, later expanding to the nearby mountainous areas. (VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.21)

Various authors have emphasized the strong association that the *chacarrá* tradition has had with the rural areas of Tarifa (GURREA CHALÉ, 1992; HERNÁNDEZ-PALOMO PEÑA, 2006; VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.21), though Vicente Lara (1982, p.20) again emphasizes the context of the *almadrabas*, a meeting place for diverse populations of both rural and maritime origin, as formative for the genesis of *chacarrá*, he adds, "We should not forget that the *almadrabas*, especially those of Zahara (de los Atunes) attracted many inhabitants of the interior of the peninsula who sought out honest wages [...]".

The ebullient social and cultural environment of the *almadrabas* of Zahara de los Atunes of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century is richly described by Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) in his work "*La Ilustre Fregona*":

*Allí está la suciedad limpia, la gordura rolliza, el hambre prompta, la hartura abundante, sin disfraz el vicio, el juego siempre, las pendencias por momentos, las muertes por puntos, las pullas a cada paso, los bailes como en bodas, las seguidillas como en estampas, los romances con estribos, la poesía sin acciones. Aquí se canta, allí se reniega, acullá de riñe, acá se juega, por todo se hurta. Allí campea la libertad y luce el trabajo [...]*

As previously mentioned, the *fiestas* of *chacarrá* traditionally have involved multi-generational family participation, popular religiosity, traditional foodways, music, dance, improvisational song, comic theatre, rural sports, and various other facets. The *fiestas* have historically served as vehicles of social interaction and social cohesion of geographically dispersed communities composed of rural households. María del Carmen Tizón Bernabé (2009, p.23) describes, "*fiestas* of *chacarrá* possessed a marked social character in which, in equal fashion, marriages were arranged, livestock was sold, or couples had quarrels". Also, Quero González (1993, p.16) adds, "for many years *fandango* was the best social

connection that existed among the dispersed rural population located between the Guadalmesí River and Zahara de los Atunes". (Figure 13)



Figure 13 – Rural landscape of rural Tarifa (Dehesa de los Zorrillos, Cádiz, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Structurally, *chacarrá* follows the *fandango* patterns as mentioned anteriorly by Berlanga. The orchestra is composed of guitar and various domestic and home-made percussion elements, and often involves the participation of the general public, according to Alfonso Alba Escribano, "it used to be rare that a women did not know how to dance or a man did not know how to play an instrument or sing".<sup>18</sup> Traditionally, *chacarrá* has incorporated the tambourine, castanets, bamboo sticks, the *crótalos* (small metal cymbals of ancient origin), as well as serrated glass bottles used for distilled spirits. The music alternates between sung lyrics and instrumental passages. Soloists either improvise lyrics structured in four to six lines or resort to the vast repertoire of oral tradition present in the region, and in the Peninsula in general. (EVA COTE MONTES, 2012) Improvised lyrics are often about the attendees of the *fiesta*, and the events that occur there.

The region examined in this paper, over the centuries, has accumulated a vast dynamic repertoire of oral tradition in the form of ballads, refrains, popular

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<sup>18</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

poetry and verses, *coplas*, etc. - all expressions of cultural values and wisdom passed on from one generation to the next over time via oral transmission. Ruiz Fernández (1995, p.24) emphasizes the central role of women in the preservation and intergenerational transmission of oral traditions, however Tizón Bernabé (2009, p.30) highlights the protagonism that men also have shown in rural Tarifa in song and cultivating oral literature traditions. This author also highlights this specific tradition's capacity of poetically synthesizing cultural values, sentiments and popular wisdom in its lyrics:

One of the things that is quickly observed in the municipality of Tarifa is the synthetic capacity that these verses possess: the majority of the topics are resolved in four lines and the right words are always employed to be able to express a complete idea within such a short expressive space. (TIZÓN BERNABÉ, 2009, p.15)

Bearing testimony to the flux of different cultures that have passed through the Strait of Gibraltar region, María Jesús Ruiz Fernández clarifies:

[...] All of these (oral traditions) are products of ways of thinking and living of people from Campo de Gibraltar, preserved and transmitted by them, and demonstrates [...] the paths that the Pan-Hispanic folkloric archive has taken in this corner of (southern Spain). What is told or sung in Campo de Gibraltar is not exclusively from there. (RUIZ FERNÁNDEZ, 1995, p.22)

There is also a long tradition of improvised poetic duels between singers, a practice common in the Iberian Peninsula. This has been a method to air community members' grievances with each other in a public fashion, and has served as an outlet to express and potentially defuse social tensions present in the community, before resorting to violence. Juan Heredia González [Figure 14] from Zahara de los Atunes, member of an extended family of popular musicians whose father, Curro Heredia Manzorro, has been a professional fisherman and avid frequenter of *chacarrá fiestas*, explains:

The (improvised) lyrics are about people's lived experiences [...] when they go out to sea, they sing about the sea, their return, fishing. The lyrics are about what people have lived. [...] If a person had a conflict with another, they would express it through *chacarrá* [...] through (improvised) song [...] the mood would get heated. <sup>1920</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> An improvisational session of *chacarrá* from August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in Zahara de los Atunes featuring Jualili, his parents, sibling and cousins can be found here: [https://youtu.be/-YMP\\_Q59j44](https://youtu.be/-YMP_Q59j44)

<sup>20</sup> Heredia González Et. Al., Interview, Zahara de los Atunes, 2020



Figure 14 – Juan Heredia González y familia Heredia (Zahara de los Atunes, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Andrés Caballero Cruz [Figure 15], raised in Las Caheruelas, also remembers:

Sometimes (conflicts between people) originated from previous problems (not originating during the *fiesta*). Sometimes the two guys would cross paths and not say anything, maybe even had a cigarette together, from there the mood got heated, after three or four glasses of wine, the conflict would let loose. But I never saw anything serious happen in conflicts at *fiestas* of *chacarrá*.<sup>21</sup>



Figure 15 – Andrés Caballero Cruz (Algeciras, 2020)

<sup>21</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras



Photo: José A. Curbelo

*Fiestas of chacarrá* are made for dancing, which occurs continuously during the execution of the music. Surrounded by the musicians and *fiesta* attendees, one dance couple at a time performs together. Most often, each dancer also executes a percussion instrument while dancing, such as castanets or bamboo sticks ("cañas"). With local variations, such as the practice of one man dancing with two women simultaneously ("El Zángano") or a dance couple performing in an embrace ("Agarrao"), *chacarrá* in rural Tarifa traditionally has displayed a rich variety of choreographic variations ("mudanzas") with women serving as the primary protagonists of this dimension of *chacarrá*. (ALBA ESCRIBANO, 2019)

For many generations, the social dance aspect of *fiestas of chacarrá* had played a central role in the social interaction of young people in these dispersed rural communities and the formation of friendships, romantic relationships and marriages. In this sense, *chacarrá* traditionally has played a crucial role in the social reproduction of rural communities in this region. Alfonso Alba Escribano (b.1946) [Figure 16], raised in Dehesa de los Zorrillos, remembers:

[...] those *fiestas* would last all night, we would spend the whole night there, we got together and that's when the romances started, boys and girls would start to talk with each other and then form couples, and the majority ended up getting married.<sup>22</sup>



<sup>22</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

Figure 16 – Alfonso Alba Escribano (Tarifa, 2019)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

However, *fiestas* were not strictly limited to their performative aspects as expressed in music, lyrics and dance. Numerous other practices were associated with them. Firstly, were the rural equestrian activities such as *carrera de cinta*, traditionally carried out in the late afternoon prior to the start of a *fiesta*.<sup>23</sup> Also, comic theatrical pieces and parodies were often performed for the *fiesta* participants. (VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.95) Andrés Caballero Cruz (2020) recalls performing those home-made theatrical sketches, "I remember when I was a kid, those games in the *fiestas*, they would teach us, we were just kids [...] the adults would teach us and people would laugh a lot".

If not conducted in domestic spaces, *fiestas* of *chacarrá* were held in rural bars called *ventorrillos* for possessing sufficient space to accommodate a large quantity of attendees. For the families that owned one of these establishments, the celebration at their *ventorrillo* of *fiestas* of *chacarrá* in the festive periods of the year in spring and summer was an important influx of money for the household economy. (RUIZ VALVERDE, 2016, p.70-71) Such was the case of the family of Andrés Caballero Cruz in Las Caheruelas. At the *ventorrillo* at his residence, his mother, who would also sing at the *fiestas*, would sell basics such as "wine, anise liquor, crackers, coffee [...] When it was snail season, she prepared snails. Sometimes *picadillo de tomate* (finely chopped tomato salad), because we had tomatoes in our garden [...] That's what there was back then, things were very different". He recalls:

A night that there was a *fiesta* it got packed at my house, I remember, I was a child, but I remember a lot of people would go, and it was packed [...] The day after, our family had enough to make ends meet [...] We would purchase barrels of wine from Chiclana (to sell at the *ventorrillo*), barrels that had eleven and a half liters or sixteen liters.<sup>24</sup>

Alfonso Alba Escribano remembers that gastronomy was not necessarily the central attraction at the *fiestas* held at *ventorrillos*:

There was more song and music than there was food [...] Those bars, those *ventorrillos* were not prepared to serve much food, but, for

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<sup>23</sup> The informants of this paper describe *carrera de cinta* as a test of equestrian dexterity consisting of riders on horseback attempting to hook hanging ribbons at full gallop. It is an age-old Spanish tradition also practiced in Latin America.

<sup>24</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

example, in the month of May, they would serve snails, snails in tomato sauce. [...] There was drink, but not much food in those establishments.<sup>25</sup>

In the geographies that bordered on both littoral and rural regions, *fiestas* were opportunities for social mixing between members of agrarian and fishing communities. Juan Quero González (b.1917) who grew up in rural Tarifa near Zahara de los Atunes remembers:

Since I was very young, I remember that each year when the Day of the Cross (May 3<sup>rd</sup>) arrived, a date that coincided with the start of the *almadraba* season, on that magic day a large number of women from Zahara de los Atunes left their shanties and, taking the paths to El Moro, El Almarchal and La Zarzuela, would go into the rural areas to go to the celebrations of the Cross in Dehesilla, Tahivilla, Almarchal, and La Canchorrera. (Figure 17) Wherever three or four of these women from the sea showed up, the success of the *fiesta* was guaranteed, because they had a wide repertoire, and giving them enough to eat and drink, they would never tire out. (QUERO GONZÁLEZ, 1993, p.15)



Figure 17 – View of the general location of La Canchorrera from El Almarchal (El Almarchal, Cádiz, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Quero González also recalls *fiestas* in the littoral zone in the 1920's and 1930's, conducted after activities such as the collection of shellfish at the rocky sea shore by rural inhabitants from his region:

[...] many hours of happy carousing in that No Man's Land among an amalgam of people from different places, and even of different ethnic groups, because the *gitana* fisherwomen from Zahara and Bolonia rarely missed these occasions, and were the first protagonists of those events. [...] In those days past there was nothing that brought the

<sup>25</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

humble rural people together more than those popular events with *fandango*. (QUERO GONZÁLEZ, 1993, p.17)

Juan Heredia González and his father Curro remember the interaction and exchange that Curro's mother and other women of coastal Zahara de los Atunes maintained with the nearby agrarian communities of the rural interior, "My grandma would go from Zahara to Tahivilla with a donkey to go sell fish, Tahivilla is about 20 kilometers away. [...] They would sell the fish or exchange for (rural products such as) milk, bacon, sausage, meat, etc."<sup>26</sup> (Figure 18)



Figure 18 – Rurban outskirts of Tahivilla (Tahivilla, Cádiz, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Juan's aunt, Francisca "Paca" Heredia González, from the coastal community of Bolonia (Figure 19) also describes the dynamic relationship that her cousins and sisters maintained with the area's rural interior, "we would go to the *fiestas*, and a lot of people from the countryside would come [...] the ones who animated the *fiesta* was our family"<sup>27</sup> She remembers that country people would make a point to attend the *fiestas* once the word got around that she and her family from Bolonia were to perform. Juan and his father also recall that local fisherman, after long periods of time of fishing at sea, once they reached land, would seek out *fiestas* of *chacarrá* as a way to have fun, let off steam, and drink.

<sup>26</sup> Juan Heredia González Et. Al., Interview, 2020, Zahara de los Atunes

<sup>27</sup> Francisca Heredia González Et. Al., Interview, 2020, Bolonia



Figure 19 – Francisca "Paca" Heredia González y familia Heredia (Bolonía, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

However, in counterpoint, Alfonso Alba Escribano recalls that, in his region, the social division between the rural and maritime worlds in Tarifa was clearly drawn:

It used to be that the fisherman was out at sea and the rural worker was out in the country, so there wasn't much social contact [...] sometimes when people had too much to drink, there were conflicts.<sup>28</sup>

It can be construed, as McNeill (1997, p.37) states, that participation of community members in festive rituals - in this case, *fiestas* of *chacarrá* - contributed to group cohesion and mutual trust that fomented collective and reciprocal participation in important community tasks, such as those related to agropastoral production. In rural Tarifa this participation has often occurred as "festive" reciprocal farm labor as described by Erasmus (1956, p.445). One of the most emblematic events of this phenomenon is the *matanza*.<sup>29</sup>

Described by Ruiz Valverde et al. (2016, p.174) as "the fundamental piece of the subsistence economy before the rural exodus", when a *matanza* was held in a family household in rural Tarifa, "that day was looked forward to and would become a festive event in that all the family members and friends would get together around this precious animal. It was a day of fraternizing that is so lacking

<sup>28</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

<sup>29</sup> Traditional slaughter and processing of a hog within a domestic environment for family consumption. Currently, Spanish public authorities do not authorize *matanzas* without inspection by an authorized veterinarian.

in this day and age". (Ibid., p.175) Alba Escribano remembers, "People held *matanzas*, you wouldn't invite the whole neighborhood, but there were always people to come and help you make blood sausage or salted pork".<sup>30</sup>

After the slaughter and processing of the hog to ensure a supply of meat products for an extended period in a context lacking electric refrigeration, it was customary for the hosts to send the participants home with bacon, sausages or meat, an act of commensality. (RUIZ VALVERDE, 201, p.175) Agustín Barrios Triviño (b.1944) of El Amarchal remembers:

[...] in those days you would slaughter a hog, and because there was no refrigerator, you would fry everything and store it in lard. That was a great dish [...] you would eat a piece of meat in lard and you were able to withstand an entire day of work. [...] When you would slaughter a hog, you would get family and friends together and make a big meal for everybody, and what was left over was stored in salt, because there were no refrigerators [...] there was no electricity.<sup>31</sup>

Andrés Caballero Cruz<sup>32</sup> recalls participating in many festivities surrounding *matanzas*, "they used to invite me to many *matanzas* to sing and have a good time". Alba Escribano<sup>33</sup> states that, in addition to *matanzas*, any rural task could be a motive to have a *fiesta* of *chacarrá*, "after the cycle of (spring and summer) festivities in the countryside, the *fiestas* didn't end there because there were also cattle-branding events or other tasks that people would take advantage of to have a *fiesta*". Ruiz Valverde et al. (2016, p.113) also observes, "Cattle-branding events would turn any day into a festivity in bringing together family members, neighbors, and friends in the important task of branding the cattle born during the past year".

An important practice of "exchange" farm labor, according to the informants of this paper, occurred during plowing and planting (most often with work animals).<sup>34</sup> Neighbors' assistance in this laborious task was reciprocally compensated by conceding a "*pijual*" to them. Alba Escribano (2019) explains:

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<sup>30</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

<sup>31</sup> Agustín Barrios Triviño, Interview, 2020, El Amarchal

<sup>32</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

<sup>33</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

<sup>34</sup> Agustín Barrios Triviño (b.1944) from the village of El Amarchal recalls, "I was about twenty years old when the first tractor arrived here [...] (before that, plowing was just with) oxen, mules, horses, donkeys, whatever you could get. With a plow, plowing the land, and seeding by hand". (Agustín Barrios Triviño, Interview, 2020, El Amarchal)

In planting the cereal crops, neighbors would help each other out [...] A neighbor would come and help you out and you would plant a *pijual* for him [...] The *pijual* was a plot of land just for him. (You would tell him) "Okay, for helping me out I'll give you this plot of land, you plant it, and when the time comes you harvest it for yourself".<sup>35</sup>

It can be suggested that these traditional practices of reciprocity and commensality in relation to collective tasks of agropastoral production for the subsistence and material gain of agrarian families and their communities in the territory of rural Tarifa were fomented by the social cohesion and integration practiced during the yearly cycle of *fiestas* involving *chacarrá*. These forged community relationships that will eventually be challenged, unraveled and re-signified in the radically transformative process of rural exodus, beginning in the 1950's and 1960's, which will profoundly change the society of the geography examined in this paper, as well of the rest of rural Spain. The cultural values and practices of rural Tarifa, as well as those of other interior regions of Spain, transmitted via oral transmission for generations, will face the challenge to seek new resilience to maintain relevance and meaning to migrants in diaspora in urban, industrial Spain and be transmitted to their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Up until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century much of the populace of rural Spain was involved in agricultural production, a condition that had persisted since the previous century. With an emphasis on traditional Mediterranean production such as vineyards, olive trees, and cereals, southern Spain was marked by its inequality in landownership, possessing a small class of hereditary landowners and large amounts of landless laborers. The catastrophic aftermath of the Spanish Civil War and economic policies of the early Franco regime produced desperate living conditions for Spain's rural poor. This factor and the later agricultural mechanization, industrialization and urbanization push by the regime (the so-called "Spanish Miracle") beginning in the 1950's and 1960's provoked an unprecedented rural exodus to Spain's industrial centers such as Barcelona and Madrid. (COLLANTES, 2007)

This process of rapid rural depopulation in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century produced a series of impacts in Spain's rural societies that are still felt to this day.

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<sup>35</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

Firstly, was the steady departure of the base material for rural communities' social reproduction: the youth. Pushed by economic hardship and incentivized by mass media and stories of friends and relatives that had previously migrated, young people - particularly young women departing traditional rural cultures with rigid gender roles - left their communities and agrarian systems of production to find employment in burgeoning urban, industrial centers. With the economically-productive segment of the population, of child-bearing age, leaving rural areas *en masse*, these rural geographies increasingly became characterized by predominately aged, male populations and innumerable centuries-old small communities in rural Spain eventually ceased to exist in this period. Invariably, the process of rural exodus, depopulation and rupture of oral intergenerational cultural transmission was acutely felt in a dimension that uniquely expresses rural Spanish communities' culture and social dynamics: traditional collective festive rituals. *Chacarrá* of rural Tarifa was no exception. (COLLANTES, 2007)

Rural people of Tarifa, many of whom had traditionally practiced family-based subsistence farming, migrated from their homes to numerous locations both within Spain and abroad (France and Germany), beginning in this period. Alba Escribano (2019) states, "it was like shooting buckshot. Everybody migrated, some to Barcelona, some to Marbella, others to Madrid, others to Algeciras. The majority went to Algeciras, there are many people there from rural Tarifa". The effects this migration *en masse* had on the society of rural Tarifa was drastic. Isabel Román Treviño (b.1938) from Poblana (Figure 20) relates:

There used to be a lot of people in the countryside, and now nobody is left. There used to be a lot of neighbors. We would get together in people's houses to sing and dance (*chacarrá*) [...] Now the countryside is just for livestock, nobody plants anything. There are just animals.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Isabel Román Treviño, Interview, 2019, Tarifa





Figure 20 – Isabel Román Treviño (Tarifa, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

José García Alba (b.1953) from Angostura (Figure 21) comments about his village of origin, which he left at eighteen years old:

There are no neighbors left. (There´s only one) and he rents because he has livestock, but he´s the only one left. There are many old houses in ruins. [...] just a bunch of rubble. [...] A lot of people left there, some came to Algeciras, others went other places, there practically weren´t any possibilities in the countryside. So, they left, mainly the youth, when they reached working age, they had no other option, they emigrated.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 21 – José García Alba (Algeciras, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

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<sup>37</sup> José García Alba, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

As mentioned, an important location for emigration of people from rural Tarifa, in addition to Cataluña, has been the nearby industrial port city of Algeciras in the Bay of Gibraltar. This was the option chosen by the informants Andrés Caballero Cruz, Agustín Barrios Triviño and José García Alba. Vicente Lara noted, back in 1982:

This intensive emigration in the past twenty years has separated the "*fandangueros*" from the authentic, original context of this folkloric manifestation. An important destination of this rural population is the city of Algeciras, in whose outlying, suburban neighborhoods a significant community of *tarifeños* has settled, many of whom have abandoned the practice of *chacarrá*. (VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.25-26)

The peripheral neighborhood of *El Cobre* in Algeciras, near the *Cortijo Real* industrial complex, received a large influx of rural migrants from Tarifa over the decades. Andrés Caballero Cruz, who has lived in the neighborhood since he was 23 years old when he arrived to the city from the countryside to work in the construction trade, observes, "*La Carretera del Cobre* is one of the neighborhoods of Algeciras with the most people from Tarifa [...] they even came to call it Little Tarifa. Here there are a lot of people from Tarifa".<sup>38</sup> (Figure 22)



Figure 22 – *La Carretera del Cobre* neighborhood (Algeciras, Cádiz, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

<sup>38</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

Both José García Alba, who also came to Algeciras as a youth to work in construction, and Andrés Caballero Cruz, recall the maintenance of rural practices among this migrant population in El Cobre such as gardening and keeping farm animals. When García Alba arrived to the neighborhood to construct his residence, he remembers, "there were only three or four buildings, the rest was all countryside, they would plant crops, there wasn't the industrial complex that there is now, they used to plant crops".<sup>39</sup> According to them, these rural practices slowly came to diminish as the migrants and their children became more urbanized. According to García Alba, "there were a lot of houses that had gardens, but people started building and building and normally the gardens disappeared".<sup>40</sup> He cites the example of his neighbor who maintained a garden on his property, but after his death, the grandchildren inherited the property and began to construct where the garden once was.

This gradual waning of rural practices of *tarifeño* migrant families in the working-class neighborhoods of Algeciras has its parallels in the trajectory of *chacarrá* in this new urban environment. On this point, Vicente Lara, observes:

We have observed in these people, taken out of their world and transplanted to an environment that is hostile to them, a certain reluctance to maintain their folkloric traditions for fear of ridicule. Nobody denies their rural origins, which is to be commended, but the rural-urban conflict makes them uncomfortable, and sometimes offends them. On the very few occasions that they get together to have a "fandangazo" it is strictly within a family environment. While this phenomenon occurs, it is difficult for *chacarrá* to be able to take root in the city, this is negatively compounded by the fact that young people are uninterested in learning it, which endangers this tradition. (VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.26)

Andrés Caballero Cruz corroborates:

*Chacarrá* was not normally done (here in Algeciras). *Chacarrá* was done when the group from Tarifa (*Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* led by Alfonso Alba Escribano) has come or by a few neighbors over there. Maybe at a first communion party, or a birthday, people would get together and say "let's have a bit of *chacarrá*" because, of course, they were people who had sung and danced *chacarrá* and they wanted to remember their past (in the country).<sup>41</sup>

Within this rural diaspora, not solely in Algeciras, but among *tarifeño* migrants in other cities of Spain such as Barcelona, and even the city of Tarifa

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<sup>39</sup> José García Alba, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

itself, *chacarrá* takes on new significance. Though many migrants have ceased to have rural lifestyles for several decades, *chacarrá* comes to be an expression that conjures up a fleeting rural past and the values and social practices that were carried out in that environment in the youth of the migrants and in the lives of their parents, grandparents and other ancestors. The context of *fiestas* of *chacarrá*, in many cases, have served as "social frameworks" - according to Maurice Halbwachs (2004) - for the memory and identity processes of senior citizen rural migrants from Tarifa.

Though various informants relate that migrants have not necessarily cultivated the practice of *chacarrá* in their migration destinations, during work vacation periods (July, August, September, etc.) it has been a common practice for rural *tarifeño* migrants distributed throughout urban Spain to return to their places of origin, and in those periods *chacarrá* has been an important element for socializing and reconnecting with dispersed friends and relatives. Agustín Barrios Triviño remembers:

(People from El Almarchal) emigrated to Barcelona, Tarragona – to Cataluña [...] Here there was no work, there was a bit of misery in that period [...] in the 1960's. [...] (Migrants would return on vacation) and participate in *fiestas* of *chacarrá*. On days when they had festivities here, they would come and participate. They left because of the economy.<sup>42</sup>

Andrés Caballero Cruz remembers that generally in the month of August (period when people had vacation from their employment) many *tarifeño* migrants would visit from Barcelona and participate in *fiestas* of *chacarrá*, particularly at a restaurant en route to the Sanctuary of *Nuestra Señora de La Luz*, "*El Rancho*". Caballero Cruz recalls:

They would come on vacation, and there were some who sang very well and others who danced, and between us and those who came (from Barcelona) a great *fiesta* was had. [...] Those moments were beautiful because you were happy to see people, if they weren't family members they were acquaintances [...] *Chacarrá* was very important to bring people together.<sup>43</sup>

Juan Heredia of Zahara de los Atunes also notes the continued presence of *chacarrá* in the memories of the populace of his region:

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<sup>42</sup> Agustín Triviño Barrios, Interview, 2020, El Almarchal

<sup>43</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

Wherever we go to perform [...] all you have to play are the first chords (of *chacarrá*) and people react immediately. [...] People from the countryside. [...] *Chacarrá* moves a lot of people, people from Tahivilla. Facinas, Tarifa, they dance (and there are people who improvise).<sup>44</sup>

Within the diaspora that has migrated to urban areas, there have also been localized efforts for several decades to formalize the practice of *chacarrá* and officially foment and disseminate it through education and public presentations. Such is the case of *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz*. [Figure 23] Founded in the 1970's by Tarifa resident Antonio Triviño Iglesias, the group has taken *chacarrá* to diverse venues: from national television to the yearly fair that is held in Tarifa in September, where there is stage exclusively dedicated to *chacarrá*: the *Caseta Fandango Tarifeño*.



Figure 23 – Agrupación de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de La Luz (Tarifa, 2019)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Since 1988 this group is presided by Alfonso Alba Escribano, who also resides in the city of Tarifa. His motivations to get involved in the group stem from participating in *fiestas de chacarrá* in his youth in rural Tarifa, but also from the many years he spent away from Tarifa in his military career as part of the rural *tarifeño* migratory diaspora:

I spent eight years in Barcelona and I didn't have contact with (our) folklore, only when I would come (to Tarifa) on vacation in the summer.

<sup>44</sup> Heredia González Et. Al., Interview, 2020, Zahara de los Atunes

Later, when I was stationed in Tarifa, I dedicated myself to folklore [...] When I was away, I missed my folklore. When you are here, you don't give it much importance, but when you are far away, that's when you start to value it and miss it.<sup>45</sup>

According to Alba Escribano<sup>46</sup>, the group's members have varied since the its founding, many have been friends and acquaintances from his youth in rural Tarifa as well as their descendants, "The majority of them have parents who danced and sang (*chacarrá*). So, they determine, "Hey, my (parents) participated in this, this is getting lost, let's continue the work they started". He also observes the diverse dynamics of the group's followers and supporters in diaspora and the public that frequents the *Caseta Fandango Tarifeño*:

Nowadays in the (*Caseta Fandango Tarifeño*) we have participants from all walks of life: sailors, members of the military, public employees, health professionals, everything, farmers, ranchers, everything. Nowadays, there is no distinction between social groups. [...] We have our Facebook page; there we can see all the people in diaspora who follow us. [...] That is the advantage of social media that you can be a long distance away and you can participate in your (culture), in what you were raised with, what you like, and what you feel inside.<sup>47</sup>

This engagement of the "imagined world" of the rural *tarifeño* diaspora via electronic means is a vivid expression of Appadurai's conception of territory in terms of *ethnoscape*, *mediascape* and *ideoscape*. (APPADURAI, 2003)

Beyond returning on festive occasions animated by *chacarrá*, many rural *tarifeños* in diaspora have also cultivated direct connections to their places of origin in the form of maintenance of hereditary property ownership and investment in real estate, made possible by monetary capital saved through employment in Spain's urban, industrial centers over the years. This dynamic is a micro-sized example of Appadurai's *financescape* aspect of territorial diasporas. Agustín Barrios Triviño (2020) acknowledges that migrants from El Almarchal invested in the village, "They have invested in houses, not so much in plots of land. [...] In diaspora, away from El Almarchal, they have built (houses in the village) so that when they visit, they have their own house". (Figure 24)

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<sup>45</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



Figure 24 – Agustín Triviño Barrios tocando la botella (El Almarchal, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Isabel Román Treviño<sup>48</sup> has a son that maintains the family's hereditary property in Poblana and resides there with his wife and children. According to her, this linkage is her lifeline to her rural past, "One never forgets living out in the countryside, at least not me. I like the countryside a lot, I was raised there and I love it. Every chance I get I go out to the country". José García Alba also maintains a hereditary property in his place of origin: Angostura. Both, as well as Andrés Caballero Cruz, are active participants in the *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz*.

Although his elderly parents eventually moved from Angostura to the city of Tarifa, José García Alba (who also is an artisan, creating hand-made rural implements from his youth such as tools and woven baskets) and his siblings still maintain ownership of their hereditary rural property of approximately six hectares where they grew up. According to him:

My sister doesn't go there anymore. My brother, who lives in Tarifa, goes once in a while, he has a garden there. [...] You have to walk four or five *leguas*<sup>49</sup>, it's not so easy to get there. [...] The house is still there (intact), it has a chimney, bathroom, there is no running water, just the water well that is there.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Isabel Román Treviño, Interview, 2020, Tarifa

<sup>49</sup> One *legua* is approximately 4.8 kilometers

<sup>50</sup> José García Alba, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

Though the family of Andrés Caballero Cruz (father, mother and ten children) sold their property in Las Caheruelas to establish themselves in the El Cobre neighborhood of Algeciras when Andrés was a young man, Caballero Cruz maintained the childhood habit of returning to his territory of origin to forage for traditional natural foods found in the local ecosystem, most specifically snails, wild asparagus, and "*tagarninas*" (*Scolymus hispanicus*). (Figure 25) (Figure 26) According to him:

My legs hurt and I can't walk very well (like I used to) but I never give up going to gather snails when they are fat, [...] (and) wild asparagus [...] Where I was raised, I know where all the wild asparagus patches are, I know them by heart. I know where they all are more than the people who live there (now).<sup>51</sup>



Figure 25 – Snails being sold at the *Mercado Central* in the city of Cádiz (2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

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<sup>51</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras





Figure 26 – *Tagarninas* being sold at the *Mercado Central* in the city of Cádiz (2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

These material and immaterial connections to rural Tarifa, such as participation in *chacarrá* and maintenance of rural properties, are actively practiced by senior citizens in diaspora who participated in the rural exodus of the 1950's, 60's and 70's and are important elements in their processes of memory and identity anchored in the lived experiences of their youth and young adulthood. The transmission of these practices and values to new generations born in diaspora in urban, industrial Spain has proven to be a challenge.

José García Alba,<sup>52</sup> whose oldest child was born in Madrid in 1978, comments about his neighborhood, *El Cobre*, "The majority of those who came (from the country) are no longer around, their children are here, they were born here. [...] The majority now have been born here". Regarding the family rural property that he maintains in Angostura he observes:

Who goes there? My kids don't go. And if my kids don't go, who will go? My nephew is in Madrid, my niece as well. Who's going to go? No one. The day we pass away, for example, (none of our children will go).<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> José García Alba, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Based on his experiences with the *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz*, Alfonso Alba Escribano summarizes the generational changes that he has noted since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in relation to family-based cultural practices such as *chacarrá*:

Today the problem is that [...] (parents and children) don't interact with each other. Back then, parents interacted with their children at home, as well as the grandparents. Today, no [...] parents don't interact with their kids, they live together at home, but when it comes time to go out for fun, they don't do it together. Children will go out themselves, without their parents [...] much less with their grandparents.<sup>54</sup>

Isabel Román Triviño (2020) also notes the lack of interest that younger generations have shown in *chacarrá*. However, Andrés Caballero Cruz's children, incentivized by the family context and frequenting cultural venues such as the *Caseta Fandango Tarifeño*, have grown to participate in aspects of rural *tarifeño* culture. His son and daughter dance *chacarrá*, and, according to Caballero Cruz (2020), who admits that he feels that he was able to transmit this culture to his children: "one of my sons often goes with me (to the countryside). Anytime he can go pick *tagarninas* and gather snails he goes alone, he likes it, he must be like me".

Juan Heredia,<sup>55</sup> member of a long lineage of family musicians, sustains that in his region the song and dance of *chacarrá* has been able to be successfully transmitted to younger generations. Like Alba Escribano, he stresses the centrality of a family structure for the oral transmission of this tradition:

(You learn *chacarrá*) by ear [...] and you can't abandon it, wherever we go we play *chacarrá*. [...] (The value of family) for us means everything (in the transmission of *chacarrá*) [...] When I have played with my mother, my cousin Rosario and my aunt Juana, my cousin Fernanda, Paca, Dolores, with that group, I have never had a better time in my life.<sup>56</sup>

It is important to note that the Heredia family, regionally famous for their musicality, are *romaní*. This is crucial in understanding the dynamics of the central social importance and intergenerational transmission of *chacarrá* in their region of the province of Cádiz: Bolonia, Zahara de los Atunes, El Almarchal, etc. With the goal of providing comparison with the other distinct collectivities

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<sup>54</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

<sup>55</sup> Heredia González Et. Al., Interview, 2020, Zahara de los Atunes

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

presented later in this thesis, we will briefly provide historical and cultural background of the romaní and their presence in southern Andalucía.

The romaní, one of the primary ethnic minorities in Europe (FSG, 2019, p.5) and subject of innumerable ethnographic and sociological studies, are a unique collectivity that originated in northwestern India and began a series of migrations in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., according to some authors, due to violent invasions, by Central Asian groups, of their region of origin. (BERLANGA, 2008, p.1; PLANTÓN GARCIA, 2003, pp.17-18) Arriving to Eastern Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, these nomadic groups spread throughout Europe over the centuries, arriving to the Iberian Peninsula in the 1400's following commercial and religious pilgrimage routes. According to Jordán Pemán:

The possibility of participating in religious pilgrimages<sup>57</sup> facilitated receiving alms and donations, exemption from taxes, and the possibility to ply the commercial routes of Europe, that, in fact, coincided with the routes of religious pilgrimage. (JORDÁN PEMÁN, 1991, p.19)

A unique feature of these collective nomadic romaní groups, to whom the values of freedom and family are paramount, has been their particular ability to adapt, in their own way, to the local cultures where they travelled or settled, without necessarily assimilating or losing their inherent strong cultural identity based on family (nuclear and extended) and language. (BERLANGA, 2008, p. 1) To this respect, Spanish romaní author and political figure Ramírez Heredia states the collective desire:

[...] to live in harmony and peace with all, respecting our rights and respecting those of others and demanding that they allow us to freely practice that which does no harm to anyone, and that we consider to be inherent to our culture, although others may not understand us. (RAMÍREZ HEREDIA, 1974, pp.184-185)

Music and dance are central to romaní collectivities across the world. Their adaptability, mentioned above, has been expressed musically. Berlanga sustains:

(They) have always been propense to assimilate and refashion the music of their host countries. [...] One of the key factors that explain the success of the romaní as musicians is their adaptability. [...] As far as being musical interpreters, not contemporarily nor historically have the romaní sought to impose musical genres on the rest of the populace. Rather they have been experts in adapting to what they find to be interesting and useful for the different occasions where music is socially in demand. (BERLANGA, 2008, pp.2-3)

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<sup>57</sup> Such as that of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia.

Family is the central core of romaní society, with unique values and practices that differ from the external *payo*<sup>58</sup> society. This family-centric social organization, ethnic solidarity, and endogamy can be viewed as survival tactics during the collectivities' nomadic transit through a myriad of ethnically-different and potentially hostile national contexts throughout history. (JORDÁN PEMÁN, 1991, p.16; PLANTÓN GARCIA, 2003, pp.27-29; RAMÍREZ HEREDIA, 1971, p.28) Hence, collective ritual festive musicking, so important to romaní collectivities, is conducted and transmitted in a multi-generational, extended family environment. Plantón Garcia (2003, pp.29-30) summarizes, "(Festivities) serve to gather family members or members of another family. [...] This is where truly the happiness of the Romaní People can be seen".

The importance of ritual festivities for romaní families must be comprehended against the backdrop of systematic persecution, prejudice, and marginalization that the collectivity has experienced in the past centuries. Already beginning in the 15th and 16th Centuries, official governmental measures to control and repress the romaní and their culture in Spain continued until the 1970's, with dramatic episodes such as the mass detention and familial separation of thousands of Spanish romaní in 1749 under Fernando VI, and repression under Franco in the 20th Century. (FSG, 2019, p.11-12; PLANTÓN GARCIA, 2003, p.23) Ramírez Heredia (1971, p.149) has denominated this systematic control and repression as "powerful technocracy [...] that depersonalizes humans and converts them into instruments at its service as just another cog in its powerful machinery".

In response to these adverse conditions, the romaní have expressed constant efforts of resistance and maintenance of liberty, which is inherent to the collectivity. This has expressed itself in the perpetuation of language, cultural expressions, familial ties, and ethnic solidarity. This resistance includes the continued practice of ritual festivities within an intergenerational family structure. Plantón Garcia states:

Despite all the persecution that the Romaní People have endured, they have maintained the customs, culture and values. We are proud of

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<sup>58</sup> *Payo*: non-romaní

conserving our idiosyncrasy, of being in solidarity with one another, of being respectful and tolerant, and of being artists of life. The Romani People have unity. (PLANTÓN GARCIA, 2003, p.3)

At an informal musicking session at the residence of Francisca “Paca” Heredia González (1939-2021) in the coastal town of Bolonia in September of 2020, Juan Heredia (2020) described the participants in attendance (all of whom contributed in some manner: singing, clapping, dancing, playing percussion on household utensils, etc.) which numbered about fifteen, at the festivities at his aunt’s house, “Paca, aunt, cousins, sons, sister, niece, all in the family. *Chacarrá* is done as a family. Four generations”. His sister concurred and recalled how she habitually attended family musical festivities since being a young girl - calling attention to her young daughter in attendance – which developed her cultural-musical abilities and sensibilities. Juan again emphasized that traditional musicking is transmitted informally from one generation to the next via the family and is not formally taught.<sup>59</sup>

Expressing her happiness to host a musical family gathering at her house after many years of not doing so, Paca jokingly recalled the adverse circumstances of the upbringing of she and her siblings, “we didn’t have much money, we had more fleas and lice, that’s what there was in those days (but) we had great *cante*<sup>60</sup>”. Similarly, Juan Heredia and his father Curro, remembering how fisherman Curro’s<sup>61</sup> mother would traverse kilometers on donkey back to sell recently caught fish in the rural communities or barter them for agricultural products, states, “those old people had to live through a lot (of difficulties) and in the moments that they were able, they would do *chacarrá*. Their daily life was about getting enough to eat, and yet they found time to do a bit of *chacarrá* and *cachondeo*<sup>62</sup>”.

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<sup>59</sup> A video, produced by the author, of the above mentioned gathering can be found here: <https://youtu.be/an3GRnTCIrA>

<sup>60</sup> *Cante*: music and song

<sup>61</sup> Curro used to fish in African waters off the coast of Agadir, Morocco.

<sup>62</sup> *Cachondeo*: Merry-making. Term comes from the traditional carousing along the banks of the Cachón River which passes through Zahara de los Atunes. (Figure 27)

Paca and her sisters were greatly in demand as singers at festivities in the immediate region.<sup>63</sup> She remembered that, as young women, they would walk long distances to the inland rural communities, where they were the principal artistic animators of these traditional festivities. Her son, who later as a child would accompany his mother at those festivities, recalled the festive context of inter-generational cultural transmission within the family:

A lot of people would come from the countryside. Word would get around that in a determined place there would be a *chacarrá* party and people from the countryside would come. [...] I would go as a child, I remember everything. [...] They would go to *La Canchorrera*<sup>64</sup> and lots of people would show up. There were certain days for parties and people would be waiting. [...] It was a healthier way of life. [...] In the 1950's my mother was already performing at those parties. [...] Her parents would go with their daughters, and because my grandparents sang, my mom and aunts learned by ear.<sup>65</sup>

The family fondly remembers Paca's venerated sister, Juana, now since deceased. Juan Heredia's mother recalls, "for festivities, she was good at everything: singing, dancing, she was good at everything". Juan<sup>66</sup> describes the unique way that Juana left human existence, "When she died, we played *chacarrá* at the church. She said that she didn't want grief. We played at her funeral. It was a first. She requested that a few days before (she passed)". This novel occurrence contrasts with Ramírez Heredia's (1971, p.89) analysis of traditional romaní practices of bidding farewell and remembering their deceased.

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<sup>63</sup> A live album "*Chacarrá: De Bolonia a Zahara de los Atunes – Grupo de Chacarrá La Galera*" (El Flamenco Vive, 2007) featuring Paca and her sisters performing *chacarrá* and *flamenco* can be found at the following link: [https://youtu.be/2tFubt\\_G1s8](https://youtu.be/2tFubt_G1s8)

<sup>64</sup> Now an abandoned village near El Almarchal. It was famous for the festivities that habitually occurred there, that attracted revelers from surrounding communities, and involved *chacarrá*.

<sup>65</sup> Heredia González Et. Al., Interview, 2020, Zahara de los Atunes

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



Figure 27 – Cachón River (Zahara de los Atunes, Cádiz, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

In conclusion, in this section we have been able to portray how the *chacarrá* tradition in rural Tarifa developed over generations via oral transmission of diverse cultural influences arrived via migration to this territory in the exploitation of maritime and rural resources. We have suggested how the festive ritual *chacarrá* tradition proved fundamental in the dispersed rural and coastal society of Tarifa as a context for social reproduction and a tool to promote social cohesion and integration, fomenting acts of commensality and reciprocity, and strengthening bonds of trust that proved crucial in carrying out collective agropastoral tasks. The *chacarrá* tradition has served as an important social framework of memory and identity for people in rural Tarifa. Though depopulation brought on by rural exodus in the 20<sup>th</sup> century dealt a mortal blow to the practice of *chacarrá* in its natural habitat, it has shown resilience in being cultivated within extended families, and in being re-signified within diaspora, coming to symbolize rurality and regional cultural values, incentivizing continued emotional investment and material engagement in the territory of rural Tarifa on behalf of members of the diaspora and their descendants.

## 4 CASE STUDY – SOTAVENTO ALGARVIO

### 4.1 Chromatic accordion – Social Dances and Concert Performance

We now turn our attention to the chromatic accordion tradition in the southern Portuguese region of the Algarve, bordering Andalusia. (Figure 28) The chromatic accordion, its diatonic predecessors and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century continental European couple dance musical genres (polka, mazurka, waltz, etc.) associated with these instruments are relatively recent arrivals to the Algarve, historically speaking. However, the practice of social ludic dancing, singing and music-making (not necessarily religious or ceremonial in nature) is an ages-old practice in rural communities in the interior of the Algarve. Raimundo (2002, p.36) considers round dances, involving choreography, song, and melody instruments such as artisanal cane flutes (associated with livestock pastors) and practiced on occasions such as harvests and feast days, to be the earliest form of ludic dance that still exists in the Algarve.<sup>67</sup> (Figure 29) Raimundo (2002, p.38-39) also highlights the diverse cultural origins of these practices, citing the historical processes of conquest, maritime exploits and circular labor migration as formative of these traditions, influenced by cultures from nearby regions: North Africa, Alentejo, Andalusia, etc.

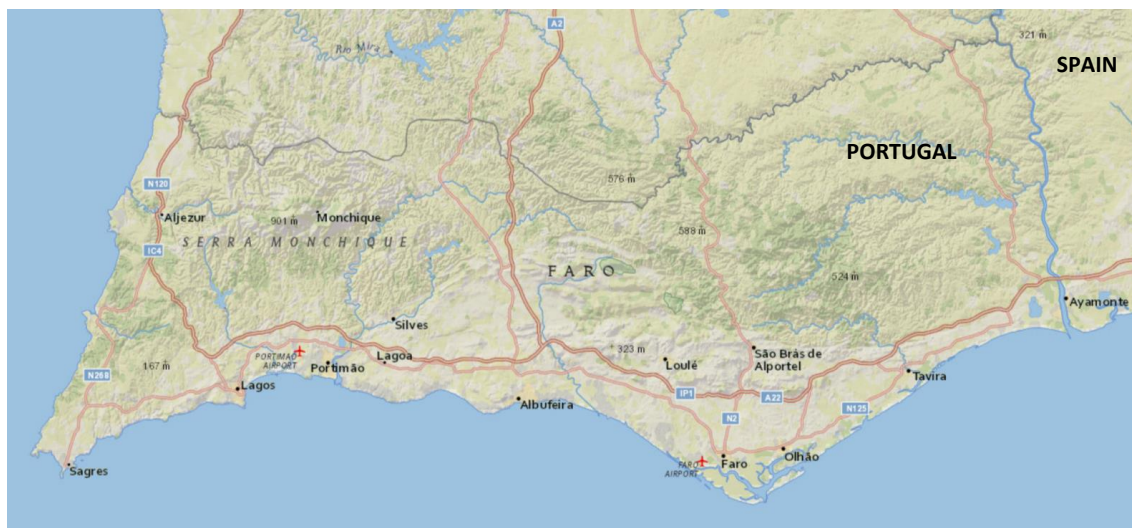


Figure 28 – Map of the Algarve  
Source: NatGeo Mapmaker Interactive

<sup>67</sup> Ethnomusicologist Michel Giacometti (1929-1990) registered various ludic social dance pieces such as "*Baile Mandado*" and "*Corridinho*" artfully executed on artisanal cane flutes in his field work in the Algarve. (GIACOMETTI, 1998)





Figure 29 – Cane flute (Casas, Alte, Loulé, 1985)

Source: RAIMUNDO, 2002, p.50

Sardinha (2001, p.27) (2002) and Raimundo (2002, p.47) also note the historical protagonism of archaic stringed instruments - *viola campaniça* – in accompanying these types of ludic dance events, as well as traditional improvised poetry duels (*cantar ao despique*) in neighboring Alentejo, but also in certain parts of the Algarve. (Figure 30) Sardinha (2001, p.156) and Veiga De Oliveira (2000, p.58) describe the eventual predomination of foreign-made free-reed instruments ("*harmónio*", "*concertina*") over Portuguese archaic stringed instruments, such as the *viola campaniça* and others, in accompanying social dance music, beginning in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Veiga de Oliveira in Portugal this organological evolutionary and transformation process has historically been a constant:

It can be said that the chordophones (and nowadays, above all, the *concertinas*) show a tendency to [...] absorb the old ludic genres, which in the past had competed with instruments of another character: bagpipes, *adufes*<sup>68</sup>, etc. – which conversely, as a rule, conserved their ceremonial functions. (VEIGA DE OLIVEIRA, 2000, pp.74-75)

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<sup>68</sup> *Adufe* (membraphone) is a traditional Portuguese square-shaped frame drum



Figure 30 – *Viola campaniça*  
Source: SARDINHA, 2001, p.36

Cunha (2010, p.107) notes the unfavorable opinions that certain contemporary music researchers and critics have expressed regarding trends of organological transition towards free-reed instruments in Portuguese popular traditional dance music. Accordingly, in the words of Veiga De Oliveira, regarding the general transition towards free-reed instruments across Portugal (in this quote particularly referring specifically to diatonic *harmónios* and *concertinas*):

The harmonicas, accordions, and *concertinas*, imported from abroad and lacking any regional characteristics, structured in an extreme and exclusive fashion along a tonal line, seem to have come to occupy, because of this, the place of the old local chordophones, and tend to totally eliminate them. The repertoire of these new instruments is certainly, most of the time, constituted of genres that are related to the *viola* and its counterparts; and their particularities that not only rendered them unusable to execute any form of archaic musical genres, but produce, in the songs that they appropriated, a very perceivable distortion, which alters the melodic line and any rhythmic particularities, transforming them according to their elemental and easy diatonicism, and poor and uniform structure, annulling all the possible originalities of before. (VEIGA DE OLIVEIRA, 2000, p.58-59)

The exact time period and channels of introduction in which the accordion – both its diatonic and chromatic varieties<sup>69</sup> – arrived in Portugal, and most specifically to the Algarve, are not precise, though it has been documented to be present since the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. (CUNHA, 2010, p.110) Various authors

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<sup>69</sup> The diatonic button accordion, referred to in Portugal as *concertina*, is the predecessor of the chromatic accordion, a variety of accordion which possesses three to five rows of buttons on the right hand, each button producing the same note whether the accordionist is opening or closing the bellows.

associate its introduction (and introduction of the repertoire and styles associated with it: European popular dance music of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century such as polkas, waltzes, mazurkas, etc.) with the commercial and maritime interconnectedness the Algarve has maintained with other European nations and the presence of population of other European nationalities in the region. (BOOKER, 2010; PASCOAL SINTRA, 2016, p.42; RAIMUNDO, 2015, p.193-194) <sup>70</sup> Many associate the instrument's growth in popularity in the region with the period after the First World War, a conflict that saw many Portuguese participate as combatants in France, a country where the chromatic accordion was in vogue in that period. (CAMPOS INÁCIO, 2016, p.26) Some of these combatants were popular musicians themselves, as was the case of famous accordionist José das Neves Vargues (known as José Ferreiro Pai) (1895-1967) from Bordeira, Santa Bárbara de Nexe in the Algarve who returned from the conflict with musical experience acquired in France. (GUERREIRO, CONCEIÇÃO, 2014, p.21) (Figure 31)

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<sup>70</sup> Lameira (1993, pp.55-56) also notes the importance of military bands and "*filarmónicas*", stemming from Portugal's 1820 liberal revolution, as vectors of introduction of urban popular continental European dance repertoire.



Figure 31 – José Ferreiro Pai

Source: GUERREIRO, CONCEIÇÃO, 2014, p.46

Though older, diatonic free-reed instruments (*gaita-de-beiço*<sup>71</sup>, *harmónio*, *concertina*) have been wide-spread across Portugal (and throughout the nation's global migratory diaspora), different regions have shown predominance of one instrument or another. The *concertina* has been particularly associated with northern Portugal, most specifically Minho (Figure 32) (Figure 33), but accordion repairer Isabel Gomes who works with accordion-maker Leonel Carreira Rocha in Ferreira do Zêzere, noted in 2020 that the instrument is currently being widely played, by professionals and amateurs alike, in other regions of Portugal.<sup>72</sup>(Figure 34) Carlos Pedrosa, maker of the Pedrosini *concertina* brand in Valença do Minho, also accentuated in 2020 the exponential growth of the practice of *concertina*-playing among members of the Portuguese migratory

<sup>71</sup> *Gaita-de-boca* (free-reed aerophone) Colloquial Portuguese term to refer to the harmonica. (Figure 36) (Figure 37) (Figure 38)

<sup>72</sup> Leonel Carreira Rocha, Isabel, Gomes, Bruno Gomes, Interview, Ferreira do Zêzere, 2020.

diaspora abroad – motivated by homesickness (*saudade*), according to him – in places such as Venezuela, France, Canada, etc.<sup>73</sup> (Figure 35)



Figure 32 – Older model *concertina* that forms part of the collection of the *Casa Museu do Acordeão*, Paderne, Albufeira, Faro

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 33 – Modern *Pedrosini* brand concertinas, Valença do Minho

Photo: José A. Curbelo

<sup>73</sup> Carlos Pedrosa, Interview, 2020, Valença do Minho



Figure 34 – Isabel Gomes (right) and Leonel Carreira Rocha (left) Ferreira do Zêzere, Portugal, February 2020

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 35 - Carlos Pedrosa in his workshop, Valença do Minho, 2020

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 36 – *Gaitas de beijo* (harmonicas) Casa Museu do Acordeão, Paderne, Albufeira, Faro

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 37 – Classic harmonica branded for the Portuguese market "O Fado Portuguez" by the German company Hohner. Collection of the *Museu do Traje*, São Brás de Alportel, Faro

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 38 – Foreign imitation of the classic "O Fado Portuguez" harmonica still being commercialized at Portuguese open-air markets. Market in Moncarapacho, Olhão, Faro, January 2020

Photo: José A. Curbelo

The most primitive form of accordion, the one-row diatonic accordion (*harmónio*) was the first to arrive to Portugal in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and became wide-spread across the nation's territory, employed especially in social dance accompaniment or providing ludic entertainment at settings such as local taverns, important nexuses of music dissemination and social dance interaction. (SARDINHA, 2000, p.326) (Figure 39) From his vast field work, Sardinha declares that the regions where the *harmónio* maintained greater protagonism were Estremadura, Douro Litoral and Beira Baixa. According to him:

Effectively, the *harmónio* has been better preserved in these regions, than in the other provinces, probably due to merely casual reasons or perhaps related with the subsequent predomination of the *concertina* and the (chromatic) accordion, which is famously the case in Minho and the Algarve. (SARDINHA, 2000, p.454)





Figure 39 – *Harmónio* that forms part of the collection of the *Museu do Traje*, São Brás de Alportel, Faro, Portugal

Photo: José A. Curbelo

During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the chromatic button accordion came to be, by far, the preferred free-reed instrument in the Algarve, evolving into an icon of the popular culture of the region. (Figure 40) Though there are historical registries of several diatonic accordion players in the region (DIVISÃO DE CULTURA, MUSEUS, ARQUEOLOGIA E RESTAURO, 2016, p.5, 24-26; RAIMUNDO, 2002, p.49), accordion-maker in Tavira, José Domingos Horta (1941-2022), stresses the vast predominance of the chromatic accordion in the Algarve (Figure 41), in contrast to the North where *concertinas* predominate.<sup>74</sup> In addition to importing a wide variety of European makes and models of chromatic accordion (at times brought by returning emigrants), the Algarve has produced important local artisanal chromatic accordion-makers, like José Domingos Horta (born in

<sup>74</sup> Jose Domingos Horta, Interview, 2020, Tavira

Malfrades, Vaqueiros), as well as Joaquim Contreiras in Bordeira. According to João Pereira (b.1976), accordionist and teacher:

I always say that the (chromatic) accordion (in the Algarve) is our cultural emblem, it is an instrument that has strong roots and is very popular. [...] The Algarve is the place with the strongest chromatic accordion tradition in the whole country.<sup>75</sup>



Figure 40 – Chromatic accordion at the *Casa Museu do Acordeão*, Paderne, Albufeira, Faro

Photo: José A. Curbelo

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<sup>75</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2020, Castro Marim



Figure 41 – José Domingos Horta, Tavira, 2020

Photo: José A. Curbelo

The chromatic accordion began to be widely incorporated in rural dances or *bailaricos* throughout the Algarve (often accompanied by percussion, such as the metal triangle called "*ferrinhos*") (Figure 42) where the dance repertoire consisted of traditional round dances, as well as local adaptations of urban European salon dance music from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (schottische, polka, etc.) such as the famed, local, late-19<sup>th</sup> century creation: *corridinho*.<sup>76</sup> (LAMEIRA, 1993, p.56; RAIMUNDO, 2015, p. 192) These *bailaricos* served as moments of socialization and ludic activity for rural communities in the interior of the Algarve, many without electricity at least until the 1960's. (Figure 43)

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Figure 42 – Miguel Pereira performing accompanied by *ferrinhos*

Source: Pereira Family archive



Figure 43 – Grupo Mato Bravo (Quebradas, Castro Marim, 2019)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Sardinha (2000, p.329-330) accentuates the domestic festive rituals of village social dances in Portugal's interior as "rites of passage" for a community's new generations to graduate to adulthood – leading to mingle the sexes, form couples, and eventually form marriages and produce children, carrying on the social reproduction of a local community. Aside from having been habitually practiced on Sunday afternoons in settings such as taverns, private residences

or barns, social dances were practiced on festive occasions such as weddings or festive dates such as Carnival, saints' days (such as Saint John, etc.) of the cyclical religious/natural calendar, as well as after collective agricultural tasks such as grape and olive harvesting, or shucking corn (SARDINHA, 2000, p.327-328) The same author also emphasizes the great importance an instrument player possessed in animating these dances - whether they had been a player of cane flute, later traditional chordophones, and eventually free-reed instruments such as *harmónio* or accordion – and the special treatment and high esteem these musicians received from tavern owners and dance attendees. (SARDINHA, 2000, pp.331-332)

Marchi Et Al., in writing about later revival practices and research of these village social dances, poignantly describe:

(Our work) reinforces the way in which we conceive of dance as a necessity of encounter, as a moment that turns sadness into sweat and produces a circle of dancers, dance partners, laughter, romance, and village sociability. [...] (MARCHI, 2010, pp.21)

The same authors go on to synthesize the social context of village social dances of the recent past in Portugal's interior, most specifically, in this case, referring to rural Alentejo:

During times when work was hard, money and material wealth was scarce and fun-making was conducted by the community itself – in the sense of the practice and the material means – (social) dance was the festivity *par excellence*. Lacking any other means of entertainment, it was necessary to dance, and often to sing, to be able to dance, with the aim to create fun-making with your own hands, and obviously, with your own feet. In the villages that populated this territory, constructed in the cradle of rural values and practices, permeated by isolation, in the words of the majority of this population: "that used to be the only entertainment that we had back then". (MARCHI, 2010, pp.21)

Social dance events were crucial in providing the context for creation and strengthening of social ties among members of small, rural communities in the Algarve's interior, dispersed across its territory, at times separated from each other by some distance or difficultly-travelled roads. (Figure 44) (Figure 45) The cultural agents that traversed these distances were the local dance musicians themselves, most often chromatic accordionists. Carlos Gonçalves, from Fonte Salgada, Tavira, is a third-generation accordionist. (Figure 46) His grandfather played for local dances, as did his father. Gonçalves recalls how the geographic population dispersion of his region shaped the professional activities of dance musicians in the 1960s, such as his father:

In my dad's time, my dad would get around by bicycle, with his accordion on his back, he would travel kilometers and kilometers. For example, when there were a few dances, let's say one on Saturday and another on Sunday – not like today – my dad would spend the night there. During Carnival time my dad ending up being out for three, four, up to eight days playing dances here and there. Back then, people really lived for those dances with accordion.<sup>77</sup>



Figure 44 – Landscape of Fonte Salgada, Tavira

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 45 – Landscape of rural Fonte do Penedo, Castro Marim

Photo: José A. Curbelo

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<sup>77</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2019, Tavira



Figure 46 – Carlos Gonçalves, Fonte Salgada, Tavira, 2019

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Likewise, accordionist Miguel Pereira (b.1949) from Fonte do Penedo, Castro Marim, recalls his father playing local dances, travelling by bicycle 20 kilometers or more to small rural settlements, which at the time were relatively more populated and possessed more youthful demographic profiles (Figure 47):

(Back then) any one of these small rural settlements ("*montes*") had ten, twelve or fifteen teenage girls, and if there were girls there were always boys who came to the dances.<sup>78</sup>



Figure 47 – Miguel Pereira, Fonte do Penedo, Castro Marim, 2019

Photo: José A. Curbelo

<sup>78</sup> Miguel Pereira, Interview, 2019, Castro Marim



Figure 48 – Map of locations mentioned by interviewees

Source: National Geographic Mapmaker

As previously mentioned, in the 1960s large parts of rural Algarve lacked electricity, and these village social dances, involving celebration, food and drink, were most often conducted without electric light, refrigeration, or sound amplification. This pre-electric condition shaped the logistical and social characteristics of these celebrations, colored the interactions between their participants, and created necessities that the chromatic accordion proved particularly effective in fulfilling – it was loud, portable, and provided its own rhythmic accompaniment (on the left hand), required only one musician for its execution, and had chromatic resources to interpret new emerging genres of popular music as consumed by the populace in the form of radio, records and sheet music.

These dances were held in settings such as taverns' event halls or locales specifically dedicated to dance events ("*casas de baile*") such as that maintained by Miguel Pereira and his wife, Maria Fátima, for years alongside their residence.



Also, the domestic space proved to be crucial to this festive practice, with modest residences and storage buildings being transformed overnight into the stage for ritual festivities involving music, dance, song and commensality.<sup>79</sup> Carlos Gonçalves remembers:

Back then, life was experienced in a different fashion. It had a different flavor. Because things were more difficult, perhaps that led to things being lived differently than now, [...] in the 1960s and 1970s. [...] Back then, a dance could be held at any old house, and if you got fifty dancers together, that was a big dance. [...] Back then there was no electricity, the dances were lit by petrol-burning lamps.<sup>80</sup>

Various informants recall this distinguishing feature of these dances: illumination by gas-light (Figure 49), and also the sonority of purely acoustic instruments (with the primacy of the chromatic accordion) which allowed for conversation among dance participants. Lack of public electrification necessitated that these social dances last all night and end at dawn so party-goers could return home with daylight. Accordionist Francisco de Conceição (b.1956) from the rural, mountainous region of Conceição de Tavira recalls (Figure 50):

Back then, the dances were more fun. At that time, [...] those dances would go on til dawn, not like today that they end at one or two in the morning, back then they went until daybreak. At one in the morning the accordionist would be fed, and the girls would form a round dance. A round dance, they sang and danced in a circle holding hands. Now there is nothing of that.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Domingos Morais describes the process in which public ritual festive dances (in neighboring Alentejo) in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries went from being celebrated *en masse* in public spaces to differing locales based on processes of restrictions and social stratification. In examining this process, they sustain, "you must consider other conditioning factors that result from permanent change within a social group, or result from regulating measures by civil or religious authorities. We see how popular dances abandoned the public plazas to be held in homes or the budding 'societies' that, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, responded to class stratification, each (class) with their own representations and own ways of fun-making and conviviality". (MARCHI ET AL., 2010, p.12-13)

<sup>80</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2020, Tavira

<sup>81</sup> Francisco Conceição, Interview, 2020, Tavira



Figure 49 – "Petromax" lamp (Source: <https://sc04.alicdn.com/kf/H0e8fd5c0d71a41cf82173a8e1efffaa4g.jpg>)



Figure 50 – Francisco Conceição, Tavira, 2020

Photo: José A. Curbelo

As described above by Francisco de Conceição, and communicated by other informants, these village social dances included common ancillary practices beyond couple dancing. We will focus briefly on three: round dances, *Dança do*

*teso*, and fistfights. The first two are traditional group choreographic practices and the last is an expression of resolving interpersonal tensions within a community, and perhaps can even be considered a necessary release of violent tension to avert more serious conflicts within a community, as we will explore later.

In regards to traditional round dances in the Algarve, Lameira (1993) considers them to have been eventually eclipsed by more historically recent couple dance traditions based around free-reed instruments, and describes them in the following fashion:

The traditional round dances continued to be the most unrefined form of entertainment. Young men and women of a certain locale would get together on the threshing floors or the homes of one of them, and would dance - always in the presence of family members - to the most widely-known melodies. There was a soloist, but all sang. Sometimes, a dance caller (man or a woman) would stand out who would direct the different dance steps, improvising funny and picaresque verses. (LAMEIRA, 1993, p.56)

Though Cunha Duarte (2000, p.240) admits that, "there are many sung round dances in innumerable countries on all the continents. This universal spontaneity is difficult to explain", he sustains that the centuries-old religious dance tradition of *charolas* (explored more in depth later in this thesis), which eventually became secularized, engendering diverse traditional dance forms in various countries – including Portugal – is the genesis of traditional sung round dance forms in the Algarve.<sup>82</sup> (CUNHA DUARTE, 2000; SARDINHA, 2001, p.157) Citing the presence in medieval *charolas* of round-dancing, a dance caller and sung improvised poetic duels, Cunha (2000, pp.236-237, 240) writes:

The *charola* conserved its dance until the 16th century, but in a secondary plane. The dance disappeared but the song remained. In the Algarve, the song of *charolas* still exists in Christmas songs. The dance is alive in round dances as well as *balho mandado* (called dances). Children maintain the tradition and perform it in their round dances. (CUNHA DUARTE, 2000, p.246)

The same author also comments on elements of this tradition that he sustains remained in traditional culture of the Algarve:

[...] (Sung improvised poetic duels occurred at dances). It is a kind of challenge (or tournament) born of the *charola* dance. Normally, it would be a girl or a boy or a man and a woman who would sing. [...] it is still popular to this day in the Algarve. At family parties it was a tradition to sing to each other in poetic duels. Normally the lyrics were satirical. (CUNHA DUARTE, 2000, p.240)

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<sup>82</sup> Ribas (1983, p.77) also cites historical sources that describe *charolas* being performed in tandem with Christian religious processions in Portugal in the Middle Ages.

Marchi Et Al., in their fieldwork with traditional dancers in neighboring Alentejo, also state the centrality of specific sung dances and improvised poetry exchanges in rural social dances in that region:

Some interviewees affirm that many of the songs [...] had their own dances and, in the past, they were sung at social dances [...] (which were) opportunities for young men and women to compose verses to liven the party or describe local themes that emerged in the conviviality, such as from the history of the (local) group. (MARCHI ET AL., 2010, p.30)

Dance ethnologist Tomaz Ribas (1983, p.36) admits that, "group dances or couple round dances make up, until this day, the vast majority of Portuguese popular dances" and acknowledges that *bailes mandados* and *bailes de roda* have been typically characteristic of the Algarve. (Ibid., p.88) He also stresses the importance, since the early Middle Ages, of the interconnected, simultaneous performance of popular poetry, music and dance in Portugal, noting the vestiges of medieval traditions present in modern Portuguese traditional music and dance, vestiges that have origins even further back in time, to Celtiberian and Hispano-Roman roots. (Ibid., p.35, 43).

Ribas (Ibid., pp.12-13) also presents criteria to classify Portuguese dance traditions in the popular sphere. He sustains that Folkloric dance expressions stem from archaic past forms that once possessed religious or ritual meaning and in centuries of intergenerational oral transmission have lost their original symbolic meaning, exemplified in Portugal's various dramatic dance traditions. Popular dance forms, Ribas sustains, are dances that emerge from popular social classes (rural workers, lower middle class, fisherman, etc.) or are incorporated and adapted by them, such as *fandango* or *corridinho*. Ribas lastly sustains that Popularized dances are dance expressions incorporated from other nations, yet practiced by Portuguese popular classes, such would be the case of polka, mazurkas, *tangos*, etc.<sup>83</sup> In the descriptions of village social dances in the Algarve

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<sup>83</sup> Ribas (1983, pp.50-51) stresses the significant transformation that Portuguese music and dance traditions underwent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to sweeping social and political changes: "The social and sociological transformations that were consequences of liberalism and technological progress that characterized the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had profound repercussions on certain aspects of customs and practices of the people. The 19<sup>th</sup> century is, to an extent, not a moment, but rather a turning point because of the huge alterations in Portuguese folklore, alterations that had repercussions not only in dress but in music, dance, and popular theatre as well. A large number of songs for dancing and Portuguese popular dances today are, from a musical or

by the informants for this thesis and the field work observations of the author, it can be observed that both Popular and Popularized dances, in Ribas's words, co-exist in the same context.

A curious aspect mentioned in the narratives of informants of this thesis is the practice of the "*Dança do Rasteiro*" or "*Dança do Teso*" at the tail end of all-night village social dances in the Algarve. According to Francisco de Conceição, this practice functioned in the following fashion:

There was a melody – not all the accordionists played it – but there was a melody that was the "*Dança do Rasteiro*". One man would grab another, the strongest man would grab the smallest man, and the (he would swing him around) and the lightest man would end up knocking down other people, some would hit their heads on the floor and fights would start. [...] It was also called "*Dança do Teso*".<sup>84</sup>

Though the author of this thesis was not able to find academic literature regarding this practice, it would seem to be a traditional practice of ritualized festive violence that has formed an integral part of village social dances in the Algarve. Another violent practice that, according to several informants, formed part and parcel of village social dances in the Algarve were fistfights between male dance attendees.

Interpersonal conflict – whether it be mediated by poetic verbal sparring or actual physical violence – within the context of traditional festive rituals is an element that this thesis pays attention to, in both the Iberian and Uruguayan contexts. A group ritual festivity, with community members and outsiders in attendance, often with alcohol consumption (provoking its disinhibition effects) and mingling of the sexes, can provide a poignant setting for long-simmering intercommunity and interpersonal disputes to express themselves in a public fashion. Whether this conflict comes to blows (or worse) or is waged via a poetic battle of barbed words, it occurs within a ritual context that has some degree of codes of honor and control mechanisms for conflict resolution (ceremonial authority, armed public security officials, family matriarchs/patriarchs, etc.).<sup>85</sup>

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choreographical perspective, foreign bourgeoisie songs and dances imported in the past century and assimilated by our people in their own fashion to fit their character".

<sup>84</sup> Francisco Conceição, Interview, 2020, Tavira

<sup>85</sup> Such is the role of the "captains" of rural masked Cajun Mardi Gras troupes, festive authority figures who control and coach the ritual revelers in their itinerant antics and festivities across local communities in rural Louisiana, as described by Sexton (2001).

Elias (1990, p.191) describes these contexts of public interpersonal conflict between males as "the emotional realm (of) the theatre of hostile collisions between men". Just as in the multi-faceted, simultaneous occurrences and emotions experienced during the course of a public festive ritual attended by a multitude, Elias states:

The emotional structure of man is one whole. We can give particular instincts different names, according to their different orientations and functions [...] sexual desires and aggressive impulses, however, in real life these various instincts cannot be separated, just as the heart cannot be separated from the stomach. [...] They complement each other and, in part, they substitute each other. (ELIAS, 1990, p.189)

In writing about the socially-accepted public expressions of interpersonal violence in modern Europe, expressed – among other ways – in the duel between two antagonistic parties, Spierenburg expresses:

[...] in societies with pronounced notions of honor and shame, a person's reputation often depends on physical bravery and a forceful response to insults. [...] Honor has at least three layers: a person's own feeling of worth, this person's assessment of his or her worth in the eyes of others, and the actual opinion of others about him or her. (SPIERENBURG, 1998, p.2)

These "pronounced notions of honor and shame" particularly apply to the traditional cultures of the Iberian Peninsula and the cultures that resulted of the colonial possessions of Iberian powers in the Americas. Almeida describes this particular Iberian cultural context:

[...] (There exists an idea of) a male chauvinist ("*machista*") culture, concomitantly with a strong and pronounced division of the sexes, systematized by Mediterranean Anthropology in the «Honor and Shame» complex [...] (ALMEIDA, 1995, p.11)

Huizinga, in turn, emphasizing the theatric, ludic character of certain kinds of public conflictive violence, states:

A person's honourable qualities must be manifest to all and, if their recognition is endangered, must be asserted and vindicated by agonistic action in public. Where recognition of personal honour is concerned, the point is not whether honour is founded on righteousness, truthfulness or any other ethical principle. What is at stake is the social appreciation of such. (HUIZINGA, 1980, p.94)

Spierenburg (1998, p.9) observes the opinion of 19<sup>th</sup> century European supporters of the practice of duels who sustained that it was a method to stem the eruption of greater, more intense, interpersonal (perhaps intercommunal) conflict, and eventually would bring the antagonists together in a social bond. In this same light, Cama Ttito Et Al. (1999) and Escalante Et Al. (2020) describe the

social role that the traditional practice of *Takanakuy* plays in a certain Andean region of Peru. The tradition involves masked fighting (mediated by referees armed with whips) around Christmas time between pairs of adversaries (not only men, but women as well) that had entered into personal conflicts (for innumerable reasons: theft, rivalry, betrayal, insults, etc.) during the course of the year, and had awaited *Takanakuy* to publicly enter into physical combat, viscerally addressing their grievances with each other. The combat takes place amid a highly ritualized and festive atmosphere (involving music, commensality, and dance) in front of community members and spectators. Escalante Et Al. describe:

Although the brawlers are on unfavorable terms, they begin and end their fight with an embrace. When the brawling ends, the entire village feasts together. [...] These factors suggest that *Takanakuy* plays a respected, robust and effective role in resolving a variety of local disputes that could potentially hinder cooperation and collective action. (ESCALANTE ET AL., 2020, p.355)

Regarding *Takanakuy*, Cama Ttito Et Al. synthesize eloquently:

[...] this type of individual and collective rituals, in addition to evoking the past, and maintaining Andean culture in a festive, and happy mood, thankful to Nature for continuing to bless them with good harvests, also brings cohesion to the social relations among relatives, and even among enemies, because they are expressions of belonging to a certain culture and affirms its values [...] it is a method of celebrating Christmas to, once again, achieve peace, love and human mutual comprehension. The ritual fight of *takanakuy* [...] has the purpose of enjoyment, remembrance of the past, and conceiving of the future, without forgetting to consider that all that depends on their agricultural and pastoral activities, which are fundamental to their sustenance, and occur thanks to the social relationships [...] in which reciprocity is an everyday practice. (CAMA TTITO ET AL., 1999, pp.152-153)

Though violent acts, such as fistfights, at rural village dances in the Algarve have not necessarily achieved a degree of ritual importance as in traditions such as Peru's *takanakuy*, that extreme example from South America prompts us to attempt to more fully understand the role of interpersonal conflict and its resolution within settings of popular ritual festivities in small communities. Publicly displayed interpersonal violence and rivalry, as opposed to an outlier behavior, can perhaps viewed as an integral part of traditional festive rituals (albeit within a relatively controlled setting with predetermined codes of honor). The public airing and resolution of these conflicts at these events could potentially be seen as conducive to maintaining inter-community relationships of cooperation and reciprocity, as they are in Peru's *takanakuy*, according to Cama Ttito Et Al.

Returning to the context of the Algarve, accordionist Francisco de Conceição, an ex-police officer, recalls laughingly, "back then, in every dance there was a fight [...] there were few dances that didn't have a fight, at four in the morning, more or less [...] a fight would always start".<sup>86</sup> Carlos Gonçalves concurs, "at the dances there were always fights, today that doesn't exist, people have a different culture and live differently. (Back then) a dance that didn't have a fight wasn't a proper dance. [...] People would fight over girlfriends".<sup>87</sup> Miguel Pereira's testimony on the subject is similar, he recalls certain select community members in his area that were particularly adept and prone at starting fistfights at dances:

I remember that there was a guy in the area of Alta Mora [...] there was not a dance in that area that he didn't attend, but he would always start fights, it's true. It seemed that he really enjoyed getting involved in fistfights. He would always start trouble., there are people like that. (Back then, the fights weren't with knives or guns) just fisticuffs.<sup>88</sup>

Across world cultures, another traditional way of expressing and resolving conflict or engaging in ritual public "agonistic play", as Huizinga would say, is verbal sparring between two adversarial parties, often in poetic form occasionally accompanied by music and conducted within a larger festive ritual context. Beyond the realm of *homo sapiens*, ritualized physical and sonic "play" between antagonists can be found throughout the animal world. (TANGHE, 2016) Huizinga writes:

[...] all the basic factors of play, both individual and communal, are already present in animal life – to wit, contests, performances, exhibitions, challenges, preenings, struttings and showings-off, pretences and binding rules. (HUIZINGA, 1980, p.47)

Huizinga, in his 1938 work *Homo Ludens*, links play to the realm of ritual, and affords it great significance in human society. The author states, "archaic ritual is thus sacred play, indispensable for the well-being of the community, fecund of cosmic insight and social development". (HUIZINGA, 1980, p.25) He emphasizes that play as a ritual, encapsulated in traditional festivities, occurs within set physical and temporal boundaries – the "playgrounds" – which he describes as, "[...] temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the

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<sup>86</sup> Francisco Conceição, Interview, 2020, Tavira

<sup>87</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2019, Tavira

<sup>88</sup> Miguel Pereira, Interview, 2019, Castro Marim



performance of an act part". (Ibid., p.10) Agonistic play where there is a "winner", so appreciated by the ancient Greeks, also forms part of festive rituals, however, Huizinga clarifies:

[...] the competitive "instinct" is not in the first place a desire for power or a will to dominate. The primary thing is the desire to excel others, to be the first and to be honoured for that. (HUIZINGA, 1980, p.50)

Concerning verbal sparring as ritual play, Huizinga (1980, pp.68-69) cites barbed, agonistic sung poetry present in ancient Arabic, Greek and Germanic festive ritual traditions. He also cites numerous world traditions of improvised poetic duels, such as practiced in Malaysia, China, and Indonesia, with an infinite variety of culturally-specific poetic forms and metrical structures, puns, biting ironic humor, musical accompaniments, etc. (Ibid., p.123) In festive traditions, such as social dances as examined in this thesis, that involve inter-locking social occurrences such as interpersonal conflict, commensality and mingling of the sexes, the words of Huizinga are pertinent when he states, "[...] both conflict and love imply rivalry or competition, and competition implies play". (Ibid., p.133) Hence, in the Iberian Peninsula, historically, this festive ritual agonistic play of rivals often takes improvised poetic-musical form, whether it be between two male antagonists or between a man and a woman, in the latter case often with suggestive undertones.

Conceição and Vargues affirm the traditional importance of poetic duels with very particular rules ("*cantar ao despique*") in the festive events of the recent past in Bordeira, Santa Bárbara de Nexe in the Algarve, naming renowned improvisers: Antônio Aleixo, Antônio Madeirinha, Clementino Barreta, Zé Campeão, and others (this topic is tackled more thoroughly later in this chapter). Conceição explains:

What was *cantar ao despique*? It was in quatrain form, with crossed rhyme, and because it is sung, the metrics have to be accurate, it has to be normally within seven syllables, it has to fit. [...] when the other person responds it has to rhyme with the last phrase that the last person sang. The rhymes are always crossed. Even more with high-level poets, the bar was set high. The bar was set really high back then, the improvisers were really good. So, here in Bordeira, in my opinion, the bar was always set high, there were always great poets and improvisers.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Nelson Conceição, Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro

While Machado Guerreiro (1981, p.61) sustains that "*cantar ao despique*" refers to a very specific variety of ludic poetic duel that is found in Baixo Alentejo and the Algarve, Nogueira (2007, p.4) prefers to apply the term to refer to the varied poetic duel traditions found in Portugal (the peninsula, Açores and Madeira) which are also popularly referred to as "*cantar ao desafio*", "*desgarrada*", etc. Romeu (1948) notes the prevalence of these styles of poetic duels in the Romance-speaking countries of Europe, and sustains that the tradition's common root is found in pastoral Amoebaean improvised poetic duels in Ancient Greece. Nogueira (2007, p.3), on the other hand, attributes the formation of the improvised poetic duel, as it is known today, to medieval troubadours and minstrels. He sustains that the key elements of today's traditions were stabilized in that period, which are:

[...] a dialogic poem that is born of the encounter, empirical or fictitious, of two poets that spar with their inventive, creative, and emotional capacities, that boast and reciprocally provoke each other, and challenge each other, almost always in front of an audience. [...] (NOGUEIRA, 2007, p.3)

Though often conducted in an environment of "play" antagonism, the inherent conflictive nature of *cantares ao desafio*, and other kinds of poetic duel traditions, gives birth to moments of provocation and resolution of social tension. According to Nogueira:

The harmonious finish (of a poetic duel), will be - except for cases in which the duel, inversely, ignites moments of bodily violence - an abundance of lasting and sincere peace, at least mutual understanding, which is conducive towards an individual or collective exorcism. (NOGUEIRA, 2007, p.7)

Sardinha (2001) emphasizes the importance of *cantares ao despique* in the ethno-cultural context of the rural interior of Alentejo and the Algarve, often accompanied by the archaic *viola campaniça*. Though a duel between two individuals, Nogueira expounds on what significance the phenomenon of *cantares ao desafio* has held for local Portuguese communities where it is practiced:

As a form of symbolic production, the *desafio* is then a privileged form of commitment by the singers in the practice of social life; singers that, in their role as strategic agents, in reflecting upon and discussing paradigms according to which the group should adhere, in telling stories, allegories, fortuitous or fateful happenings, they confer cognitive and emotional cohesion to the collective and personal life experience, edifying communal and individual identity. (NOGUEIRA, 2007, p.12)

In these examples we have seen how interpersonal conflict (whether real or agonistic "play") has expressed itself within festive ritual contexts in rural Algarve. Whether coming to physical blows or simply heated, improvised poetic duels set to music (as seen in *chacarrá* in Cádiz in the last chapter), the intended end result is a reconciled, harmonious relationship between community members, cultural identity affirmation and strengthening of reciprocal social bonds between members of the group.

In tandem to being scenarios of interpersonal conflicts and *despiques*, dances in the Algarve's interior occasionally have also been scenarios of commensality. Carlos Gonçalves<sup>90</sup> remembers, "My father told me that (in his day) there were (meals at dances). At the end of the dances, in a certain period, they would serve food. My dad called it a "*finta*", but in my day I never saw that (practice)". Miguel Pereira (2019) also recalls that at the all-night dances where he performed, "normally, in almost all the rural communities, there was always food offered to the accordionist and others at two or three in the morning. In almost all rural communities (where I played) they offered food". Francisco Conceição (2020) also recalls this practice. The author of this thesis observed commensal offerings of drink and food at the tail end of a traditionalist dance documented by him in December of 2019 in the *Associação Entre Barragens* in Quebradas, rural interior of Castro Marim, where Francisco Conceição's ensemble, *Mato Bravo*, performed. The festive practice of conviviality and commensality will be examined more in depth in the following section of this chapter.

Much in the same fashion as described by Alfonso Alba (2019) in *fiestas* of *chacarrá*, in that young couples were formed and entire multi-generational families attended, as far as the role that these dances played in the social reproduction of small communities in the Algarve, José Aniceto summarizes, utilizing the example of Bordeira, where he grew up:

Because the people were isolated there (in Bordeira), at work and at home, the social dance was a moment of conviviality, generally it was on a Sunday or on festive days. [...] Dances were precisely that, young people (would go) and form couples that led to romance and marriage. It was a way for people to share together. Young people, and older people too, the mothers and fathers would go with their kids and would

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<sup>90</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2019, Tavira

share together in the dances. It was a way for people to see each other and show off a new dress or a new suit [...] to show and say, "I worked hard and this is the product of my effort". [...] In those days, what was most lacking were clothes. [...] It was a different day, it was a day of conviviality, festivity, and happiness. [...] Back then, people practically never left the towns where they lived. There was no transport, you had to go on foot. [...] People moved within a certain radius.<sup>91</sup>

In regards to the aesthetic and artistic characteristics of traditional social dances in small communities of the interior of the Algarve, insights were gained by the author of this thesis in his documentation in December of 2019 of a rural social dance held at the *Associação Entre Barragens* in Quebradas, rural interior of Odeleite, Castro Marim, a weekly occurrence held on Saturdays and attended by local residents from the surrounding small communities and isolated rural dwellings. (Figure 51) (Figure 52) (Figure 53) The characteristics of the dance event were in line with what various informants in the Algarve revealed about traditional-style social dances in the region, a practice that culminated roughly towards the end of the 20th century, however is still maintained in specific events such as that occurring at *Associação Entre Barragens*, whose producers and participants refuse to employ electronic amplification of the live dance music to preserve the sonic aesthetics of traditional dances and to be able to converse amongst themselves during the dance event.



Figure 51 – Dance at *Associação Entre Barragens* in Quebradas, Castro Marim, December 7th, 2019

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<sup>91</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 52 – Exterior of *Associação Entre Barragens* in Quebradas, Castro Marim, December 7th, 2019

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 53 – Village of Odeleite (Castro Marim, 2019)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

This next section will attempt to give the reader an idea of what occurred at that dance on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in Quebradas (as experienced by the author of this thesis), combined with memories of traditional dances of the past, as related by informants for this thesis, in their majority, chromatic accordionists who performed regularly at such dances in the Algarve's interior. This will be carried out for the reader to get a general sense of the dynamics and aesthetics of this

particular social dance tradition from the Algarve, and to more easily compare – at the end of this thesis - the various traditions examined in this academic work, from both sides of the Atlantic. Firstly, the chromatic accordion-based musical aesthetics and repertoire are the first elements that characterize this particular social dance tradition in question.<sup>92</sup>

The ensemble "*Mato Bravo*" (composed of two chromatic accordions, six-stringed guitar, and percussion - "*tabuinhas*"<sup>93</sup> and "*ferrinhos*") (Figure 54) (Figure 55), was hired to perform at the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019 event. They performed an eclectic mix (representative of this style of regional social dance event, as mentioned anteriorly in this thesis) of 19<sup>th</sup> century European salon dance genres (polka, waltz, etc.), locally-created adaptations of those same genres (such as *corridinho* and *marcadinha*), as well as modern popular urban genres from Portugal and other nations: *fado*, *marchinha*, *passodoble*, foxtrot and *tango*.

According to ensemble leader, Francisco Conceição, "(*Mato Bravo*) is a group that is mainly based on old music, the oldest possible [...] *marchas*, *tangos*, *fox*, *corridinhos* from the 1960's and 70's, we play a *marcadinha* that is over 100 years old" and he explains that the choice of that repertoire was to differentiate the ensemble from the myriad of musical groups performing at dances that play solely "modern" music.<sup>94</sup> The purely acoustic musical aesthetics of the ensemble's performance is representative of this social dance tradition, according to various informants, executed in acoustic, non-electric environments almost exclusively with chromatic accordion and percussion (*ferrinhos*).

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<sup>92</sup> A video of the dance, which culminated in a rousing rendition of Zé Ferreiro Pai's emblematic composition "*Alma Algarvia*" can be found here: <https://youtu.be/voPgvWDZMFE>

<sup>93</sup> *Tabuinhas* are small blocks placed between the fingers and played as an idiophone percussion instrument, similar in practice and sonority as *castanholas* (castanets)

<sup>94</sup> Francisco Conceição, Interview, 2020, Tavira



Figure 54 – "*Tabuinhas*" being played by the group *Mato Bravo*, December 7th, 2019

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 55 - "*Ferrinhos*" being played by guest performer with the group *Mato Bravo*, December 7th, 2019

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Accordionist Francisco "*Ervilha*" Moreira (b.1948) from Estói, Faro, owner of the important music store "Dó Ré Mi" in Faro (since 1976) and accomplished accompanist as well as interpreter of diverse musical genres, recalls the repertoire in the dance events (both urban and in the interior) in which he performed, with his group "*Os Bonanzas*" and other ensembles (Figure 56):

(The repertoire) was what everybody liked: *marchinhas* [...] *corridinho* was more for folklore, and wasn't danced much, however back in the day it was. [...] What people always wanted were: *tango*, *bolero*,

*passodoble, marchinhas, marchas de Lisboa, marchas populares*, the melodies that were most listened to at that time [...]<sup>95</sup>

Moreira also recalls how he and his musical colleagues acquired repertoire to keep abreast of the public's taste at the dance events where they performed.

The foreigners that would come here every year, would almost always bring books of sheet music that they liked, and they would offer me the books. [...] When new music would come out, we would learn it by ear via the radio [...] French music: *musette*, English music, those little English waltzes, lots of Italian and Spanish music, we played a little bit of everything. [...] Argentine music, we played a lot of *tangos*.<sup>96</sup>



Figure 56 – Francisco "Ervilha" Moreira, Faro, 2019

Photo: José A. Curbelo

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<sup>95</sup> Francisco Moreira, Interview, 2019, Faro

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.





Figure 57 – Interior of the store *Dó Ré Mi*, Faro

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Likewise, though he and his grandfather acquired their repertoire on the chromatic accordion by ear, Carlos Gonçalves's father learned to read music and was able to acquire his dance repertoire via popular sheet music publications. Per Gonçalves:

There weren't any local radio stations like there are now. [...] When new music would come out, it would arrive by mail. My dad received the sheet music. Now, my dad owns a lot of old sheet music. [...] Things that were heard in the past. Nowadays, new music comes out, but it doesn't stick in your ear like back then. Back then, it did, and we would whistle the songs and sing them. [...] Sheet music would arrive from Lisboa. [...] It was music of the moment, and he evolved performing that music that was in vogue in that moment: *marchas*, *valsas*, *tangos*, all that.<sup>97</sup>

In contrast, Miguel Pereira's father, Francisco Venâncio Pereira learned chromatic accordion by ear, as did Miguel. Per Miguel (2019) his father's repertoire consisted of:

[...] the little melodies that the local people knew, popular music [...] People would dance *marchina*, *tango*, what we call foxtrot, which is like a quicker *fado*, and it was more or less that. When I got my start, people in Furnazinhas<sup>98</sup> still danced *marcadinha*, which is a waltz where there is a slow part where people did movements with their feet – not everybody knew how to dance *marcadinha* – and then there was a faster part where people would dance around the dancefloor.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2020, Tavira

<sup>98</sup> Furnazinhas is a rural village in the interior of Castro Marim.

<sup>99</sup> Miguel Pereira, Interview, 2019, Castro Marim

As evidenced by the testimonies of the informants for this thesis, as well as that which was observed at the dance in Quebradas, the musical repertoire for traditional social dances animated by accordion in Algarve's interior during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (and continuing in some instances, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century) has been eclectic. Not only employing traditional regional rhythms and dance styles as well as regional adaptations of 19<sup>th</sup> century European salon couple dance genres, these traditional dance events have also stayed connected to the latest urban, international (inter-European and trans-Atlantic) song and couple dance genres - "*mesomusic*" as Argentina musicologist Carlos Vega (1979) would call them. Not solely transmitted by oral transmission, the dance melodies employed in these dance events have been learned via *mediatized transmission* utilizing radio and recordings, as well as commercially-published sheet music. (FORNARO, 1994; ONG, 2002; ZUMTHOR, 1985)

Whatever the evolving repertoire included, the centrality of the chromatic accordion in providing ludic social interaction and entertainment to isolated rural communities in the Algarve's interior was a constant throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to music professor and accordionist João Pereira:

Older people have a special admiration for the instrument, because the chromatic accordion really was the only instrument, here in our region, that was an aggregator, it was a big social component in the socialization of groups. It was the only instrument, and wherever the accordionist was, where there were few resources for people to get around [...] there were no automobiles. When an accordionist came, he was like a god. He had a very important role, that's why for an older person, it's like going back to their youth [...]<sup>100</sup>

Pereira's affirmation was evidenced in those in attendance at the dance in Quebradas, attended primarily by couples of senior citizens, many who danced, others who simply observed (at times bothered by the invasive presence of a two-meter tall audiovisual apparatus-toting investigator, taking up space in the crowded and cramped quarters of the *Associação Entre Barragens*). According to Francisco Augusto Caimoto Amaral, physician and president of the Municipal Chamber of Castro Marim, who was in attendance at the dance, he extolls the virtues of this style of social dance for the health benefits of his senior citizen constituents: simultaneously serving as social interaction, anti-depressant,

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<sup>100</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2020, Castro Marim

aerobic exercise, etc. (Personal conversation, 2020) Also, João Pereira, who in addition to music professor and accordionist is also the president of the parish ("*freguesia*")<sup>101</sup> council of Odeleite, expressed his concern for the well-being of his senior citizen constituents who are increasingly becoming more isolated and aged, as younger generations tend to move to the city. (Personal conversation, 2020)

Originally, the tradition of accordion performance in the Algarve was primarily transmitted orally from one generation to the next within families. (CAMPOS INÁCIO, 2016, p.30) A quintessential example of this phenomenon is the case of the Pereira family from the rural areas of the border municipality of Castro Marim. The accordion tradition in the family begins with Francisco Venâncio Pereira (b.1921) in the rural locale of Fonte do Penedo (just a few kilometers from the fluvial border between Portugal and Spain along the Guadiana River) (Figure 58). Having learned to play by ear, he performed dances in the *Sotavento algarvio*<sup>102</sup> and Baixo Alentejo. (CAMPOS INÁCIO, 2016, p.84) At times he would play dances with his son, accordionist Miguel Pereira (b.1949), also born in Fonte do Penedo, alternating so that neither would tire out during the night.<sup>103</sup> Miguel's son, João Pereira (b.1976) complemented the methods of playing by ear and self-training - as practiced by his father and grandfather - with a formal musical education, eventually studying at the Conservatory in the city of Faro.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *Freguesia* is an administrative sub-division in Portugal

<sup>102</sup> The eastern half of Algarve.

<sup>103</sup> Miguel Pereira, Interview, 2019, Fonte do Penedo

<sup>104</sup> João Pereira, Interview, Interview, Castro Marim



Figure 58 - Francisco Venâncio Pereira

Source: Pereira Family archive

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, without losing its original essence, the chromatic accordion tradition of the Algarve expanded from its roots as accompaniment of regional social dances and popular culture festive traditions to include the phenomenon of formally-trained concert soloists interpreting advanced classical and international repertoire (as well as repertoire from the Algarve) in the context of global competition circuits. This came to be through the continuation of the trans-generational accordion lineage of the Algarve through the successful and widely-publicized professional careers of influential Portuguese accordionists, such as Eugenia Lima (1926-2014) (Figure 59), as well as the engaged and committed work of educators who have formed the newest generations of accordionists, and organized new public venues to showcase them, as this tradition moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All this has contributed to consolidate the chromatic accordion as a cultural symbol of the Algarve, an identity projected abroad, but also held by many people from, and with roots in, the Algarve.



Figure 59 – Eugenia Lima

Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/xjHVtdRVzMkpYYn46>

Due to the Algarvian migratory diaspora, accordionists from the region have also enjoyed global mobility in their artistic careers (Canada, United States, Argentina, Angola, France, Brazil, etc.), performing wherever migratory communities have organized themselves and seek to reconnect and strengthen emotional ties of Identity and Memory with their places of origin through cultural symbols that represent them – in this case, the chromatic accordion (and the socializing practices centered around it).

One of the world regions with collectivities of Portuguese emigrants and Luso-descendants is the River Plate. Though the Portuguese presence in the River Plate region dates from the colonial period, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century a new wave of Portuguese emigrants began to arrive. (CARREIRAS ET AL., 2007) By the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, emigrants from the Algarve (eschewing the traditional Portuguese migration destination of Brazil) made up the most significant segment of Portuguese migrants in Argentina, a primary destination for European migration in that period. (BORGES, 2009, p.11)

Attracted by relatively higher wage levels, and amplified as personal, family, and village networks were established in the new country, Algarvian

emigration to Argentina in the 20<sup>th</sup> century left a mark on the communities of origin back home. Referred to as "*terra dos esquecidos*" (Land of the Forgotten) in reference to the amount of emigrants that eventually did not return to the Algarve, Argentina (especially Buenos Aires and Comodoro Rivadavia) is the home of Algarvian emigrant collectivities that, nonetheless, have maintained affective ties with their local communities of origin. Researcher Marcelo Borges (2009, p.20) states, "Migration was firmly rooted in the local ground. More than a national phenomenon, the move of tens of thousands of Portuguese migrants to Argentina originated in, and achieved full meaning, at the level of the *aldeia* (village)".

José Manuel Aniceto (b.1953), from the village of Bordeira (Santa Bárbara de Nexe), who grew up listening to stories of Argentina and Brazil from his uncles who had emigrated there as young men in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and returned to Portugal, illustrates the above-described dynamics in his description of the type of diasporic family and community relations that has culturally bound together far-flung migrant populations, in this case, in the River Plate region:

I have an aunt in Argentina. I have an aunt and first cousins in Argentina, they never returned. They created lives for themselves there, far away, they went away for good. However, they remain connected to Bordeira to this day. For example, my cousins are involved with an association in Buenos Aires, Argentina, a Portuguese association, they have a *rancho folclórico*. Sometimes they bring accordionists [...], many accordionists from Portugal [...] These emigrant associations stay connected to their village, their home, their families, and from there they foment international tours of these artists, Portuguese artists, and from Bordeira. From Bordeira they primarily bring accordionists. Bordeira has always had good accordionists, and still does.<sup>105</sup>

The collective work of Algarvian professional accordionists and educators, many with international careers, gave fruit in 2012 with the creation of the group *Mito Algarvio – Associação de Acordeonistas do Algarve* in Castro Marim. Founded by important artists and teachers from the region, *Mito Algarvio* is dedicated to imparting instruction, organizing regular showcases and galas, as well as collaborating on an international level – in representation of Portugal – in the activities of *Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes*, part of the International Music Council, which is a consultative body of UNESCO.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

<sup>106</sup> A 2019 video of Pereira teaching students at *Mito Algarvio*'s space in Altura, Castro Marim can be found here: <https://youtu.be/gg98A7UkGcM>

Accordionist and educator João Pereira, member of *Mito Algarvio*, describes how his experience teaching students (several of whom go on to compete internationally) stems from his background of inter-generational transmission within a family structure, so common in the Algarvian accordion tradition (Figure 60):

Music was the bond that united the family. Any family gathering began and ended with music. In my family environment, I was born surrounded by accordion music, because of my dad, because of my grandpa. [...] Music has a social factor [...] music enables you to develop capacities that other activities don't. [...] Music transmits many things [...] I believe it plays a fundamental role on a psychological level (for students).<sup>107</sup>



Figure 60 – João Pereira giving classes at *Mito Algarvio* (Altura, Castro Marim, 2019)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Pereira goes on to describe his work as an accordion educator in the Algarve, most specifically within the context of the border region with Spain and the juxtaposition of Andalusian and Algarvian cultures:

I have taught an innumerable number of students, even Spanish students. Just recently, there is interest (in the accordion) in Andalusia, it used to be little known in Spain, they just had the guitar. [...] Here in southern Spain there isn't an accordion culture. Here we live in a region of Portugal where the accordion is most popular, but if you cross the border there is no vestige of the accordion, only guitar is what was played. The difference between Spanish and Portuguese students is curious, it is much easier for the Portuguese students because they form part of the culture, they have more familiarity with the instrument. [...] Its easier for them than the southern Spanish students. (Portuguese students) were born into this culture and they (Spanish students), no, they were born into a culture different from ours. They have a completely different style.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2020, Castro Marim

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

Reinforcing the chromatic accordion's status as an internationally-recognized emblem of the Algarve, a conception that has been projected at least since the 1930's, Pereira identifies the factors that distinguish Algarvian accordionists:

It is in the Algarve where the (accordion) tradition is strongest in Portugal, where the accordion has wider projection. It is easy to distinguish the style of an Algarvian accordionist from that of an accordionist from another region. Here, Algarvian accordionists have a unique soul that other regions don't have. Here there is sweetness, and flavor [...] perhaps because of the great cultural exchange that we have in the Algarve with people from other countries, maybe all that contributed to this, to what we call "*Alma Algarvia*" (Algarvian Soul).<sup>109</sup>

Though not officially declared as Cultural Heritage<sup>110</sup> by the Portuguese Government's *Direção-Geral do Património Cultural* nor as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO (unlike other Portuguese traditional expressions such as *Fado* or polyphonic singing from Alentejo)<sup>111</sup>, the accordion tradition in the Algarve – most specifically that of the accordion epicenter, Bordeira, a village within the parish ("*freguesia*") of Santa Bárbara de Nexe near Faro, the district capital – is considered intangible cultural heritage by the consortium of regional museums: *Rede de Museus do Algarve*, through its working group dedicated to Intangible Cultural Heritage (RMA-PCI).<sup>112</sup> Being the subject of a 2012 exhibition at the *Museu Municipal de Faro*, the chromatic accordion tradition of Bordeira has produced many notable accordionists, composers, and educators that have been widely influential in the Algarve, Portugal and internationally.<sup>113</sup>

The popular musical and dance expressions of the Algarve have been employed by public authorities to represent the region and the nation at least since the 1930's, a period when Salazar's *Estado Novo* followed nationalist tendencies in vogue in Europe and the Americas in creating its own conceptions of Cultural Heritage and Folklore and the processes of their investigation, usage, and projection in the legitimation and perpetuation of the regime's corporatist, authoritarian vision. (MARQUES ALVES, 2010, p.191; RAIMUNDO, 2015, p.184;

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> "*Património Cultural*" in Portuguese

<sup>111</sup> <https://unescoportugal.mne.gov.pt/pt/temas/proteger-o-nosso-patrimonio-e-promover-a-criatividade/patrimonio-cultural-imaterial-em-portugal>

<sup>112</sup> <https://algarveimaterial.wordpress.com/acordeao-da-bordeira/>

<sup>113</sup> [https://cms.cm-faro.pt/upload\\_files/client\\_id\\_1/website\\_id\\_1/museu/A%20tradicao%20do%20acordeao%20em%20Bordeira.pdf](https://cms.cm-faro.pt/upload_files/client_id_1/website_id_1/museu/A%20tradicao%20do%20acordeao%20em%20Bordeira.pdf)



SARDINHA, 2001, p.18) Though the phenomenon predates the *Estado Novo* (1933-1974), the organization and performance of Portuguese traditional music and dance troupes: "*ranchos folclóricos*" was actively supported by Salazar's government throughout the regime. (EL-SHAWAN CASTELO BRANCO & FREITAS BRANCO, 2003).

Serving to mobilize the populace of the nation's rural interior (Ibid., p.9), the process of "folklorization" and its projection of "national identity" was primarily directed at Portugal's middle and upper classes, as well as the nation's foreign peers within the international sphere. (MARQUES ALVES, 2010, p.190) Under the *Estado Novo*, this movement projected an image of a pacific, rural nation, lacking any class conflicts, content with the nationalist authoritarian regime imposed on it. Sardinha summarizes:

What the *Estado Novo* did in relation to the so-called folkloric movement was, in general, what 20<sup>th</sup> century European authoritarian regimes did: appropriate or emphasize the aspects of nationalist or patriotic character that could be transported by *ranchos folclóricos* as portrayers of a mythical, rural purity or of a certain ethnic national identity. (SARDINHA, 2001, p.18)

This portrayal also was crafted to influence the attraction of international tourism to Portugal, this dynamic being particularly relevant in the case of the Algarve, a meridional sun-drenched, littoral region. (SOUSA, 2003, p.8). In this light, many *ranchos folclóricos* and similar groups were sent abroad by the regime to perform in festivals, expositions, and other venues.

In the Algarve, the *Grupo Folclórico de Faro* was founded in 1930, which, at the time, had the participation of emblematic artists such as accordionist José Ferreiro Pai. (GUERREIRO, H., CONCEIÇÃO, N., 2014, p.22). Their acclaimed performances (and performances of related groups) at showcase events such as the 1932 *Exposição Industrial de Lisboa*, gained visibility for Algarvian cultural expressions, and the local musical and dance creation, *corridinho*, came to symbolize the region on national and international stages, a phenomenon that was perpetuated during the Salazar regime. (PEREIRA, 1997, p.94)

During the 1960's the use of the accordion and the practice of festive social dances animated by chromatic accordion in the Algarve began to go through a period of decline. (INÁCIO, 2016, p.32; PASCOAL SINTRA, 2016, p.35) Inácio (2016) cites various factors such as: increased emigration, deepening rural depopulation, the eruption of the Colonial War, and the gradual

domination of Anglo-American commercial popular music styles. Utilizing the perspectives of varying Portuguese researchers as well as testimonies of the informants for this thesis, this next section will explore various factors that have challenged the continuity of the traditional practice of social dances animated by chromatic accordion in the Algarve, notably: emigration and rural exodus, demographic and technological changes in rural areas, as well as electrification and socio-technological developments in the area of music.

However, the geopolitical backdrop to the occurrence of all these dynamics in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is the longest-lasting dictatorship in Western Europe, the over four-decade rule of António de Oliveira Salazar's *Estado Novo*, a regime that was extremely repressive in its censorship, insidiously and creatively co-optive in the realm of popular culture and civil society, persistent and iron-fisted in its colonial aspirations, as well as being a protagonist in instating policies that created relatively dynamic growth in some sectors and regions, while simultaneously relegating others to stagnation. The consequences of this period of Portuguese history are still felt today, especially in the lived memories of those who witnessed it first-hand.

Much like in Francoist Spain, the post-World War Two decades of the 1950's and 1960's were transitional decades for Portugal, who had been under military dictatorship since 1926, and under Salazar since 1933. This period marked the mid-way point between the early and late periods of the Franco and Salazar regimes, and was characterized by the simultaneous processes of modernization, industrialization, rural exodus, and emigration.

Incentivized, in centuries past, as a method to exert effective control of national territory and distribute population throughout the interior, while increasing food stocks, Portuguese small farming in its interior had remained relatively archaic and of low productivity in comparison with other European neighbors. (AMARAL, 1994, p.889; SILVA, 1999, p.12; VAN MELLE, 2015, p.7) This was compounded by low levels of industrialization in the country, accompanied by historically rampant and endemic illiteracy. (MÓNICA, 1977)

To illustrate, accordionist Carlos Gonçalves recalls that in the 1960's in his region of the Algarve:

Here, everybody worked in the country, people planted wheat [...], oats, barley, rye, corn. People made a living from the land, back then they

didn't have employment, not like now. There weren't possibilities to study, like there are now. (GONÇALVES, 2019)

With the advent of the Salazar regime, the apparatus of the *Estado Novo* became subject to the pressures of certain powerful sectorial interests, such as large landowners, and incipient industrial interests. (AMARAL, 1994; SILVA, 1999) Regarding the process of melding old elites in to the *Estado Novo* power structures, Almeida describes:

(Historically in Portugal) local elites were an important group who maintained power in areas where central government could not reach. With the New State a huge centralized government tried to control every aspect of daily life, using corporative institutions for every section of the economy and society. The military, industrialists, landowners and bankers benefited from state protectionism, as well as local elites. And they were all put in charge of each sector's main corporative institutions, created to control industry, agriculture, and social services [...] Local elites simply took control of all the new institutions, just as they already controlled local economy and society [...] (ALMEIDA, 2018, pp.03-04)

Much like in Spain, with the rise of processes of industrialization throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Portugal's major urban centers on the coast, such as Lisboa and Porto, and the increasing stagnation of living conditions and economic prospects in the nation's rural interior, a massive phenomenon of rural to urban migration has taken place, a phenomenon that was not attenuated in post-1974 governments, and is currently an endemic structural reality of Portuguese society and economy. (ALMEIDA, 2018, p.02) To illustrate, Carvalho (2018, p.3) estimates that, currently, roughly 2% of Portuguese cities house 60% of the nation's population, with dense concentrations around Lisboa and Porto.

This process of "rural exodus" is global and has long been a feature of the Modern world. In the Algarve, rural exodus has taken the form of migration to major urban centers such as the area around Lisboa, but also to the Algarve's developed littoral zone, a geography economically involved in the global tourism industry that was fomented and boomed in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This internal migration has left the region with a relatively aged, sparse population in its rural interior, much like the rest of rural Portugal, a dynamic that eventually leads to the decline of human presence in determined geographies, with gradual atrophy of State-provided services and social and economic capital. (CARVALHO, 2018, p.2; SOUSA, 2007, p.104) This, without a doubt, has impacted the continuity, and intergenerational oral transmission, of the interior of

the Algarve's regional festive ritual traditions, such as social dances animated with accordion.

On this topic, Miguel Pereira observes on his locality in the interior of Castro Marim:

The future of the accordion, in relation to dances, [...] here in the region, there isn't much. In my day, any old village, no matter how small it was, just among the inhabitants, they would hold dances. There would be 10 or 12 young women in any small village. [...] (Nowadays) there are few young people here. All the young people leave here and go work in the hotels, there are no jobs here. [...] If there are no jobs, you have to make a living somewhere. That's life.<sup>114</sup>

Carlos Gonçalves concurs, regarding his experience in the interior of Tavira:

(There are) much fewer people living here in the rural area than before. The youth all move to the city, they move to Faro. Some, who still have family out in the country, visit on the weekends.<sup>115</sup>

These two informants' commentaries illustrate the processes that Duarte de Sousa (2007) described in her analysis of rural to urban migration of young people (sometimes returning periodically, such as on weekends, or sometimes migrating permanently) of a small locality in the interior of Tavira. Acknowledging the interpenetration of both the rural "traditional" and urban "modern" universes within small communities, and conceiving of rural exodus as an expression of economic globalization whose migrant protagonists are largely composed of young people of working and reproductive age, she highlights that a beacon light of the magnetic attraction of rural to urban migration is partly due to "the narcissistic imaginary of cities or urban spaces" perceived by young people. (SOUSA, 2007, p.102) She also goes on to emphasize that "young people are the emblematic group of urban cultures" (Ibid., p.108) a concept also presented by Guerra (2010).

Alves, employing the example of electrification – a theme to which we will return later in this section – also descriptively illustrates this "magnetic" attraction of the city that serves as the "pull" factor in the process of rural to urban exodus:

The urban area, with electrification, extends the day, maintaining light after dark, but the countryside is rapidly engulfed in the black and uncertain fluidity of the deep night, since electricity has been slow to arrive and the pitch black of the night is not broken by oil lanterns (later, kerosene), whose flickering light barely creates penumbras apt for

<sup>114</sup> Miguel Pereira, Interview, 2019, Fonte do Penedo

<sup>115</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, 2019, Interview, Tavira

meditation and the suspicious movement of shadows. Here stems the fascination with the city, that metaphorically represents the brightness of progress, while the countryside continues to interact with reality from behind a dark veil that is hard to pull away. (ALVES, 1999, p.3)

Rural to urban exodus can also often be the precursor to emigration abroad. As previously mentioned, Portugal, for centuries, has been a nation of emigrants, and the cyclical processes of emigration have profoundly shaped the country's political economy, culture and worldview. In the Algarve, small property-owning subsistence farmers, and other proletarian social segments had traditionally engaged in seasonal labor migration within the Iberian Peninsula (Alentejo, Andalusia, Gibraltar, etc.) finding employment in diverse sectors such as grain harvesting, cork extraction, fishing (sardines, tuna, etc.), maritime trades, and mining to supplement their domestic household earnings. These experiences later translated into trans-Atlantic emigration processes, primarily to Argentina (as opposed to Brazil, which was traditionally the preferred destination for most Portuguese, primarily those from the North), in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and, beginning in the 1950's, these migrant flows became directed at renascent post-World War II industrialized Western Europe, primarily to France. (BORGES, 2000)

Baganha (1994, p.960) sustains that, between 1900 and 1988, 3.5 million Portuguese emigrants left the country, many within the tumultuous final period of the *Estado Novo*: 1966-1973. Additionally, Cepeda (1995, p.25) estimates that, between 1950 and 1990, 1.5 million Portuguese emigrants, of various places of origin, left for France. This emigration was primarily motivated by economic necessity, but, also, in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, political concerns and avoidance of military conscription were also motivating factors.

Salazar's *Estado Novo* sought to breed a governing technocratic and doctrinally-obedient elite to govern the State and saw public education primarily as a political and religious indoctrination tool, as opposed to technical and academic preparation, for subaltern social classes. Hence, Portugal's historically high levels of illiteracy were maintained during the regime, a phenomenon that the *Estado Novo* viewed as a deterrent to the propagation of divergent ideologies, and as a method to maintain an apolitical, passive rural proletariat. (LEEDS, 1983, p.1050; MÓNICA, 1977)

The regime's industrialization measures in the mid-20th century (occurring much later than other Western European economies), primarily within the radius of Lisboa - which attracted migrants from the rural interior - based on abundant, cheap, non-specialized labor (with no right to independent labor union activities under the State's corporatist system) sought to attempt modernization without creating a combative class of industrial workers nor provoking inflation. (LEEDS, 1983)

The vast gulf between wages in Portugal versus developed industrialized Western European economies such as France and Germany assisted in prompting millions of Portuguese to emigrate, both legally and clandestinely. As in the past (such as in the era of Portuguese migration to Brazil), the remittances sent home by these migrants in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's proved to be significant in both the household economies of their relatives back home as well as the Portuguese economy as a whole, illustrating Foucault's (1979, p.403) statement that "*homo oeconomicus* and civil society are two inseparable elements". Leeds summarizes the Salazar regime's role in exacerbating Portugal's migratory phenomenon in this period:

[...] the reality was that emigration was a result of the regime's economic policies, most specifically its wage policies – for a period of almost fifty years. When the impacts of the Colonial War and industrial modernization began to be made evident in the 1960's, most visibly in growing inflation, the working class was the sector that was forced to absorb and withstand those effects. It bore the brunt of low salaries, denied any revindication mechanisms, and resisted by sending remittances from abroad. Beyond the humanitarian concerns, the remittances of emigrants gained ever-growing importance in the Portuguese economy. (LEEDS, 1983, p.1080)

On this topic, Miguel Pereira pessimistically observes about his locality in Castro Marim in the Algarve:

(A lot of people emigrated) from around here, and from the country as a whole. People are always trying to raise their standard of living. Our country was, is and will be (a country that produces emigrants). There doesn't seem to be a solution. For some, yes, for others, no. People emigrate all the time. [...] They've gone to France, Germany. I don't think there is any country in the world that doesn't have Portuguese emigrants. [...] But France and Germany are where there are more.<sup>116</sup>

Though emigration in the period of 1950's to the 1970's led to population loss in communities in the interior of the Algarve, impacting the continuity of

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<sup>116</sup> Miguel Pereira, Interview, 2019, Fonte do Penedo

festive ritual expressions such as social dances, conversely, these outward migratory flows carried the same festive ritual expressions into diaspora abroad. Such is the case of the family of accordionist Silvia Silva (Figure 61) that resides in the small town of Pechão.



Figure 61 – Silvia Silva (Olhão, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Silva's parents and grandparents were raised in the countryside and were involved in small-scale farming. Her father worked in civil construction and building trades and the family ended up emigrating to Paris, where she was born, most specifically in the peripheral neighborhood of Lafayette. Though the beginnings of her accordion education were not until she was thirteen years old, four years after the family returned to Portugal, she recalled that her family's enthusiasm for the accordion, stemming from their Algarvian rural upbringing, was clearly present in her childhood. According to her:

My dad always liked the accordion, but he never had an opportunity to study. [...] The social dances from back in my parent's younger days were animated solely with accordion, that's why they have a have had a such passion for that instrument.<sup>117</sup>

She recalls that as a young girl growing up in the Portuguese emigrant community in the region of Paris, her parents were avid dancers and frequenters of ludic activities, such as social dances, produced by members of the Portuguese diaspora. The family also habitually consumed Portuguese commercially-produced recorded music such as vinyl LP's and cassettes in their

<sup>117</sup> Silvia Silva, Interview, 2020, Olhão

domestic environment. She observes that her first contact with Portuguese traditional accordion playing was most likely at the events she attended in France with her parents as a young girl – an instrument she would later learn, upon the family's return to Portugal due to a grandparent's illness.<sup>118</sup> Silva reflects on the meaning that these festive ritual traditions (often animated by accordion), brought into diaspora by emigrants, had for the local Portuguese emigrant collectivity in Paris:

It was observable that it was necessary for them to get together in those events [...] there was a need for them to get together and listen and dance to Portuguese music, now and then [...] to be able to remember Portugal [...] (and maintain) union and a connection with their country of origin, because only in August is when people got vacation and could go visit. [...] They would come to Portugal in that period of time [...] it was a way to combat homesickness.<sup>119</sup>

Silva's testimony illustrates how rural festive ritual traditions can be made to circulate within diaspora (both abroad and in domestic industrialized urban centers), carried by migratory flows, where they acquire new meanings and resignifications for migrant communities. For emigrants, these festive ritual traditions, practiced far from home, can come to encapsulate a diverse array of simultaneous sentiments and qualities: homesickness, attachment to family and nation, cultivation of memories of a rural past, etc. As in the case of rural migrants from southern Cádiz examined in Chapter Three, the periodic return to migrants' rural locations of origin (during vacation periods allotted by industrialized firms in major urban areas) and participation in rural festive ritual expressions (in the case of Cádiz: *chacarrá*) have proven crucial for the cultural and emotional well-being of rural migrants (and their descendants) residing abroad or in domestic major urban centers.

Now we shift our focus to the task of attempting to identify and describe the effects that the spread of electrification and socio-technological developments in music had on the traditional practice of social dances animated with accordion in the interior of the Algarve in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly, we briefly outline the process of electrification that was experienced by Portugal in this period, with particular emphasis on the arrival (either late or non-existent) of electricity to the rural areas of the interior of the country, and in our case, the Algarve. Electricity

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.



was a largely a prerequisite for rural communities to be able to engage with, and be shaped by, technological developments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the areas of communications, mass media, popular recorded music, etc. The arrival of electricity to such locations normally has marked a "before and after" point for the sociocultural and artistic workings of small communities in the interior.

To begin, De Matos Et. Al. contextualize the drawn-out process of bringing electricity to Portuguese businesses and households:

Portugal was one of the nations that evidenced a large diversity in the electrification of its different regions. Though the main urban centers benefitted from public and private illumination since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the 1960's and 1970's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were many wide areas of the nation's interior that still awaited electrification. (DE MATOS ET.AL., 2017, p. 1)

Much of the electric power in Portugal in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was initially generated by private initiative to power specific, locally-situated industries in urbanized areas, with the energy surplus marketed to local municipal authorities for public illumination and to a small number of private consumers. (ALVES, 1999, p.3; DE MATOS ET. AL., 2017, p. 2-3) Electricity did not arrive to the urban capital of the Algarve, Faro, until 1911 where it powered public illumination and local industry. (CARREGA, 2019, p.60-61) Alves summarizes this period:

For a long time, the production of electric energy in Portugal was done mainly by consuming foreign coal or other energy sources from abroad. The micro-production and dispersion explained the lack of energy [...] the insufficiency of production impeded the installation of large industries that demanded large amounts of cheap electricity. Foreign capital owned the most productive power plants that supplied the cities of Lisboa and Porto [...] (ALVES, 1999, p.13)

Interests within the *Estado Novo* advocated for the creation of a single, connected, national electric grid; however, they doubted the real benefits of extending such a grid into remote, rural areas of the interior. The long-term effects of these policies relegated a great many small communities in the interior of Portugal to remain without electricity, even well into the democratic government post-1974. (ALVES, 1999, p.5; DE MATOS ET. AL., 2017)

The tumultuous context of World War Two - a conflict in which Portugal managed to remain officially neutral - elevated prohibitively the cost of foreign mineral inputs that the nation was dependent on for energy creation, such as British coal. (DE MATOS ET AL, 2017, p.8; HENRIQUES, 2003, p.1) This prompted the regime to pivot significantly to domestic hydro-electric projects to

achieve national energy self-sufficiency, relegating domestically-mined coal, of poor quality, for usage during periods of drought. (Ibid.) (ROLLO ET AL, 1996, p. 345) These numerous feats of hydro-electric engineering, subsequently constructed as the 20<sup>th</sup> Century tread its course, in the form of dams and reservoirs, brought industrial and civil construction activity into the nation's interior, crisscrossed by a myriad of waterways, transited and exploited by humanity, in varying fashions, for millennia. (HENRIQUES, 2003, p.3)

Accordionists Carlos Gonçalves<sup>120</sup> and Miguel Pereira<sup>121</sup> both recall that in the 1960's and 1970's electricity still had not arrived to their rural communities in the interior of the Algarve, with all nocturnal social, ludic activities - such as dances - illuminated solely by oil lamps, as described earlier in this text. Interviewed in 2019, Gonçalves remembers that in that period of the 1960's and 1970's in his region, both telephones and radios were also scarce:

Electricity arrived here 34 years ago (1985) (however) we had 2-volt batteries that we could have light with. When one battery would run out, you would use the other one, and charge up the first one, because in town they had electricity, and we charged it in a workshop there and brought it home. That's how we had light, and we didn't need to use oil lamps.<sup>122</sup>

Francisco Conceição (2020) also recalls about dances in the 1970's, "There was no electricity, but there were generators".<sup>123</sup>

Beginning in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Portuguese government initiated processes of modernization in industry, infrastructure, transport and communications, in attempting to keep up with the transformative technological revolutions occurring in certain countries of Western Europe as well as North America. By the 1880's the largely agrarian nation would possess train and telegraph systems, as well as a telephone network located in the urban capital, Lisboa. (ABREU, 2010, pp.217-218) This period, under a liberal government, also witnessed a growth and expansion of cultural institutions and the arts with impacts in music, theatre, literature, etc. (Ibid., p.224)

Phonograph technology arrived in Portugal in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and by the turn of the century, the pioneering Gramophone Company of London installed an affiliate firm in Lisboa: *Companhia Francesa do Gramofone*,

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<sup>120</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2019, Tavira

<sup>121</sup> Miguel Pereira, Interview, 2020, Castro Marim

<sup>122</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2019, Tavira

<sup>123</sup> Francisco Conceição, Interview, 2020, Tavira

commercializing both its patented gramophones and records. (Ibid., pp.226-227) British and United States firms came to have pre-eminence in this nascent market, with both foreign and nationally-produced records, however the turbulent first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Portugal with revolutions, political instability, World War One, epidemics, and endemic rural poverty hindered the flourishing of the national recorded music industry. (Ibid., pp.229-231) Abreu describes:

Within this social, economic and political context, one could not have hoped for a widespread commercialization of phonographs or recorded music. Only the most privileged groups, the urban upper and middle classes or the large rural landowners, had the means to access these technological and cultural novelties. (ABREU, 2010, p.231)

Born at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, radio communication technology was utilized by the belligerent parties of World War One, after which it greatly expanded as a method of mass communication. By 1925 Portugal already had its first radio station: *CT1AA – Rádio Portugal*, with others soon following. (FIGUEIREDO, 2019, pp.9-10) After an initial entrepreneurial flowering of private radio stations in Portugal, the authoritarian *Estado Novo* regime recognized the capacity of the novel medium of radio as an effective means of social and political indoctrination and control, and eventually squeezed out the private ventures to install, in the 1930's, a national radio oligopoly of state broadcasters, such as *Emissora Nacional*, as well as broadcasters of the Catholic Church supportive of Salazar: *Rádio Renascença*, and other broadcasters in line with the dictates of the regime: *Rádio Clube Português*. In this period, radio listenership was largely limited to urban areas, due to the lack of electricity in much of rural Portugal. (Ibid.)

Santos (2012) describes the conceptual bases on which the state-administered *Emissora Nacional* was founded, which reflected the far-reaching corporatist policies of the *Estado Novo* affecting civil society and culture, in its attempt to refashion a "new" Portuguese citizenry, breaking with the Republican past, in line with the regime's worldview (ROSAS, 2001):

The *Emissora Nacional*, since its creation, was based on two fundamental values: 1) Culture that was simultaneously elitist (in the sense of formation of ideological values of high culture) and popular (in the sense of reaching the masses); 2) Identification with political power, on which it was organizationally dependent. Political indoctrination programs (impact of the SNI (*Secretariado Nacional de Informação, Turismo e Cultura Popular*), on which the *Emissora Nacional* directly depended), folkloric and traditional (*fado*) music programs, talk

programs and radio theatre – these were some of the specific pillars of its programming. (SANTOS, 2012, p.2)

Pertaining to the realm of music, in the subsequent decades leading up to the transformative 1960's which saw the initial national reflexes of the global Anglo-American pop music "invasion" in Portugal - aside from other international music genres already consumed in Portugal - Guerra (2010, p.196) describes that "*música popular portuguesa (MPP)*" (Portuguese popular music), much of which had already been recorded, commercialized, and given airplay on the radio, consisted of: *fado*, *nacional-cançonetismo*, and folkloric music of different regions of Portugal (with "*canção de protesto*" – protest music – eventually emerging in academic and artistic spheres in the 1960's as a genre in opposition to the *Estado Novo* regime).

*Fado*, a genre associated with urban Lisboa, though possessing diverse historical roots in the interior through itinerant troubadour musicians (SARDINHA, 2010), was included in the genres commercially recorded in Portugal since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Viewed despectively by social and academic elites of the time, *fado* was initially repressed by the military regime for its association with working class movements and marginalized urban groups. Eventually, it was officially adopted and employed by the *Estado Novo* as a popular musical symbol of "Portugueseness" (projected both internally and abroad), and, hence, of the regime itself. (ABREU, 2010, p.264; GUERRA, 2010, p.196)

*Nacional-cançonetismo* is a popular musical phenomenon, originating in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that was actively propagated by the *Estado Novo* that combined various stylistic elements (French popular song, Portuguese folkloric music, easy listening, etc.) and whose lyrical content extolled the archetypical "national" social and cultural values and virtues that formed part of the ideological propaganda of the regime. (GUERRA, 2010, p.197; MONTEIRO, 2009, p.9) *Nacional-cançonetismo* was widely consumed via television and radio, and eventually morphed, post-1974, into a genre utilized to promote Portugal as a destination for international tourism, and as a vehicle to engage, and pull the heart strings and purse strings of, the global Portuguese and Luso-descendant diaspora. (MONTEIRO, 2009, p.1, 9)

Another widely-influential musical and performative phenomenon, from the nation's urban capital, that bloomed during the *Estado Novo* regime, were the

*marchas populares de Lisboa*. Done in a municipally-organized competitive format, they are a modernization of the traditional festivities of *Santos Populares* (St. Anthony, St. John, St. Peter) in June, in accordance with the Catholic calendar, the *Marchas Populares* gained fame in the 1930's and the model consolidated during the *Estado Novo* period persisted beyond the end of the regime. *Marchas Populares* are an expression of local neighborhood pride, and have given birth to innumerable musical compositions, popularized nationally through mass media, in the form of *marchas* (sometimes referred to as "*marchinhas*"). (FRÚGOLI, 2014; MELO, 2015); SÁNCHEZ, 2018)

As far as the effects that these cultural and technological innovations that Portugal experienced during the 20<sup>th</sup> century had on the transmission of the traditional chromatic accordion phenomenon in the Algarve, the interviewees for this thesis have some interesting insights gained from their lived experiences. Accordionist Carlos Gonçalves explains his father's musical formation during this period:

My father learned to read music, and he plays using sheet music. My grandfather, no, because he wasn't enrolled. In those days you needed a license to play music, and my grandfather wasn't enrolled. When new music would come out, my father would receive it in the mail [...] Nowadays people compose music but it doesn't catch your ear like it did back then. Back then, the music stayed in your head, and we would whistle the melodies and sing them. [...] The sheet music came from Lisboa by mail, and my father would learn the songs, because he reads music and everything. [...] It was music of the moment and he evolved playing that music that was in fashion at that time: *marchas*, *valsas*, a bit of everything, *tangos*, all that.<sup>124</sup>

In a similar fashion, accordionist Francisco Moreira - who as a young man was drafted into the Portuguese military and served as a sacristan in the Santa Margarida military base, in the center of the country, where he learned to play organ and keyboards - recalls the methodology employed to acquire repertoire when he later worked professionally as an accordionist accompanying Portuguese and international artists at venues such as the touristic EVA Hotel in Faro, as well as with his ensemble, *Os Bonanzas*:

I have thousands of music books and sheet music, I was given them by foreigners who would come here almost every year, and they would always bring me music books, pieces that they liked [...] (the hits of the moment), and when we didn't have the sheet music, we would learn those hit songs by ear, we recorded them with a tape recorder off the radio, and we tried to learn the songs [...] Music from all over the world:

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<sup>124</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2019, Tavira

French music, musette, English music [...] Italian music, Spanish music [...] from Argentina, we played many *tangos*.<sup>125</sup>

As far as describing the external influences that have impacted the continuity and evolution of the chromatic accordion dance tradition in the Algarve, it is important to commence with a bit of historical and theoretical background. As stated previously, Inácio (2016, p.32) attributes some of the causes of the decline in the chromatic accordion dance tradition in the Algarve in the 1950's and 1960's to be "the Colonial War [...] (and) a greater dissemination of other musical genres, such as Jazz, or Rock and Pop, that attracted young people to more private festivities and to discotheques, that were just beginning to open". Much of these cultural influences had Anglo-American origins, thus it is important to understand some cursory basics about the political, economic, and cultural relations between Portugal and Britain, and later, with the United States of America, which provided the context and conduit for the reception of these influences in Portugal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Strategic relations between Britain and Portugal stem from the dawn of the Portuguese nation. An early instance was the military assistance of northern European crusaders on their way to combat in the Holy Land, among them Englishmen, given to Portuguese ruler Alfonso Henriques in his retaking of Lisboa from the Moors in 1147 A.D., which was followed by further assistance in the fledgling nation's "reconquest" of Portuguese territory from the Muslims. (PRESTAGE, 1934, pp.69-70) In the 14<sup>th</sup> century a more solid, stable pact was forged between the two nations, known as the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, which has proven to be the longest-standing formal alliance in Europe, after almost seven centuries in force.

However, throughout history, this Alliance has not been immune to fluctuations in intensity - and even periods of antagonism - due to changing governments and geopolitical contexts, as both the British and Portuguese relentlessly forged their global colonial empires in Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Americas, in competition with other European powers, such as Spain, France, and Holland. The balance of power in this Alliance was tipped towards Britain's favor in the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the "undisputed economic and strategic primacy"

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<sup>125</sup> Francisco Moreira, Interview, 2020, Faro

it had gained on the world stage *vis-à-vis* other European maritime powers, including Portugal. (OLIVEIRA, 2013, p.186)

Da Costa Leite describes the rationale and incentives behind the enduring Anglo-Portuguese Alliance:

Obviously, no alliance can endure for such a long time unless it has firm geopolitical roots. Portugal needed the Alliance to counter the influence of Castile, and later, as a small power with a large maritime empire, to guarantee communications with the colonies. Great Britain shared the profits of the Portuguese Empire, and enjoyed the strategic advantages of the Portuguese Mainland and the Islands. [...] The Alliance was a cornerstone of Portuguese foreign policy. (DA COSTA LEITE, 1998, p.188)

This Alliance withstood the test of numerous political transitions in Portugal throughout the centuries, even after the revolution of 1910 and the First Republic, into Salazar's *Estado Novo* beginning in the 1930's. (CALDWELL, 1942, p.151) Caldwell sustains that the longevity of Portugal's colonial empire, and "perhaps the very existence of Portugal as an independent nation" has historically depended on British military, economic and military might. (Ibid.) Oliveira (2013, p.186) notes, that even during moments of friction with Britain during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Portuguese ruling classes had an "awareness that their independence in Europe, as well as access to credit and to the know-how and technology of the industrial era, was to a large extent secured by their haughty ally".

Entering into the fray of World War One on behalf of the Allied powers (described later in this text) which included its old ally, Britain (and that nation's former colony, the United States of America), Portugal again played a role – though officially remaining neutral – in World War Two, again in relation to Britain and the English-speaking power, the United States of America. As World War Two developed on the European and North African fronts in the 1940's, the Azores Islands in the North Atlantic, over 1500 km. from the Portuguese mainland, garnered the attention of Great Britain and the United States (under the Churchill and Roosevelt administrations) for several reasons.

Firstly, they were concerned about potential German occupation of the islands, further threatening Allied trans-Atlantic shipping and communications as the Axis power had been doing with relentless U-boat attacks in the Atlantic. (WEISS, 1980, p.5) Secondly, the U.S.A. viewed a German-occupied Azores as a further stepping stone to attacking North America. Thirdly, both English-speaking powers viewed the islands as a post-war asset to defend their territories

and extend their military reach around the globe, as the post-war conflict moved to a Cold War climate. (Ibid., p.18, 25; STEVENS, 1992, p.649)

Though both nations had initial plans to forcibly take the islands from the Portuguese authority, these were eventually nixed as to not bring the global conflict to the Iberian Peninsula nations, who had effectively remained neutral throughout the conflict.<sup>126</sup> (STEVENS, 1992) Salazar, aware of the strategic value of the Azores as a bargaining chip with the Allied powers, who, after Axis defeats, seemed to be destined to be the victors of the conflict and determiners of a post-war order, decided to use negotiations for British and U.S. military presence on the islands as being contingent on those powers' recognition and support of the post-war maintenance of Portugal's colonial empire in Asia and Africa, during a historical context that would evolve into a global tendency to decolonization, if not revolutionary emancipation. (WEISS, 1980, p.24)

In the 1940's U.S. and British military presence on the Azores was successfully negotiated, a presence that continues to this day. In exchange, Salazar solicited assistance in recuperating occupied Timor (Ibid.), and that the U.K. and U.S. respect Portugal's colonial possessions, something that occurred initially. Weiss summarizes the effects of these actions:

In the postwar period, criticism of the Portuguese colonial empire in Africa was muted because the Pentagon feared the loss of its facilities if the State Department too vigorously protested Portuguese policies there. Thus, political accommodation to Salazar in return for military access to the Azores in the fifties and sixties hampered America's ability to compete with the Soviets for influence in sub-Saharan Africa in the seventies. (WEISS, 1980)

As Europe reconstructed in the post-World War Two context, where the new 20<sup>th</sup> century international system was being negotiated, *Pax Americana* was replacing *Pax Britannica*, and the Cold War was developing, the non-democratic and anti-communist Salazar regime remained entrenched as Portugal became further integrated into the developing, multi-lateral international structure. The regime benefitted from the U.S.'s Marshall Plan, the U.S. and the U.K. advocated for the country's inclusion in the United Nations (joining in 1955), as well as in

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<sup>126</sup> U.S. President Roosevelt, utilizing concepts rooted in the Monroe Doctrine regarding the Western Hemisphere, came to view the case of the Portuguese Azores as falling within that realm. According to Stevens (1992, p.642), in 1941, "the U.S. conception of "hemisphere" expanded eastward across the Atlantic to include Bermuda, Greenland, Iceland, the Canary Islands, the Cape Verde islands, and the Azores".



the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (becoming the only non-democratic NATO founding member), Portugal participated with the U.K. in the European Free Trade Association, and the U.K. remained the nation's principal trading partner until the decade of the 1970's. (OLIVEIRA, 2013)

However, as post-war global processes of decolonization were unleashed (within the Cold War context), the relations between the U.K., U.S., and Portugal began to become more fraught and complex. The Salazar regime remained adamant on the maintenance of Portugal's colonies as a means to economic growth of the metropole, by natural resource exports, and had official policies to encourage emigration of Portuguese "colonists" from the mainland to colonial possessions. As the British decolonized their empire, upon the insistence of independence movements, as a best method to keep the former colonies from moving towards communism, Portugal became mired in protracted colonial conflicts beginning in 1961, with India's successful "retaking" of Goa, and the start of the Colonial War with conflict exploding in Angola. As the next two decades progressed, leading up to the 1974 revolution and the dissolution of its colonial empire rooted in the "Age of Discovery", Portugal would become increasingly isolated within the international community. (OLIVEIRA, 2013)

Though Portugal had engaged profusely in imperialism (in competition with other world powers) for centuries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, in various dimensions: culturally, religiously, politically, militarily, economically, intellectually, etc., conversely, it can be argued that in certain periods, Portugal, has itself been on the receiving end of "cultural imperialism" carried out by other nations and cultures. We will briefly explore some varying contemporary concepts - presenting and comparing the ideas of various authors - encapsulated in that term, which has been circulating within academia since the 1960's, though the phenomenon has existed for millennia. (WEYNAND TOBIN, 2016) Then, we will examine its application to our object of study: continuity of the chromatic accordion social dance tradition of the Algarve.

Cultural imperialism entails the imposition of cultural values and elements of a dominant society on a subordinate one, whether it is actively carried out by the dominant society or self-imposed by the subordinate society (either by attraction or with the hope of gaining economic or cultural capital, etc.). The realm of wielding cultural power is just one facet of imperialism, which also includes

military power, economic and industrial power, political power, etc. Cultural imperialism can take the form of the wielding of "soft power" by a state or other entity. Nye (2004) strikes the difference between "hard" (military action, economic sanctions, etc.) and "soft" power when wielded by a state:

Hard and soft power are related because they are both aspects of the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behavior of others. The distinction between them is one of degree, both in the nature of the behavior and in the tangibility of the resources. Command power - the ability to change what others do - can rest on coercion or inducement. Co-optive power - the ability to shape what others want - can rest on the attractiveness of one's culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices [...] (NYE, 2004, p. 7)

Having been historically central to the processes of colonization and global imperial expansion – particularly for the European powers (WEYNAND TOBIN, 2016), cultural imperialism does not necessarily have to be exclusively carried out by a nation state. Cultural protagonists in areas such as religion, academia, literary production, etc. can be vehicles and proponents of cultural imperialism, as can private enterprises, most specifically mass media conglomerates which disseminate cultural products such as music, cinema, etc. It is precisely this sector that will be examined in the following passages. It should be remembered that cultural imperialism is not an end to itself rather a means - among other kinds of power-wielding - to achieve a goal: the superior maintenance of power by the dominant society or entity in relation to others.

The post-World War Two aftermath saw the rise to hegemony of the victorious United States and the placing in motion of strategic political and economic actions to rearrange the international order in line with its interests, and those of its allies, in competition with the Soviet Union and the communist bloc. With the English language already being a *lingua franca* of global commerce - an inheritance of the globe-spanning British Empire - it gained new force, through the United States, as the language of not only commerce, but technology and mass media, in the form of cultural products such as recorded popular music, Hollywood films, television, etc. Language and culture gained more significance as tools of cultural imperialism to instill values and worldviews in subordinate societies, employed in pitched competition with global communism.

Though the concept of cultural imperialism has been criticized as simplistic and not affording enough agency to subordinate societies in the reception of imposed cultural products on customized local terms, and of failing to account for

natural processes of cultural hybridization (HESMONDHALGH, 1995; VAN ELTEREN, 2003, p.170), Van Elteren sustains that:

[...] the concept of U.S. cultural imperialism—or in some areas a broader Anglo-American cultural imperialism—retains its relevance and should neither be dismissed nor viewed as a positive phenomenon. (VAN ELTEREN, 2003, p.170)

Numerous authors have called attention to the central role that the United States and the United Kingdom have occupied in the realms of global mass media and popular culture, communication technology, literary and scientific production (not to mention the "hard power" of military technology, global finance, etc.) and the global preeminence of the English language.<sup>127</sup> While García (2013) notes the growth in usage of the English language in post-Franco Spain and attributes it to the ever-expanding processes of globalization in which an economically, technologically and culturally dominant United States is a key "imperial" protagonist, Ferro (2017) laments the traditional Portuguese custom of regarding anything from abroad as being superior than anything "made in Portugal", a phenomenon expressed in the cultural consumption of the nation's populace, as she sustains in revealing the predominance of translations of English language works in government-compiled reading lists for Portuguese schoolchildren. Ferro calls attention to the monolingualism of many native English speakers in the U.S. and the U.K. and writes:

The predominance of English together with a few other – mostly European – dominant languages over global informational flows echoes the current geopolitical inequalities. [...] Speakers of dominant languages are able to transmit information and knowledge, while speakers of peripheral languages are frequently limited to the passive attitude of recipients. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the cultural industries, namely literature, cinema, and music: statistics show that English-speaking countries, specifically the United States of America (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), have a much higher volume of exports of cultural goods than imports. (FERRO, 2013, p.142)

In this section we will deal primarily with the popular music realm, however other media, such as films, television programs, news media, etc. are inextricable from popular music, as they conform parts of a total product that is consumed by

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<sup>127</sup> As well as sports. Rosa (2019, p.7) writes, "Effectively, the British Empire spread the sportive practices of its aristocracy and industrial *bourgeoisie* to the four corners of the world". Among these practices is the globally dominant sport of football (soccer). He accentuates that these practices were purposefully cultivated within the institutions of learning of the middle and upper classes.

subordinate societies in the process of contemporary cultural imperialism. The ideas of various authors on this topic will be presented and compared.

The global dominance of the English language in pop music is undisputed, and it has been that way for many decades. Also, the strategic centrality of the U.S. and U.K. to the international music industry places its media conglomerates, that are its key actors, in globally hegemonic positions. Coopey contextualizes the historical development of this phenomenon:

Tied to the USA in a kind of binary Anglo-Saxon hegemony of Western post-war culture, British pop could ride the tide of Cold War cultural imperialism, following the US into global markets opened up in the wake of geo-political manoeuvring. As English increased its hold on international cultures and markets, British and American pop became a kind of global musical *lingua franca*. (COOPEY, p.6)

Hesmondhalgh (1995, p.52) does not necessarily assign nefarious geopolitical and culturally imperialistic designs to the dominance of U.S. and U.K. media conglomerates, but rather stresses that they act according to the principle of capitalist profit within a global market context "*with the result that Anglo-American music is still the main type of music distributed and promoted nationally*". Noting that English remains the dominant language for lyrics in the international pop music industry which is based on a "star system" of a handful of massively successful mega-artists, Hesmondhalgh (Ibid., p.56) highlights that, since the post-war 1950's, those mega-stars have almost exclusively come from the U.K. or the U.S. Calling attention to the dominance that these two English-speaking powers have had in global cultural industries, in comparison with other nations, he goes on to state:

The international distribution of industrial power, then, to some extent, structures the exclusions and inclusions that operate in the consumption of popular music. [...] (Cultural imperialism entails) unequal access to the means of production, distribution, ownership, control and consumption. (HESMONDHALGH, 1995, p.57, 59)

In this light, Negus (2002) calls attention to the central role wielded by "cultural intermediaries"<sup>128</sup> within these dominant cultural industry players. According to Negus, cultural intermediaries serve as "filters", and gatekeepers of information and symbolic production in the mass media and cultural industry and, far from playing a passive role as "middlemen", cultural intermediaries actively

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<sup>128</sup> A term coined by Bourdieu (1984)

and consciously engage in "strategies of inclusion/exclusion" in their mediation between cultural producers and consumers. (Ibid., p.2)

Noting that several areas within the arts and international cultural industry are dominated by small influential cupulas of cultural intermediaries within certain fields: music industry, fashion industry, fine arts, motion picture industry, theatre, news media, literature publishing, etc., Negus calls attention to the power these relatively few actors have to shape or exclude the mediated symbolic products and their means of commercial distribution. (Ibid., p.16) The author notes that these cultural intermediaries, as opposed to via meritocracy, rise in their profession "via networks of connections, shared values and common life experiences". As an illustration, in his research of influential executives of the globally-influential British music industry and their strategies, in the 1980's and 1990's, Negus found that:

Despite often being presented as a fairly 'liberal' business, populated by personnel who are 'in touch with the street', these agendas were in no way a 'reflection' of the diversity of music being played and listened to in Britain. Instead they represented, in condensed form, the preferences and judgments of a small, relatively elite educated, middle-class, white male faction. The aesthetic and social consequences of this have been profound. (NEGUS, 2002)

On another level, Louw (2011) views the culturally imperialistic practices employed by global media and cultural industry conglomerates (primarily based in the United States) as an explicit part of a larger process of expansion and consolidation of informal empire, a view also held by Van Elteren (2003). Referring to this informal empire as *Pax Americana*, Louw (2011, p.32) holds it to be the protagonist of a "second wave of globalization", (supplanting *Pax Britannica* which was the historical protagonist of the first wave) which is sustained, at its base, by U.S. military power. According the author:

The whole edifice rests upon America having more military power at its disposal than any other nation in history. This makes the potential of American military violence an omnipresent reality across the entire globe. [...] Exercising global hegemony through running an informal empire is a complex business. Hence, Washington deploys all manner of 'global governance' tools, including financial and trade regulations; negotiations and diplomacy; military coercion; financial coercion (sanctions); dollar diplomacy; and *cultural influence*. (LOUW, 2011, p.35, italics ours)

Acknowledging U.S. maintenance of cutting-edge dominance in global media, communications, information technology and culture industries, Louw (2011, p.37) goes on to note that the same industries in other nations are greatly

influenced by Anglo-American models, a phenomenon also described by Van Elteren (2003, pp.177-178) in the fields of corporate cultures, business education, and government. According to Louw:

What is clear is that the global media now have a distinctively 'American' feel, and the Anglo-American global media 'box' helps create the frame within which the world is seen. Although this does not mean the Anglo-American global media is able to force the rest of the world to accept its worldview, it grants America many possibilities for agenda-setting, and for presenting America and American values in a positive light. Lying at the heart of the Anglo-American built 'box' is a huge media and culture industry built by the Americans during the twentieth century. (LOUW, 2011, p.37)

As opposed to a strict process of direct imposition on powerless subjects, Louw (2011, pp.33-34) sustains that the informal empire of *Pax Americana* expands via attractive "soft power" through invitation by the elites and middle classes of other nations – socioeconomic and political protagonists that actively shape and "socially engineer" the structures and culture of their respective nations. Louw describes how, in the post-World War Two international restructuring, the United States promoted policies of growing U.S.-friendly international middle classes through the "development industry", he also stresses the role the U.S. media industry (through its varying products: films, music, news, television, etc.) has played in the global projection of consumerist, capitalist and pro-U.S. values and behaviors, destabilizing regional, traditional cultures. The author writes:

[...] the *Pax Americana* resembles, in many ways, a huge global alliance of middle-class people who share similar lifestyles. Many comprador-partners were drawn from the middle classes, while others learned to become middle class. Whatever path they took to get there, middle class-ness is a common characteristic of those occupying the governance structures of the *Pax Americana* across all continents, including Africa. These comprador partners tend to regularly expose themselves to products of the American culture industry. Many of these compradors aspire to adopting American lifestyles (given the status that power confers upon imperial cultures). (LOUW, 2011, p.40)

Conversely, Van Elteren (2003, p.183-184) admits that, even in the eventual absence of U.S. global influence, the capitalist globalization wrought in the style of *Pax Americana* would continue, perhaps with other principal protagonists such as transnational corporate entities. However, until a potential scenario such as that emerges, the United States continues to be dominant, Val Elteren observes:

The U.S. government has played an important role in promoting cultural exports, not only as a source of export income but also as a means of

exporting beliefs, values, and practices that inherently favor U.S.-based corporate capitalism. [...] The global dissemination of Americanized cultural goods and practices involves the spread of social visions of U.S.-style development, with its heavy emphasis on “progress” in the form of unlimited, quantitative growth and economic-technological expansion. It also diffuses a culture of performance and expressive individualism [...] (VAL ELTEREN, 2003, p.174)

As stated before, flows of cultural products through the global processes of cultural imperialism, actively mediated and curated by cultural intermediaries, are not necessarily solely imposed arbitrarily upon passive receivers, but rather they are often actively sought out by these receivers in subordinate societies and, upon receipt, the cultural products are often recontextualized, hybridized, appropriated, and re-signified. In this next section we will briefly examine the case of the reception and evolution of Anglo-American Pop Rock Music in Portugal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a musical genre that (with its novel electric guitars and electrified sonority, norm-breaking artist persona aesthetics, and lyrics in English) – as in many countries – displaced, and posed a challenge to the viability of, autochthonous popular music genres in Portugal, among them the tradition of chromatic accordion dance music of the Algarve examined in this thesis.

The vectors of transmission *par excellence* of Anglo-American Pop Rock Music in Portugal were initially records and radio, later to include television and internet media. The introduction, gestation, and growth of this genre in Portugal took place in the restrictive and conservative context of the last decades of the *Estado Novo*, as well as in the socially tumultuous, transformative years following the 1974 revolution. In this next section we will borrow from important Portuguese contemporary popular music researchers such as Paula Guerra (2010) and Paula Abreu (2010), and eventually describe the effects that this phenomena had on the chromatic accordion dance tradition of the Algarve, from the point of testimonies of lived experiences of the interviewees for this thesis.

By the 1950's and into the 1960's – a period of increasing urbanization, industrialization and emigration - Portugal had already counted with the presence of British and American popular recorded music firms in the national market for several decades, as described earlier in this text. Under the firm dictates of the *Estado Novo* on the cultural sector, Portugal also, since the 1930's, had seen diverse media consumption grow, in the socioeconomic contexts that had access to the appropriate technology. According to Abreu (2010, p.273), "the

dissemination of recorded music and the formation of a new musical culture benefitted from synergies created among records, sound cinema, and radio broadcasting [...]."

With the Portuguese recorded popular music landscape in this period dominated by the genres anteriorly mentioned: *fado*, *nacional-cançonetismo*, folklore, etc. (GUERRA, 2010), the first rock and roll groups begin to emerge in Portugal towards the end of the 1950's, drawing inspiration, and acquiring repertoire from, U.S.-made films. Commercial Anglo-American Pop Rock recordings were still yet to enter the Portuguese market. (Ibid., p.199) Guerra (Ibid.) notes that these initial groups lacked appropriate instruments and musical expertise and sang exclusively in English, the "native language" of Anglo-American Pop Rock, unintelligible to most Portuguese (including Salazar's censors).

With the early Portuguese rock groups of the 1960's primarily singing in English, in imitation of The Beatles and other British pop rock bands of the period, this movement became known as *Yé-Yé*, and it was at this time that Portuguese rock bands commenced recording commercially with Portuguese affiliates of international firms, such as *Valentim de Carvalho*. (Ibid., p.201) (ABREU, 2010, p.296; SANTOS, 2012, p.13) According to Guerra:

Influenced by the world euphoria of Beatlemania during 1963, Portugal will finally give in to the world of rock with the direct imprint of The Beatles and The Shadows. The large record labels (Decca, Atlantic, CBS, Philips, EMI) perceived early on the enormous economic potential unleashed by this musical language of basic musical resources most intensely appropriate to youthful aspirations. With the arrival of records of rock n' roll to our country, various Portuguese projects emerged in pure imitation of those models dictated by the giant international discographic industry. (GUERRA, 2010, p.200)

In this period, as the domestic Portuguese recording industry grew and expanded, though not necessarily beholden to the corporatist industrial dictates of the *Estado Novo*, it was, however, hindered by the regime's censorship mechanisms and intervention of the *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (PIDE). (ABREU, 2010, p.303) Portuguese rock, initially not necessarily antagonistic to authoritarian rule, accompanied the global evolutions in Anglo-American Pop Rock: psychedelia, etc. and, by the socially tumultuous decade of the 1970's, had evolved into a more professional movement of distinct national



character that was becoming increasingly overtly critical of the *Estado Novo*. (Ibid., p.204)

After the revolutionary period, post-1974, of national predominance of *canção de protesto* and repertoire that was banned during the dictatorship (ABREU, 2010, pp.308-309) Portuguese rock eventually blossomed in the more politically stable decade of the 1980's protagonized by "children of the upper middle class, with access to what was occurring "abroad" and with money to "order" records from abroad or go to see concerts in Europe" (CADETE, 2009, pp.64-65 *apud* GUERRA, 2010, p.222)

The effervescent and transformative post-revolutionary period in Portugal saw certain genres of music supported or associated with the *Estado Novo* fall out of favor with large segments of the Portuguese public, with commercial repercussions, such as *fado* and *nacional-cançonetismo*, which were eventually re-signified decades later. (ABREU, 2010, p.310) Fishman Et Al. (2013) sustain that the revolutionary process that Portugal went through to regain democracy in the 1970's upended hierarchies, sustained for decades by the *Estado Novo*, within cultural institutions, particularly those related to education, which in turn proved crucially formative of young people's tastes in cultural consumption, making them more "omnivorous", moving beyond the musical genre boundaries drawn by the former regime. According to those authors:

The revolutionary nature of the Portuguese road to democracy led to a situation in which hierarchies of all sorts, including aesthetic ones, came into question from an egalitarian perspective. [...] *We argue that educational institutions constitute the crucial intermediating mechanism, causally linking macro-level historical change to processes of taste formation at the individual level.* (FISHMAN ET. AL., 2013, pp.218, 223)

This "omnivorous" cultural consumption in this period was expressed, among other ways, via consumption of commercially recorded music available in that timeframe. Several interviewees for this thesis relate about the proliferation of discotheques in this period, employing solely recorded music for mass festivities (which, by nature, requires electric power), as being a deciding factor in the decline of social events and dances animated by chromatic accordion in the Algarve. Accordionist Francisco Moreira (2019) speaks of the decline of establishments that presented live music in Faro, in which the chromatic accordion was a mainstay, "Everything began to end, it was all recorded music,

records and discotheques. [...] That was in the 1980's and 1990's". Carlos Gonçalves<sup>129</sup> also recalls, "Nowadays, the discotheques have been causing the extinction of the dances (with accordion). [...] In my region here, there were many dance halls. Everything ended. Gone. [...] The young people don't frequent those type of dances".

Faced with the cultural and aesthetic tectonic shifts that occurred in the 1960's in the realm of international popular music, large, established international instrument manufacturing firms began to adjust their commercial strategies to the changing tastes and market conditions to garner profit and, at bare minimum, stay afloat. In the same way that the diatonic button accordion was a profitable industrialized commodity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>130</sup> – in a global context of massive European emigration and colonial expansion – for industrial manufacturing firms such as the German-based *Hohner GmbH* and a myriad of Italian firms clustered in the city of Castelfidardo, piano accordions and button chromatic accordions saw their heyday in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, promoted by a constellation of professional instructors and institutes, who often acted as intermediaries in instrument sales. (JACOBSON, 2008, p.6, 2007, pp.218-219)

As "Beatlemania" and Anglo-American Pop Rock gained global dominance from the 1960's onward, instrument manufacturers had to radically pivot to cater to the "new" (it could be posited that they were "induced") demands and musical tastes or face the catastrophic economic consequences.<sup>131</sup> Novel electronic products were developed and launched to attempt to ride the wave of the new market conditions and consumer tastes. According to Jacobson (2007, p.231), who notes that many professional piano accordion players in this period switched to playing novel electric keyboards:

The accordion industry, at least in the 1960's, appeared to cater to rock musicians and fans by producing a variety of compact, easily portable, and inexpensive *accordion-derived* instruments. The Chicago Musical Instrument Company made and marketed a series of electronic organs in the United States. That company also introduced a new instrument

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<sup>129</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2020, Tavira

<sup>130</sup> The diatonic button accordion, in this period, through the avenues of international maritime trade and migration, shaped the development of innumerable genres of regional popular music around the globe (*chamamé, merengue, vallenato, conjunto*, etc.), imprinting its characteristic melodic capabilities and tonic constrictions which have lingered to this day.

<sup>131</sup> Jacobson (2007, p.232-233) writes that, "In 1964 [...] guitar sales topped one million and accordion sales dropped to 50,000 [...] In Castelfidardo seventeen accordion factories closed down between 1960 and 1963".

called the Cordovox, an accordion wired to an organ generator. (JACOBSON, 2007, p.230)

The U.S.-based Chicago Musical Instrument Company distributed the innovative electronic accordions and organ instruments manufactured by the Italian firm *Fabbriche Riunite Fisarmoniche Italiane S.p.A.* (Farfisa) formed by a merger of the Scandalli, Settimio Soprano and Frontalini accordion companies, in the aftermath of World War Two, in 1946. (GIOTTA, 2012, p.4) As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, numerous other firms will create electronic accordions and organ instruments to launch on the international market, eventually developing into digital technology. Gorbunova (2018, p.23) sustains that the digital reincarnation of the accordion, an instrument with centuries-old roots, is a natural evolution that should be welcomed, she writes, "technique has never killed creativity, on the contrary, they have developed in close relationship: the whole European musical culture is based on the technique of creating musical instruments". She goes on to state:

In recent decades, with the total computerization of all spheres of life in the modern information society, new forms of cultural practice, including electronic music-making, have become relevant. Along with the popularization of performance on digital keyboard synthesizers, digital pianos, musical computers (MC), there is a growing public demand for the development of innovative digital (electronic) harmonica (accordion). (GORBUNOVA, 2019, p.437)

However, as the testimonies of our interviewees will demonstrate, the technological "evolution" of the accordion has not necessarily been inherently "superior" or benign in the context of chromatic accordion dance music of the Algarve. Accordionist Nelson Conceição gives some background on the matter, noting that the introduction of the electronic accordion in the Algarve was initially at the hands of renowned Portuguese virtuosi such as Eugenia Lima, Daniel Rato and Hilda Maria (Figure 62):

They used (the electronic accordion) to introduce innovations, not to use it as a crutch in order to play less. However, as time went on, with the new generations, the new learners, this transformed to the state that it is in now. [...] Here, (the accordionists) who play for dances, 10% to 20% are good accordionists [...] Nowadays, those who play for dances are associated with the electronic accordion and they are greatly dependent on the electronic features. The rhythmic base is all electronic as well as the bass keys [...] They start to play dances with little wisdom, lacking a developed musical culture. They play for festivities, and the public, which can be a bit ignorant in these matters at times, likes it. It fits the bill, it's cheap, people like low prices.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2020, Faro



Figure 62 – Nelson Conceição (Loulé, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

During a certain period, Miguel Pereira animated dances at his establishment with an organ in chromatic accordion format connected to a sound system. (Figure 63) (Figure 64) Francisco Conceição, who performed with Miguel Pereira at dances for over a decade, currently makes a concerted effort to play accordion acoustically, as evidenced at the dance documented at the *Associação Entre Barragens* in Quebradas. He describes the impact of the introduction of the electronic accordion and organ in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Algarve, in the post-revolutionary period:

When electronics appeared, the electronic accordions, the traditional accordion died out (at the dances). [...] With the electronic accordions and organs, the traditional accordion disappeared [...] This occurred at the end of the 1970's. [...] It happened so suddenly [...] when they came out on the market, everybody started playing electronic accordions and organs, and people started hiring them for dances, pushing out the traditional (acoustic) accordionists.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Francisco Conceição, Interview, 2020, Tavira



Figure 63 – Chromatic accordion electric organ, *Casa Museu do Acordeão*, Paderne, Albufeira, 2020

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 64 – Chromatic accordion digital organ, *Dó Ré Mi*, Faro, 2019

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Carlos Gonçalves also notes that, currently, the majority of dances in his region are animated by electronic accordion.<sup>134</sup> Similarly, Francisco Moreira, who had accompanied vocalists for decades with his chromatic accordion, laments the increasing "technification" of the musical craft:

I used to accompany artists on accordion, but now it's all "playback" [...] even the musicians who play piano and guitar use "MIDI file" with the karaoke-style sound systems. They download all the "playbacks" of any melody off the internet, and they play (or pretend to play) guitar. [...] This all started with the internet. Before, you had to buy a keyboard and study music, nowadays you just buy an iPad or a computer and you forget how to play an instrument.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Carlos Gonçalves, Interview, 2019, Tavira

<sup>135</sup> Francisco Moreira, Interview, 2019, Faro

In this section we were able to trace the origins of the chromatic accordion social dance tradition in the Algarve, describe its primary elements, as well as identify the macro-level social, political, technological, and economic historical processes that have shaped the evolution and transformation of this musical phenomenon. In the following section we will explore another crucial musical phenomenon in the Algarve (vastly different than social dances), in which the acoustic chromatic accordion also plays a central role: *charolas* from the town of Bordeira.

## 4.2 Charolas

The object of analysis of this section is the popular festive ritual tradition of *Charolas* - which occurs yearly around New Year's Day (January 1<sup>st</sup>) and Epiphany (January 6<sup>th</sup>) - as they are practiced in the small locality of Bordeira, which belongs to the Santa Bárbara de Nexe parish ("*freguesia*") of Faro in the southern Portuguese region of the Algarve. The objective of the section is to briefly trace the ancient and modern roots of this particular expression as well as its contemporary historical development, describe its primary elements and transmission methods, and explore how it has evolved to serve as a vehicle of collective memory, cultural identity, and social integration throughout successive generations of *bordeirenses* into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.<sup>136</sup>

Though Portuguese traditional practices related with the Christmas and New Year's seasons, especially those related with popular Catholicism, have been extensively documented by researchers for over a century, the contemporary expressions of *charolas* as they have been practiced in Bordeira since the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have largely remained a topic unexplored by academic researchers. Though a vast living oral archive exists in the experiences and memories of various generations of *bordeirenses*, as well as decades of journalistic and visual documentation, the topic was finally formally analyzed in an institutional academic context as a product of the doctoral thesis of António Vitorino Pereira: "*Bordeira: Espaço simbólico, expressões festivas e processos de construção de identidades*" (Bordeira: Symbolic Space, Festive

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<sup>136</sup> A person from Bordeira

Expressions, and Processes of Constructions of Identities) (PEREIRA, 2005) at the Anthropology Department of the *Universidad de Sevilla* in Spain. This present article will use Pereira's work as a frame of reference as well as a vehicle of dialogue in the comparison of findings obtained in carrying out fieldwork with a temporal difference of over two decades (Pereira conducted his fieldwork in Bordeira from 1997 to 1999, the author conducted his in 2020).

We now turn our attention to our geographic region of analysis. The locale of Bordeira belongs to the parish ("*freguesia*") of Santa Bárbara de Nexe (4116 inhabitants in 2011) of Faro, and constitutes one of its largest concentrations of population, however it does not exceed 1,000 residents.<sup>137</sup> Located roughly 14 kilometers due north from the regional capital and municipal head of Faro, Bordeira is located within a region denominated *barrocal*, an intermediate region – rich in stone resources – between the lowland littoral region and the dry, mountainous *serra* region of the Algarve.<sup>138</sup> (Figure 65) Historically physically isolated from the larger, nearby parish ("*freguesia*") seats such as Santa Bárbara de Nexe and São Brás de Alportel, Bordeira's geographic location and natural conditions determined its traditional economic productive sectors: dryland agriculture and stone quarrying – a unique, important sector whose existence has been documented at least since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century . (AFONSO ET AL., 2004)

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<sup>137</sup> INE Censo 2011: [https://censos.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=CENSOS&xpgid=censos\\_quadros](https://censos.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=CENSOS&xpgid=censos_quadros)

<sup>138</sup> The rich sediment of limestone - an economically important stone utilized in construction - found in this region is a result of the region being covered by ocean during the Jurassic Period, 195-141 million years ago. (AFONSO, 2004, p.2)

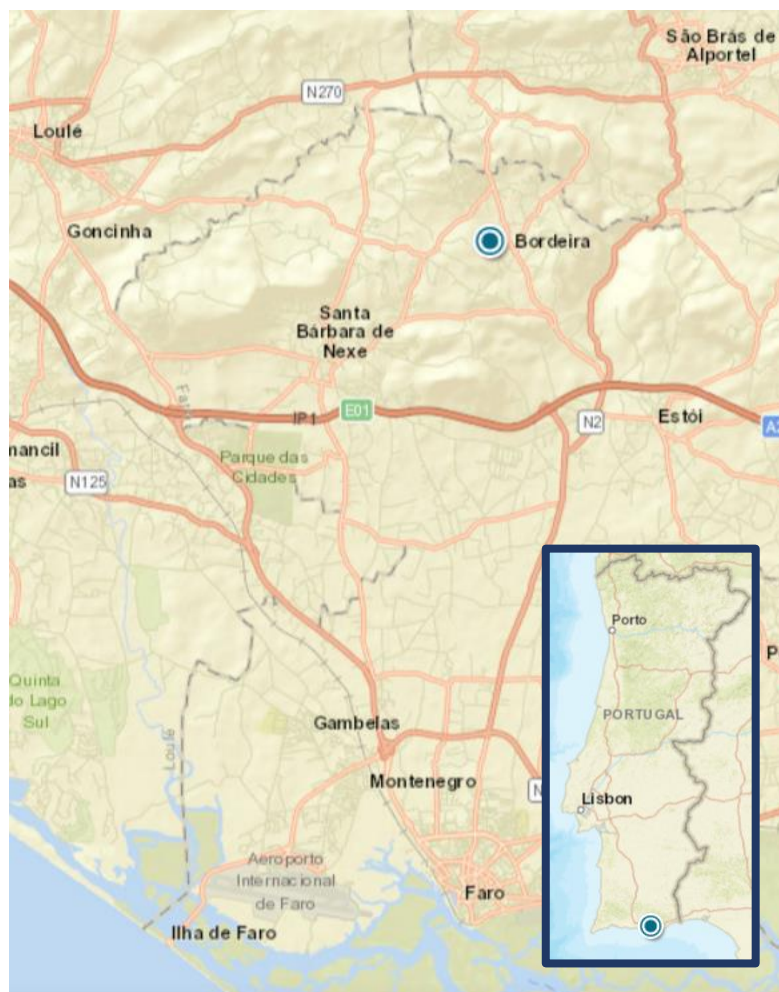


Figure 65 – Map of location of Bordeira

Source: NatGeo MapMaker Interactive

Human presence in the area of the parish ("*freguesia*") of Santa Bárbara de Nexe can be documented from the Paleolithic Age, and archeological evidence shows that the area was extensively utilized by settled human communities 5,000 years ago. During the Iron Age, Phoenician mariners arrived to the littoral region to engage in trade for minerals, establishing the city of Ossónoba (current day Faro). Eventually, the region was conquered by Rome and incorporated into its empire as part of the province of Lusitania, developing infrastructure and economic productive systems such as the agricultural *villa* of Milreu found in Estói, 4 kilometers from Bordeira, as well as disseminating Roman language, culture and belief systems.<sup>139</sup> After the fall of Rome and the invasion

<sup>139</sup> The Roman *villa* of Milreu was the residence complex of a wealthy Roman family, connected to other Roman settlements in the region, as well as a site of industrial-scale agricultural production primarily based on olive oil and wine. (TEICHNER, 2015) The *villa* also possessed sites of ceremonial and memorial importance such as a necropolis and a pagan temple, which



of Visigoths during Late Antiquity, with the Islamic domination beginning in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the region received new agricultural methods and crops, as well as dryland irrigation practices, at the hand of Arab and Berber colonists. The mixture of these cultural influences is reflected in the region's landscape, the genetic make-up of the population as well as its material and immaterial cultural practices and beliefs. (BERNARDES ET AL., 2006) (Figure 66)



Figure 66 – Rural landscape around Bordeira (Bordeira, Faro, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Variants of the early Christian religion had already arrived to the region during the Roman period, as well as by way of the invading Visigoths (who had adopted Arianism), adding to the "plurality of beliefs in the rural society of Iberia" of the period as expressed in the region (LENK, 2019, p.112). Lenk establishes that:

The Germanic people which invaded the peninsula in Classical Antiquity [...] were only partly Christianized. [...] Despite places where evangelization was successful, this did not necessarily mean a complete abandonment of parallel pagan practices. [...] It is doubtful that the Germanic Arians and the local Roman Catholic population were total free from pagan practices. [...] Testimonies from the 6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. relating to the worship of Roman gods such as Jupiter, Minerva, Mars and Saturn reveal that the worship of Roman gods continued. [...] (LENK, 2019, pp.111-112)

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was later re-purposed as a Christian worship site. (LENK, 2019) There is evidence that the temple space, richly decorated in pagan-themed mosaics, was later utilized for religious worship by the Visigoths and up until Islamic period during the 10<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.. (TEICHNER, 1993, p.97)

Part of the pantheon of Roman deities worshipped in Antiquity was the multi-faceted god Janus whom we will examine shortly.

During the Christian reconquest of the Algarve from the Muslims, culminating in the taking of Faro in 1249, the region was re-Christianized with the current area of Santa Bárbara de Nexe falling between the jurisdictions of Faro and neighboring Loulé. The arrival of new Christian colonists from the North to this reconquered area was slow, and the area around Loulé counted with a significant remaining population of Moorish descent, that worked in urban and agricultural trades, as well as a Jewish community. (ALMEIDA, 2016, p.110) With the arrival of Christian military orders involved in the reconquest, such as the *Ordem de Santiago* as well as accompanying monastic orders, the Christian religious infrastructure and social organization is built up in the region, founding churches and hermitages in places such as Santa Bárbara de Nexe, Gorjões and Loulé (whose church, São Clemente, was constructed on the site of the old mosque of the Islamic *medina*). (Ibid., p.20)

As in the rest of Western Europe in the Medieval Period, the Roman Catholic church came to dominate all major aspects of religious and governmental life in the region, with the church and its representatives placed at the symbolic center of social life, both in urban centers and rural areas. Appropriating and re-semanticizing calendar cycles, festive traditions and cultural symbols from earlier cultures, the Church expanded its influence through the evangelization process. This process will have its ramifications in the transformation, transmission and development of popular festive ritual traditions (oftentimes affected by vigorous prohibitive measures enacted by the Church and government authorities). A classic example of this is the Christianization of ancient ritual traditions surrounding the Winter Solstice which transformed into the observance of the Christmas season commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. (DUARTE, 2002, p.22-27)

In commencing to examine our object of analysis, according to Da Cunha Duarte (2002) *charolas* began in Europe as the practice of liturgical dance and song performed within churches and in religious processions in the medieval period. (Figure 67) With the passage of the centuries, eventually the practice became secularized including behaviors not officially condoned (and numerous

times officially prohibited) by the Church such as suggestive, burlesque lyrics and sensual dance movements. *Charolas* were performed by men and women at certain periods of the festive/natural calendar cycle, such as the First of May. Da Cunha Duarte sustains that in southern Portugal:

The *charola* preserved its dance component until the 16th Century, on a secondary plane. The dance disappeared but the song remained. In the Algarve, *charolas* maintain the element of song in the Christmas carols. The dance is alive in the *bailes de roda*<sup>140</sup>, and above all, the *balho mandado*<sup>141</sup>. (DUARTE, 2002, p.246)

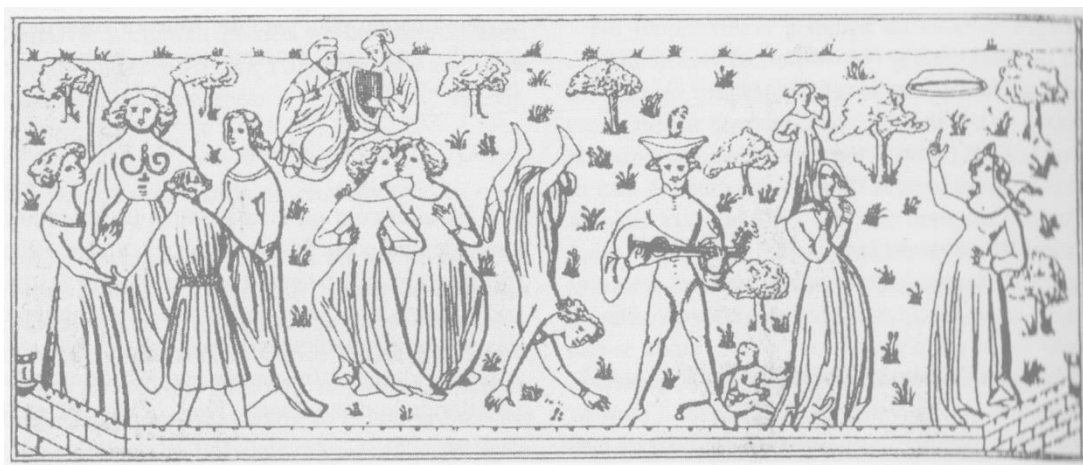


Figure 67 – *Charola* dance – *Romance da Rosa*, 14th Century – Museu de Valência

Source: DUARTE, 2002, p.248

Eventually coming to be associated with door-to-door Christmas caroling (with the corresponding food and drink offered by homeowners), *charolas* in the *Sotavento Algarvio*<sup>142</sup> traditionally have sung in honor of the Christ Child, with lyrics allusive to the Christmas story. However, there are important exceptions. Bexiga (1984) stresses the continued existence of pre-Christian pagan traditions in the performance of *charolas* in the area of Santa Bárbara de Nexe, most particularly Bordeira. He sustains the tradition of *janeiras*, as practiced in this region, stem from the Roman New Year's celebrations, around the Winter Equinox, associated with the god Janus, to whom the first month of the calendar is dedicated. (OVID, 1931)

Taylor (2000) describes the deity Janus and his significance in Antiquity:

<sup>140</sup> Round dances

<sup>141</sup> Collective dances with dance callers

<sup>142</sup> The eastern half of the Algarve.

Celebrated in literature as the god of beginnings and transitions, Janus seems to be a personification of transitional spaces through which one must walk in order to begin an undertaking. [...] Popularly endowed with two faces, one in the front of his head and one in the back, he acquired a persona as a guardian of doorways and a spirit of new beginnings. (TAYLOR, 2000, p.1)

Though archaeological vestiges of the worship of this deity are few<sup>143</sup>, historical literature gives testimony to the way Janus was understood and venerated in Roman society. (TAYLOR, 2000, p.2-3) Invoked on the commencement of human endeavors, such as military campaigns, Janus was also associated with augury.<sup>144</sup> (Figure 68)



Figure 68 – Roman coin featuring the god Janus

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/679762137488560177/>

With ancient New Year's commemorations of Janus described in the Roman poet Ovid's work *Fasti* (HARDIE, 1991), traditional practices of commensality, gift-giving, and well-wishing on that date were seen as ways to portend a fortuitous year to come. (TAYLOR, 2000, p.16) When Ovid asks Janus of the meaning of this practice, which included offerings of sweet foods, the deity replies, «It is the sake of the omen", said he, "that the event may answer to the

<sup>143</sup> There are representations of Janus and his shrines on Roman coinage, and coins featuring Janus were exchanged as gifts on New Year's Day (TAYLOR, 2000, p.5, 17)

<sup>144</sup> Augury is the practice of interpretation of omens.

flavor, and that the whole course of the year may be sweet, like its beginning" .». (OVID, 1931, p.15)

Taylor (2000) contextualizes this practice in the ancient Roman world:

[...] within the private sphere [...] traces of the augur remained in the god's (Janus) persona. The link between the liminal and the divinatory was especially evident on the first of January, the month of Janus. At least since 153 B.C., when the first month of the consular year was moved from March, 1 January had constituted New Year's Day. On this day Romans behaved as auspiciously as possible, hoping their acts of kindness to each other and propitiation of Janus would be taken as unambiguous signs of goodwill to the gods. [...] (TAYLOR, 2000, p.16)

Bexiga (1984), Cunha Duarte (2002, p.424-425), as well as Sousa and Barbieri (2016, p.18) write of the practice of *janeiras*, a festive ritual tradition incorporating song and ritual commensality, on and around New Year's in medieval Portugal as an extension of pre-Christian festive traditions. They cite the written historical records of Portuguese royal and ecclesiastical edicts that strictly prohibited the traditional practice of *janeiras* amongst the populace, specifically referring to their condition of remanences of pagan beliefs. Cunha Duarte writes:

The pagan *janeiras* are within the medieval context. It was an occasion to well-wish or insult customs and traditions as well as people. Throughout the Middle Ages, the improvised verses frequently turned to insults. The Church, through the synods, constitutions and councils, always prohibited the performance of these *janeiras* groups, because of the abuses and unrest they provoked. The kings, that looked after public order, also prohibited them by way of Statutes and Orders. [...] Civil and religious authority ordered the substitution of profane traditions for others of religious character. (DUARTE, 2002, pp.424-425)

Cunha Duarte (1996, p.39), a Catholic priest, makes a sharp distinction between *janeiras* and *charolas*, sustaining that the former is related with old pagan practices and the latter associated with groups that praise the Christ Child. Pereira (2005, p.73) also acknowledges the difference, however opts to maintain the nomenclature that *bordeirenses* apply to their unique tradition: "*charolas*". In regards to the secular *charolas* of Bordeira, which he admits exert a great aesthetic and poetic influence on *charolas*, many originally of religious character, of other communities in the Sotavento Algarvio, Cunha Duarte is of the opinion that:

They are «*janeiros*»<sup>145</sup> that recreate the ancient tradition that had been prohibited centuries ago. They sing and recite quatrains with some degree of social and political criticism. Their content is very distant from Christmas themes. [...] The *janeiros* should be respected and supported. They are the only ones that maintain the «pagan» tradition. However, we cannot say that they are a mere remnant of the «*pagani*» songs of the Romans. Their songs are to wish people a New Year full of peace and love, however they also represent social and political criticism. (CUNHA DUARTE, 1996, p.39)

Though the principal days for *charolas* of Bordeira traditionally are January 1<sup>st</sup>, as well as January 6<sup>th</sup> (as opposed to Christmas Eve or Christmas Day) (PEREIRA, 2005, p.73), in content and meaning they do not specifically evoke the Three King's Epiphany story associated with the date of January 6<sup>th</sup>, as do other *janeiras*-based traditions in the interior of Portugal, such as the caroling and house-painting tradition found in the Concelho de Alenquer, near Lisbon as described by Barbieri and Sousa (2016) as well as the numerous and varied cultural expressions of popular Epiphany traditions enshrined in Portugal's *Inventário Nacional do Patrimônio Cultural Imaterial* (National Inventory of Immaterial Cultural Heritage).<sup>146</sup> *Charolas* of Bordeira do, however, share an aspect with those other aforementioned traditions, as well as *charola* traditions from other towns in that, traditionally, *charolas* in Bordeira have gone house to house, a festive ritual tradition on foot and in movement.

Valério Bexiga (b.1937) born and raised in Bordeira, accentuates the supplicating nature of many of these itinerant *charolas/janeiras* when he was a young child, a feature that he considers to eventually have been continued in the form of an alms box and image of the Christ Child that religious *charolas* traditionally use to ask for donations during performances (Figure 69):

Before 1920, the *charolas* - better said - the *janeiras* went out on the nights before New Year's and Three King's Day, it wasn't during the day, as *janeiras* are done now. You would ask for food. It was a song tradition of poor people who would go to the houses of the well-off and sing at their doors so that they would give them something to eat. That was the origin. [...] Myself, when I was a young boy, (I started participating in *charolas*) that were still done in the fashion before 1920: to eat something, and they were done the night before. [...] I don't know (first hand) how the *janeiras* before 1920 were done, but the young children (of my time) would try and imitate the songs of their elders, and

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<sup>145</sup> People that participate in *janeiras*.

<sup>146</sup> The Inventory can be found at this link: <http://www.matrizpci.dgpc.pt/>

I think that it was a continuation of what was done before 1920, because, in truth, we sang to eat.<sup>147148</sup>



Figure 69 – Alms box with figure of the Christ Child at the performance of the *charola* from Estói, *Aldeia Branca*, at the *Encontro de Charolas Clube de Futebol "Os Bonjoanenses"* in Faro (January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

José Manuel Aniceto (b.1953), also born and raised in Bordeira, recalls participating, from the early age of six years old, in *charolas* composed of children that would go door to door in the community singing and asking for something to eat. He remembers that his *charola* always started their rounds at his residence where his mother, Idália, would offer them "*filhós com mel*"<sup>149</sup> which the young *charoleiros* preferred over the other neighbor's offerings, such as dried sausages.<sup>150</sup> Pereira cites Adérito Fernandes Vaz in his description of the general practice of the *charolas* in Algarve to go house to house singing in the expectation of being offered food and drink:

[...] when the eve arrived and night had fallen, they would go out, village past village, with the expectation to receive offerings in exchange for their songs. [...] Those who were visited, days before, would stoke their stoves to see if they could have their home-made sausages well-cured. [...] (VAZ apud PEREIRA, 2005, p.74)

<sup>147</sup> Valerio Bexiga, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

<sup>148</sup> A video fragment from the well-known Portuguese television program *Povo que Canta* (1971-1974) of the ethnomusicologist Michel Giacometti gives an idea of the styles of *janeiras* traditionally sung on New Year's Eve in hopes of receiving food and drink, in the Concelho of Loulé, near Bordeira. The video can be found here: <https://youtu.be/BvU0lByXifE?t=927>

<sup>149</sup> Traditional Portuguese fried sweet prepared with honey

<sup>150</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

Oral tradition in Bordeira holds that the foundations of the modern *charolas*, as they are practiced currently in the town, deviated from the traditional religious content and character originally associated with *charolas*, in the period of 1918 to 1920. In addition to being a time of secularism and new political thought during Portugal's First Republic (1910-1926), this was the period when Portuguese veterans, many of whom had been prisoners of war, were returning from the battlefields of World War One, and the *charolas* held in their honor in Bordeira, as they were jubilantly welcomed home by their families, friends and neighbors, had a festive, cheerful, improvised - and secular - character. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.77)

Around one hundred thousand Portuguese fought in World War One after the nation entered the fray on the side of the Allied Powers. (OLIVEIRA, 2017, p.179) The majority of the rank and file troops were young, illiterate men from poor backgrounds. (Ibid., p.27) Ill-trained and ill-equipped, thousands of soldiers were deployed to European and African theatres grudgingly, as popular aversion to the war effort was widespread in Portugal. (Ibid., p.24) In addition to the thousands of casualties and injured, over thirteen thousand Portuguese troops disappeared or were taken prisoner in battle at conflicts such as La Lys in April of 1918.

The care of the Portuguese prisoners of war in the prison camps was lacking due to inattention of the Portuguese government, compared with prisoners of other Allied nations. Also, the repatriation process was chaotic and drawn-out after the Armistice was signed which delayed Portuguese troops' return home. (Ibid.) Back in Portugal the economy and living conditions had suffered greatly during the War, especially acutely in the Algarve. This situation was then compounded by the deadly and virulent Spanish Flu epidemic that began in 1918, which also struck the Algarve, a region with a historically insufficient public health context. (VIEIRA RODRIGUES, 2019)

The long-awaited return of loved ones from the battlefields and prisoner of war camps as well as the subsiding of the epidemic, according to Bexiga (2020), elicited an exuberant, festive outpouring of joy and emotions for *bordeirenses* in this formative period of the Bordeira-style *charolas* in 1918-1920, a reflection of



the post-war "euphoria" experienced in Europe in this period. (PASCOAL SINTRA, 2016, p.47; PEREIRA, 2005, p.77) Bexiga explains:

It was happiness that came from *bordeirenses* returning from the War. Some died. The families of those who died didn't have happiness, but most people returned. There was a protracted sense of happiness. That gave birth to the development of the *charolas* and the way that they are still today.<sup>151</sup>

An emblem of this moment, and later enshrined as an iconic musician of Bordeira and the Algarve as a whole, was accordionist José Das Neves Vargues (1895-1967), known as "José Ferreiro Pai". Born in Bordeira, José followed the profession of his father: blacksmithing<sup>152</sup>, but later developed as a prodigious accordionist. (Figure 70) As a young man, in 1916, José began military service in the *Corpo Expedicionário Português*<sup>153</sup> and was sent to fight on the battlefields of France. Testimonies give witness to José being musically active in the time of his service in France, a nation with a strong popular accordion tradition. (CONCEIÇÃO, GUERREIRO, 2014, p.21)



Figure 70 – José Ferreiro Pai (at left with accordion) with the *charola* "Juventude União Bordeirense" in 1955

Source: DIVISÃO DE CULTURA, MUSEUS, ARQUEOLOGIA E RESTAURO, 2016, p.8

<sup>151</sup> Valério Bexiga, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

<sup>152</sup> The blacksmithing profession in Bordeira was intimately linked to the local quarrying and stone-working industries. "The quarry workers, in the fabrication and maintenance of their tools, would go to the blacksmiths to be furnished with the necessary instruments of their trade". (AFONSO, ZACARIAS, 2004, p.4)

<sup>153</sup> Largest Portuguese military force that fought in the First World War.

The thousands of Portuguese troops deployed abroad during the First World War, considered to be the first modern large-scale armed conflict, were from diverse regions of the country. On and off the battlefield, they interacted with soldiers from other nationalities, as well as local residents in the places of conflict. During the conflict, the practice of ludic and artistic endeavors proved to be crucial to maintenance of troop morale. Marques describes:

The *expedicionários*<sup>154</sup> passively resisted the day-to-day of the War with the aim to guarantee their own psychological stability transforming "free time" into acts of escaping from the difficult reality, fundamental to personal survival. (MARQUES, 2002, p.151)

Among the activities carried out by the Portuguese troops were music-making and song, which included the execution of the diatonic button accordion ("*harmónio*") for songs and dances (MARQUES, 2002, p.152), an instrument that had previously arrived in Portugal, but after World War One gained greater notoriety in the country, as well as the chromatic accordion (PASCOAL SINTRA, 2016, p.43) (Figure 71) The repertoire of these ludic moments included Portuguese regional music and dance traditions, but Portuguese troops in France were also exposed to the national musics of troops of other nationalities, as well as the rich French traditional and popular music of the day, which included accordion. (MARQUES, 2002, p.157)

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<sup>154</sup> Members of the *Corpo Expedicionário Português*



Figure 71 – During WWI, soldiers of the *Corpo Expedicionário Português* dance a *vira* accompanied by *harmónio* – *Liga dos Combatentes*

Source: PASCOAL SINTRA, 2016, p.28

Horácio de Assis Gonçalves (b.1880)<sup>155</sup> a Portuguese infantry lieutenant who participated in the epic battle of La Lys - that brought the death, disappearance or capture of thousands of Portuguese troops - describes first-hand the value placed on music-making by Portuguese combatants far from home, a practice with deep psychological and morale effects:

[...] there was a soldier from my 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion who was entertaining himself by playing the diatonic button accordion (*harmónio*). All of a sudden, he put it away and started to cry. [...] I asked him why, so suddenly, he began to cry for no apparent reason [...] He responded, sobbing, wiping away, with his strong and calloused hand, the crystalline tears of his pure soul that rolled down his face: "It's just that, in the sadness of the *harmónio* I longingly remembered my house, my family, and my homeland". (ASSIS GONÇALVES apud MARQUES, 2002, p.153)

Lifelong *charoleiro* Joaquim José Gago Contreiras ("Zé Campeão") (b.1936) recalls that José Ferreiro Pai was among the Portuguese troops who

<sup>155</sup> Horácio de Assis Gonçalves would later become secretary of dictator Oliveira Salazar.

had been made prisoner by the Germans during the course of the War, as well as singer and *charoleiro* from Bordeira, Sebastião Barra. (Figure 72) He describes the impact of the return of *bordeirense* prisoners on the community of Bordeira and the phenomenon of *charolas*, beginning in 1919 post-conflict:

Zé Ferreiro was a prisoner of war in the War of 1914 [...] The prisoners of war began to return, I think, in March of 1919. [...] They began arriving and it was a moment of happiness and commemoration, it was sensational. [...] Zé Ferreiro had been a prisoner of war and he was an accordionist, it was another reason for the *charolas* to acquire new force and new influences. From that moment on, it grew, for example with more accordionists, more musicians [...] <sup>156</sup>



Figure 72 - Joaquim José Gago Contreiras ("Zé Campeão") (Bordeira, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Another lifelong *charoleiro* from Bordeira, Joaquim Barra Farias (b.1938) also tells of singer Sebastião Barra's return from a German prisoner of war camp in March of 1919. (Figure 73) Though both Contreiras and Farias are of a generation posterior to that which fought in the battlefields of World War One, they remember the strong psychological and emotional effects that combatants felt when memories of the traumas of war and jubilation of return were elicited in the performances of *charolas* of Bordeira. According to Farias<sup>157</sup>, "I never saw Sebastião Barra sing, he was a great singer, *começador*<sup>158</sup>, I never saw him sing,

<sup>156</sup> Joaquim José Gago Contreiras, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

<sup>157</sup> Joaquim Barra Farias, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

<sup>158</sup> In *charolas*, the *começador* is the principal singer and improviser that leads the group. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.76)

but I saw him cry in the *Sociedade*<sup>159</sup>". Contreiras<sup>160</sup> also recalls the moment described by Farias, "(Barra) was also a prisoner of war in the War of 1914 [...] Zé Ferreiro played and Sebastião Barra began crying".



Figure 73 - Joaquim Barra Farias (Bordeira, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

It is in this post-War period of 1918-1920, that *charolas* with a secular, civic character (as opposed to the religious tradition of singing to the Christ Child) are formally organized in Bordeira, providing the foundation for the Bordeira *charola* tradition that continues today.<sup>161</sup> The earliest formal *charolas* in Bordeira, "*Mocidade União*" was founded in 1919, and "*União Bordeirense*" in 1920.

<sup>159</sup> *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense* is a civic-social club founded in Bordeira in 1936, a hub of the town's cultural activity for generations.

<sup>160</sup> Joaquim José Gago Contreiras, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

<sup>161</sup> It should be noted that the separation of Church and State carried out by Portuguese government of the First Republic included the prohibition of events or commemorations of religious character in public spaces (such as religious-themed *charolas*, etc.) outside of churches. Catholic *charolas* with Christmas themes will reappear only in the 1920's (CUNHA DUARTE, 1996, p.38)

(CONCEIÇÃO, GUERREIRO, 2014, p.21; PEREIRA, 2005, p.77) During this period the musical format of *charolas* in Bordeira begins to evolve into what it is commonplace today. Originally accompanied solely with chromatic accordion and *ferrinhos*<sup>162</sup>, the *charolas* gradually incorporated Andalusian<sup>163</sup> percussion in the form of *pandeireta* and *castanholas*<sup>164</sup> to further form the percussion section of the *charola* which is referred to as the *pancadaria*.<sup>165</sup> (PASCOAL SINTRA, 2016, p.46) (Figure 74) Occasionally the musical format of *charolas* in Bordeira will include instruments such as saxophone, guitar and *banjolim*<sup>166</sup>. In total, the number of participants in a *charola* can range from approximately fifteen to thirty. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.76)



Figure 74 – *Charola* "Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense" at the *Encontro de Charolas Clube de Futebol "Os Bonjoanenses"* in Faro (January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020) From left to right: *ferrinhos*, *pandeireta*, *castanholas*

Photo: José A. Curbelo

The choral aspect of *charolas* in Bordeira is composed of several singers, many of whom form part of the *pancadaria* as well, and the *começador*, a kind of lead singer, improviser and director. Pereira describes the role of the *começador*:

Each *charola* has a *principador* or *começador* that should have a good voice tone, but in the case of Bordeira they must be, above all, a good

<sup>162</sup> Metal triangle (idiophone)

<sup>163</sup> The Algarve shares an over 50km long fluvial border with Andalusia, Spain along the Guadiana River, Bordeira is located roughly 60km from the border with Spain. The Algarve and Andalusia have had close cultural and socioeconomic ties for centuries. Raimundo and Vieira (1990, p.121) write that *charolas* are "veritable philharmonics of diverse influences and with an Andalusian style of playing, with their marches, waltzes, and *cantos novos*, animated by wind instruments, castanets and tambourines, that perform a quasi-*flamenco* rhythm".

<sup>164</sup> Tambourine (membraphone) and castanets (idiophone)

<sup>165</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro

<sup>166</sup> Stringed instrument combining characteristics of the banjo and *bandolim* (mandolin)

improviser that knows the tradition and understands how to translate a spirit of the moment in which the *charola* is invited to participate, whether it be a private residence or in a public setting, such as in the *Sociedade* or a café. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.76)

Originally in the religious *charolas* around Christmas time a traditional slow-tempo music style known as "*canto velho*" was employed to sing lyrics allusive to the story of the Christ Child. As the characteristic Bordeira style of *charolas* developed from 1918-1920 onwards, the novel incorporation of new instruments and popular social dance rhythms - performed at weekend dances in the community animated by accordionists<sup>167</sup>- changed the musical aesthetic of *charolas* creating what is known as "*canto novo*". (CUNHA DUARTE, 1996, p.43) Cunha Duarte describes his version of the incorporation process of these new, popular rhythms in to the itinerant, seasonal *charolas*:

In the 1920's and 1930's, the groups would go door to door and it was common, along the way, for musicians to improvise melodies that were popular at the time: a popular song, a round dance, a waltz, a *pasodoble*, a mazurka, etc.[...] This "profane" music was only to lighten the journey. (CUNHA DUARTE, 1996, p.47)

As far as the lyrical and poetic content of the *charolas* in Bordeira, its history, development and evolution are rich and dynamic. Like the rest of Portugal – and the Iberian Peninsula in general – Algarve possesses a millenias-old tradition of oral literature and popular poetry, and Bordeira is no exception. In addition to its *charola* and accordion traditions, Bordeira has gained fame for being a hotbed of poets.

Though not from Bordeira, the prolific and influential Algarvian popular poet António Aleixo (1899-1949), who resided in nearby Loulé, in his improvisational poetic participation in popular events in the region such as street fairs and *romarias*, would frequent the town of Bordeira. (Figure 75) The poet revealed his genius at nine years old when he would sing *janeiras*, improvising verses, door to door with his siblings in the rural areas of Loulé at Christmas and New Year's. (DUARTE, 1999, p.33) Possessing an irreverent, and socially critical

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<sup>167</sup> Such as *pasodobles* and *mazurcas*. rhythms originating in other European countries that were adopted and adapted by musicians in the Algarve. (CUNHA DUARTE, 1996, p.43) Regarding the cultural contact with other nationalities in the Algarve, Pascoal Sintra (2016, p.48) writes, "The cultural exchanges with the English, Spanish, and French, mainly as a result of the commercial contacts with those countries during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, brought (musical) novelties that the people adopted and adapted to their environment, making them unique and their own".

style stemming from his varied professions and long-suffered life story<sup>168</sup>, Aleixo exerted a profound influence on other popular poets in Bordeira and elsewhere in Portugal.<sup>169</sup> Duarte states that:

(Aleixo) ended up leaving a legacy of great admiration, today with practically no eyewitnesses remaining alive, but he had fame that was perpetuated in his legacy that is passed from generation to generation. [...] Aleixo was viewed, even then, as a popular philosopher, a profound barometer of the restrictive social conflict in which his Algarve, and even all of Portugal, was immersed. (DUARTE, 1999, p.54, 76)



Figure 75 – António Aleixo, 1943

Source: DUARTE, 1999, p.89

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<sup>168</sup> Growing up in a period of Portuguese history marked by economic difficulties and political instability, Aleixo was born into a family of weavers and possessed little schooling, he served in the military, was a policeman, emigrated to Paris, France to work in civil construction, sold lottery tickets, among a wide list of professional attempts at overcoming poverty, He also had a wife and seven children, and Aleixo suffered health problems all of his life, which eventually included tuberculosis that ultimately ended his life in 1949. His trials and tribulations are reflected in his poetry. (DUARTE, 1999)

<sup>169</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro



*Charolas* in Bordeira compose new music and lyrics for their repertoire performed in January of each year, they will also utilize compositions from the past, which seem to be perennial in their form and content. The topics presented in the lyrics of *charola* compositions are diverse, but they generally accentuate themes related to Bordeira and its residents (both living and deceased), social solidarity, and well-wishing for the New Year.<sup>170</sup> The improvised, rhymed verses that occur during certain moments of a performance of a *charola* are normally in heptasyllabic quatrain form.<sup>171</sup>

The practice of improvisation in this method is not exclusive to *charolas* in Bordeira, it has also been traditionally used in the poetic duels of *canto ao despique*, accompanied by accordion in taverns and informal gatherings in the Algarve, a phenomenon found in many other parts of Portugal. Poet and *charoleiro* from Bordeira, Rui Vargues (b.1970) explains (Figure 76):

Back then, at night in the bars there was no electricity. So, the only things there were to do were play accordion, have some drinks, and (*canto ao despique*) and still today when we get together and get a bit drunk, we start rhyming.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro

<sup>171</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2020, Faro

<sup>172</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro



Figure 76 – Rui Vargues (Faro, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

It was from these kinds of constant musical and poetic confraternizations among artists in and around Bordeira that gave birth to collaborations that came to be iconic compositions in the vast repertoire of Bordeira's *charolas*.<sup>173</sup> One of these compositions is the *Marcha de Bordeira*, with music by José Ferreiro Pai and lyrics by António Aleixo, which is displayed below with an English translation by the author. This will give the reader an idea as to the form and content of repertoire performed by Bordeira's *charolas*, radically different from the popular Catholic content alluding to the Christmas story as traditionally performed elsewhere in Algarve. (CUNHA DUARTE, 2002) The duo also collaborated on two other iconic Bordeira *charola* compositions: *Hino da Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense* and *Hino de Bordeira*.

### **Marcha de Bordeira**

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<sup>173</sup> Accordionist Nelson Conceição estimates that over the course of one hundred years from 1920 to 2020, six to seven hundred musical compositions with lyrics were created for Bordeira's *charolas* by various artists. (Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé)

**Music: José Ferreiro Pai**

**Lyrics: António Aleixo**

<p>Rapaziada amiga De amizade eterna. Da Bordeira antiga Nasce a moderna.</p> <p>A felicidade Já não é quimera Com esta amizade Pura e sincera.</p> <p>Entre as flores Das amendoeiras Nascem amores Crescem clareiras.</p> <p>Somos felizes Num beijo puro Nascem raizes Para o futuro.</p> <p>Temos p´ras festas Lírios e rosas E para o trabalho As mãos calosas</p> <p>Só o trabalho dá vida aos obreiros honrados Como o orvalho refresca a seara nos prados.</p> <p>Oh Bordeirenses</p>	<p>Young friends Of eternal friendship. From the Old Bordeira A new one is born.</p> <p>Happiness Is no longer a chimera With this friendship Pure and sincere.</p> <p>Among the flowers Of the almond trees Romances are born Glades grow.</p> <p>We are happy In a pure kiss Roots grow For the future.</p> <p>We have, for the festivities, Lilies and roses And for labor Calloused hands.</p> <p>Only labor brings life to honorable workers Like the dew refreshes the evening in the fields</p> <p>Oh, people of Bordeira</p>
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<p>Como é bonito Desta Bordeira, O chão bendito!</p> <p>Bordeira amada Em que nascemos Se fores atacada Todos te defenderemos.</p>	<p>How beautiful it is From Bordeira, Its blessed land.</p> <p>Beloved Bordeira Where we were born Should you be attacked All of us would defend you.</p>
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Source: (CONCEIÇÃO, GUERREIRO, 2014, p.71)

Though the lyrics of music performed by *charolas* in Bordeira traditionally are not explicitly political in nature<sup>174</sup>, during the authoritarian *Estado Novo* (1933-1974) under Salazar and later Marcelo Caetano, *charolas*, like all forms of expression (journalism, performing arts, etc.) were subject to rigid government censorship through wide-reaching regime institutions and networks. (BARRETO, 1999, p.7; CABRERA, 2008) The censorship carried out by this Catholic, anti-Communist and colonialist regime had its historical roots in persecutions conducted as part of the Inquisition. (MELO, 2016, p.490) In addition to attempting to control thought and expression, in a country where poverty and rampant illiteracy already hindered communication of ideas via the written word, censorship initiatives sought to mold the minds of the Portuguese, encouraging people to engage in self-censorship, aborting creative process that could be contrary to the regime, before they even began. (GAMA, 2009, p.8; LIMA, 2013, p.108) These repressive policies deeply marked the culture and collective memory of Portugal for generations. (PEÑA RODRÍGUEZ, 2012, p.188)

Faced with this situation, the culture of Bordeira, regionally infamous for its Communist political leanings and secularism, took a stance of veiled resistance.<sup>175</sup> In their varied forms of rich cultural expressions: *charolas*, popular

<sup>174</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro

<sup>175</sup> Bexiga (2020) states, regarding Bordeira, "The fame that we had was "Little Russia", "Little Moscow" [...] but that generation didn't talk about Communism, it was "Equality" - which is different because it is a social concept and Communism is a political concept. [...] After 1974, in the first elections [...] they were able to establish a polling station here in Bordeira [...] which goes to how you the power that the Communist Party had". Pereira (2005, p.49) notes that Bordeira's polling station was established in 1985. In elections after redemocratization, Left parties have traditionally won in Bordeira.

theatre ("*récitas*"), *Carnaval*, improvised poetry, etc. *bordeirenses* were able to maintain opposition to the regime and engage in communication amongst themselves. José Aniceto describes how this was carried out (Figure 77):

People had to camouflage, disguise (their ideas). You had to know how to read between the lines, the jokes people told were sophisticated, with double meanings [...] In relation with the *charolas*, people (in Bordeira) have always been politicized because they studied, they read. [...] People were always against the dictatorship. In the area of culture, they would do popular theatre, *récitas*, and include those jokes with double meaning, people had to know how to read between the lines.<sup>176</sup>

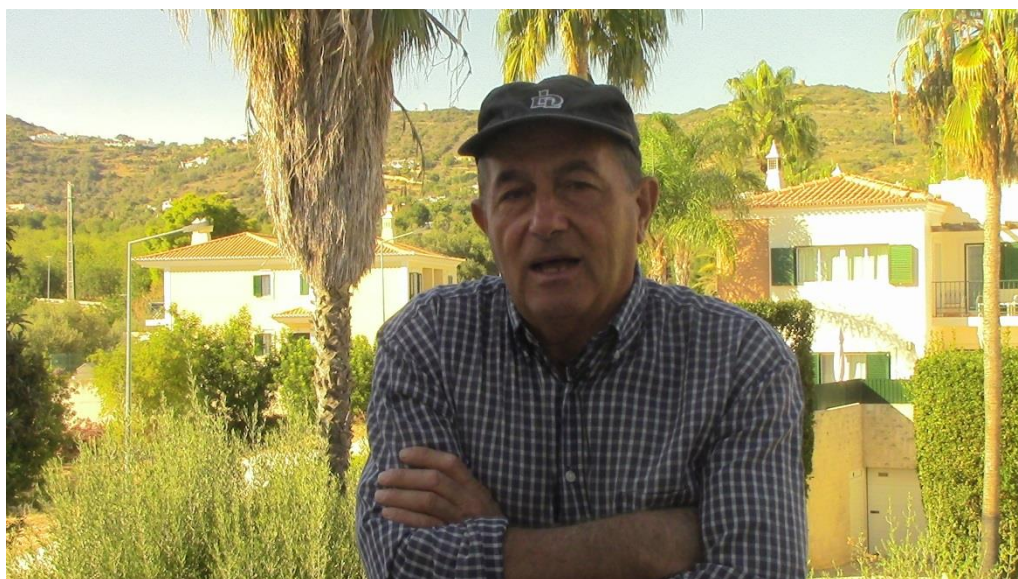


Figure 77 – José Manuel Aniceto (Santa Bárbara de Nexe, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Bexiga (2020), as well, describes the social and artistic context in Bordeira under the *Estado Novo* (Figure 78):

Your thoughts had to remain on the inside, under Salazar we had to swallow our thoughts. Some people were sent to jail. [...] People had solidarity with one other, but there were informers of the PIDE<sup>177</sup> as well. [...] But we knew more or less who the informers were [...] People shared the same way of thinking, what was discussed among the people had to be kept a secret. Political matters were taboo in the *charolas*, you had to follow the official line otherwise you would be sent to prison.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>176</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

<sup>177</sup> *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (PIDE) was a State security agency in Portugal under Salazar.

<sup>178</sup> Valério Bexiga, Interview, 2020, Bordeira



Figure 78 – Valério Bexiga (Bordeira, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

As mentioned, the oldest formally-constituted *charolas* in Bordeira still active today are: "*Mocidade União*" (1919), and "*União Bordeirense*" (1920). Throughout the decades, numerous other *charolas* were formed and participated in New Year's and January 6<sup>th</sup> festivities in Bordeira. Though many disband and its members join other *charolas* over the years, there is continuity in the present day of *charolas* founded in past generations. Such is the case of the *charola* "*Democrata*", which included professionals such as doctors and lawyers in its founding, constituted in 1975 after the revolution that brought an end to the authoritarian *Estado Novo*.<sup>179</sup> Also, "*Juventude União Bordeirense*" founded in 1955, which counted among its founders Zé Campeão. Normally, within a *charola* there is a core leadership group, but the dynamic of participation and decision-making is much more cooperative. Pereira describes:

Despite the functional or logistical importance of one person or another in a *charola*, it is, above all, an extremely egalitarian structure, where there is no boss with discretionary power that would stem from any hierarchical authority. (PEREIRA, 2005)

<sup>179</sup> António Pinto, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

In many ways, the *charola* phenomenon in Bordeira is a symbolic synthesis of this small community's historically strong character of cooperativism and associativism. This unique character, reinforced by a dense network of endogamic family relations as well as collective, entrepreneurial industrial relations stemming from the local quarrying and stone-working sectors, has set Bordeira markedly apart from neighboring communities, a fact that is widely recognized by outsiders and *bordeirenses* themselves. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.44, 52-53) This dynamic has also been reflected in the civic-political sphere with Bordeira historically presenting strong Communist tendencies in its political sentiments and voting tendencies. (Ibid., p.50-51) Religiously, Bordeira has historically lacked Catholic fervor in comparison with other neighboring communities, as well as counts with the presence of a Protestant church in the town, frequented by residents. (Ibid., p.95-100)

The development of this unique character of socioeconomic cooperation, collective self-determination, social solidarity and civic-cultural local pride is viewed with different lenses. Several point to the domestic and international migratory experiences of *bordeirenses* throughout the past century as being a catalytic factor in these social transformations<sup>180</sup>. Insightfully, Pereira summarizes this as follows:

[...] the importance of emigration in the life of Bordeira was never solely economic, however it constituted a determining factor in the construction of its "modernity", whether it be novel production techniques that allowed for the introduction, for example, of new stone-cutting methods by emigrants returning from Argentina in the beginning of the (20<sup>th</sup> century), or as one of the primary vehicles for the introduction of socially-innovative ideas, thanks to the *bordeirenses* that had the opportunity to travel Europe or participate in the First World War, in a society which possessed little or no access or communication with the exterior or large urban centers. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.32)

This dynamic of socioeconomic cooperation and solidarity, partly inspired in ideals espoused by Portugal's First Republic, expressed itself in the 1920's and 1930's with the founding of numerous community associations in Bordeira, the same time that the town's characteristic *charolas* were gaining force. Among

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<sup>180</sup> The emigration of people from the Algarve, including Bordeira, was concentrated on South America in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly to Argentina, but also Brazil. Later from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onward this economically and politically motivated emigration shifted to the industrialized nations of Western Europe, most importantly to France. (BORGES, 2009; PEREIRA, 2005, p.31-32, 2014)

the organizations founded - during a historical moment in which Bordeira was an isolated, poor hamlet distant from the regional administrative centers - were the iconic *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense* (1936) which became a cultural epicenter of the community and central to the *charola* tradition, *Cooperativa de Consumo* (1921) one of the first consumer cooperatives in Portugal, and the *Sociedade do Carro Funerário* (1923) which established a mule-drawn funerary transport service to the graveyard in the parish ("*freguesia*") capital, Santa Bárbara de Nexe several kilometers away, putting an end to the necessity of carrying the deceased by hand. (PEREIRA, 2005)<sup>181</sup> (Figure 79) (Figure 80) According to Pereira:

The different forms of self-help and solidarity that, bit by bit, took root in the collective spirit of Bordeira, seem to historically spring from various factors such as the new ideas and emerging ideologies with the implantation of the Republic, the post-War (1914-1918) European environment and the return of the *bordeirenses* that took part in the conflict, the necessity of the population to face concrete difficulties that were recurrently debated: the absence of any system of social protection on the part of the public authorities or the State in particular, the isolation and difficulty in transportation and communication that Bordeira perennially faced, and also a certain degree of marginalization and oblivion by the parish capital. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.44)



Figure 79 – *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense* (Bordeira, Faro, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

<sup>181</sup> Valério Bexiga, Interview, 2020, Bordeira





Figure 80 – Interior of the *Cooperativa de Consumo* (Bordeira, Faro, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

José Aniceto, who's family had firms in the quarrying and stone-working industries, had uncles that migrated to Brazil and Argentina to work in the same profession at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and returned to Bordeira during the end of the First World War. According to Aniceto, the emigrants of that generation that returned home, came back with new ideas that shaped the social organization of their home community:

They came to the conclusion that individually they wouldn't achieve anything, only by acting collectively, in union, they were able to resolve their problems, because they didn't have anything. Here in Bordeira there was nothing, this was an isolated hamlet. [...] To solve their problems, they resolved that they had to unite, they had to form associations [...].<sup>182</sup>

Bexiga also observes:

That was a generation of heroes, the generation that founded the *Cooperativa*, and the *charolas* [...] Here was an island, we had to make do with what was here, that's why those institutions were created so that people could self-realize themselves [...] 75% of the Portuguese soldiers that went to the War of 1914 were illiterate [...] Schooling was very important [...] That contributed to that generation, learning to read and write, and that was precisely the generation that, from 1920 onward, created those institutions.<sup>183</sup>

Beginning in the 1920's, Portugal saw an increase in civil construction projects. This fueled a growth in Bordeira's quarrying and stone-working sector.

<sup>182</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

<sup>183</sup> Valério Bexiga, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

(AFONSO, ZACARIAS, 2004) According to Aniceto, the cooperative spirit of *bordeirenses* was applied professionally:

When (quarry workers and stone workers) would get a contract, instead of keeping it to themselves, they had a policy of sharing and dividing the contract amongst everybody. One would win a contract and divide it amongst everybody, that way everybody worked. There was a spirit of union.<sup>184</sup>

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the early migration of *bordeirense* stone-workers to Argentina and Brazil, there was a period of migration of professionals in the same sector to the French Protectorate of Morocco, during a period of civil construction by the colonial regime.<sup>185</sup> (Figure 81) Later in the 1950's, there was significant domestic labor migration to the area around Lisbon, particularly Cascais, another site of booming civil construction. According to Aniceto (2020) most of the migrants to Morocco and Cascais eventually returned to Bordeira (bringing with them new industrial techniques and tools), having accumulated capital to purchase and improve real estate in their home town, which had been their original goal on embarking on those professional migratory endeavors.



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<sup>184</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

Figure 81 – Quarry and stone worker emigrants from Santa Barbara de Nexe in Brazil in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

SOURCE: BERNARDES ET AL., 2006, p.232

The period of the 1920's to the 1940's, approximately, is popularly considered locally to be a "Golden Age" of Bordeira. (AFONSO, ZACARIAS, 2004, p.5; PEREIRA, 2005, p.85) It was a Golden Age not only in terms of industrial and economic dynamism, and civic-social organizational activity, but also in terms of artistic effervescence and sociocultural festive traditions in which the chromatic accordion, iconic artists such as José Ferreira Pai, social dance events (such as those held at the *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense*), and *charolas* played a large part, and cemented themselves to be important symbols for Bordeira's collective memory and cultural identity for generations to come.

Later, during the post-World War Two environment of the 1950's, in the throes of Salazar's dictatorial *Estado Novo*, Portugal began a period of economic modernization and integration with the recuperating, but dynamic, economies of Western Europe. It is in this period that Portugal enters in to multi-lateral trade schemes such as GATT and EFTA. However, the nation (together with Franco's Spain) was one of the last remaining authoritarian, non-democratic regimes in Western Europe with a still largely archaic economic structure, and as the European powers tended towards processes of decolonization of their overseas possessions, the *Estado Novo* regime was steadfast in its maintenance of Portugal's centuries-old "Overseas Provinces", particularly in Africa, as integral parts of the nation, being sources of raw materials and colonial commerce from which the nation's elite benefitted.

In 1961, armed conflict in Angola harked the beginning of a grueling, thirteen-year war in Portugal's colonial possessions, which will only be brought to an end with the 1974 Revolution carried out by segments of the Armed Forces fed up with the conflict, that will depose the *Estado Novo* regime itself. Fought simultaneously on multiple fronts such as Guiné, Angola and Moçambique against armed indigenous independence movements supported by various international protagonists (during the context of the Cold War), the "Colonial War" effort sent 820, 000 Portuguese troops to Africa (which represented 7% of Portugal's population at the time, a little under nine million people). (CAMPOS,

2006, p.151) Much like Portugal's participation in the First World War, the vast majority of these troops were young men from humble backgrounds originating in many regions of the nation, and there was a popular sentiment among large portions of the populace of resistance to the war effort. (Ibid., p.152)

Among the Portuguese combatants, it is estimated that 8,831 were killed, tens of thousands wounded, and over 100,000 were left suffering with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. (CAMPOS, 2006, p.152) Coelho Mestre (2017, p.14), who served in Angola in the 1970's, estimates that the small parish ("*freguesia*") of Santa Bárbara de Nexe sent 150 young conscripts to the battlefields during the Colonial War, with at least two deaths. (Figure 82) The traumatic experiences of fighting in the overseas Colonial War marked a generation of young people in Portugal. After the conflict, much like during World War One, there was a public silencing of the memory of the Colonial War and the initiation of processes of forgetting of this episode, which many Portuguese viewed with shame and sadness. This has made it difficult for combatants of that generation, born in the 1940's and 1950's to embark on memorial processes, share lived experiences with others, and engage in healing mechanisms. (CAMPOS, 2006, 2014; MOREIRA, WEISER, 2017)



Figure 82 – *Bordeirense* soldier José Manuel da Conceição in Guiné Bissau (1973-75) in a moment of leisure with other Portuguese combatants

SOURCE: COELHO MESTRE, 2017, p.102

During the period of the Colonial War, military conscription for Portuguese young men was mandatory, and normally they served tours of duty of at least two years. In order to escape military conscription and deployment to the bloody, protracted guerilla conflicts in tropical Africa, but also to seek freedom from the authoritarian *Estado Novo* regime, and crushing economic poverty in Portugal's interior, many Portuguese opted to emigrate, often clandestinely, to France and other Western European nations. Coelho Mestre writes:

[...] those that fled (the War) and sought refuge in strange lands, namely France, saw their lives transformed and faced an uncertain future, going through difficult hardships, greater than those faced by who went to war [...] (COELHO MESTRE, 2017, p.13)

From 1957 to 1974 1.5 million Portuguese emigrated, primarily to European countries, with more than half of them going to France, most entering clandestinely. (PEREIRA, 2014, p.26) Even beyond Portuguese borders, leaving home and loved ones behind and working informally, Portuguese emigrants in France could not fully escape the effect of Salazar policies on their lives, yet were not fully protected by French legislation. Pereira insightfully describes this difficult situation that these emigrants faced:

(Administrative) inefficiency is accompanied by the fragilization of the population, another tactic of the Government of the Salazar dictatorship. Impeding Portuguese from emigrating legally and confining them to clandestineness represented the surest way to fragilize them. In a clandestine state both in relation with the French and Portuguese States, the emigrants had to be more docile and prudent. A Sword of Damocles was suspended above their heads. If they took part in labor union or political activities, they could be immediately fired by their employers, thus, expelled from French territory. That would imply the suspension of the means to reimburse the money that they had to borrow to get to France. This fragilization goes against the family, still touted as one of the values of the Salazar regime. Until 1969, the repression of clandestine immigration does not solely have the goal of impeding illegal exits. It seeks to oblige the emigrants to become indebted and avoid the exit of women and children. The prudence of the emigrants and the influx of foreign currency are born from the division of the nuclear family unit. (PEREIRA, 2014, p.422)

Emigrants from Bordeira in this period, as well, were motivated by economic necessity and the need to escape military conscription. By and large, these emigrants were quarrymen and stone-workers, and ended up finding employment in the cities of France, such as Paris, in the civil construction sector. These experienced artisans came to work on iconic buildings and monuments in Paris such as the Louvre, Arch of Triumph, and Notre Dame, also acquiring new

industrial techniques as in past experiences of labor migration. (AFONSO, ZACARIAS, 2004, p.9) José Aniceto describes the local social impact of this period, back home, in Bordeira:

The youth, at that time, left. Some went to the Colonial War in Africa, and others left clandestinely to France to not go to war [...] In those years, the *charolas* almost disappeared [...] It was a time in which everything was lacking, in the 1960's, the most apt people left Bordeira. They emigrated, some to not go to war, some to better their lot in life.<sup>186</sup>

*Charoleiro* Joaquim José Gago Contreiras ("Zé Campeão") was one of those *bordeirenses* that emigrated to France in this period, where he was one of the founders of a *charola* created by *bordeirenses* in France, one of the many informal Portuguese performing groups representing the nation's different cultural regions founded by emigrants in France during that time.<sup>187</sup> (CONTREIRAS, 2020) Many Portuguese emigrants that left clandestinely to avoid military conscription were not able to return home from France until the deposition of the *Estado Novo* in 1974. Rui Vargues elaborates:

The longing and nostalgia were so great. The emigrants (from Bordeira) couldn't return otherwise they would be jailed - it was a dictatorship - but they had been born into the *charolas*, and the longing and nostalgia was so great that they founded a *Charola dos Emigrantes* (in France).<sup>188</sup>

According to Rui Vargues<sup>189</sup>, it was emigrants in France that gave continuity to the Bordeira *charola* tradition during the difficult period of the 1960's. Also, Bexiga (2020) remembers that, once emigrants were finally able to return from France, they would come to Bordeira in the end of December to be able to participate in *charolas*. He recalls the case of a *charoleiro* emigrant in France who was not able to return one time, during this period of the year, and, "He cried the whole day there (in France), which goes to show you the enthusiasm that *bordeirenses* have for their festivity".

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Accordionist Silvia Silva, participant in the *charola "União Bordeirense"*, was born in France to emigrant parents from Olhão. She recalls the central role of Portuguese music and dance events for emigrants in France at that time: "it was a connection to their homeland. Only at the end of the year or August is when they had vacation time [...] Like many emigrants did and do, they came to Portugal in that period, one month. Out of twelve months, eleven months are many days, many hours, so (music and dance) was a form that they could combat *saudade* (longing and nostalgia)" (Silvia Silva, Interview, 2020, Olhão)

<sup>188</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

António Pinto ("Tó"), proprietor of the iconic Café Pinto (also known as "Bar do Marroco", for the nickname of his father, from whom he inherited ownership as well the nickname) located in the social and commercial epicenter of Bordeira, the "Cocheira", has participated in *charolas* in Bordeira since 1971, reciting poetic verses.<sup>190 191</sup> (Figure 83) (Figure 84) In his establishment, aside from local *bordeirense* residents and occasional travelers, he has attended many emigrants from behind his counter. He recalls the seasonal return of *bordeirense* emigrants who had established a professional and family life in European countries, and elsewhere and would return when they were granted vacation time (Figure 85):

I was never an emigrant but I interacted with them when they would come in August. [...] Those who emigrated in the 1960's returned in the 1990's or the beginning of 2000. Their kids and grandkids [...] remained abroad.<sup>192</sup>



Figure 83 – António Pinto (Bordeira, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

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<sup>190</sup> Pereira describes the centrality of Café Pinto to Bordeira's sociocultural life, as revealed in his doctoral thesis: "Tó's café [...] occupies a privileged place in the hearts of *bordeirenses* and constitutes the principal nexus in the network of informal sociability in Bordeira. It is a veritable local institution where the first initial steps of this present study about the community of Bordeira and the *charola* tradition were taken [...]" (PEREIRA, 2005, p.58)

<sup>191</sup> António Pinto, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.



Figure 84 – Interior of Café Pinto (Bordeira, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 85 – Exterior of Café Pinto (Bordeira, Faro, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

About this generation of *bordeirense* emigrants, Rui Vargues contextualizes:

Even after (the Revolution of) April 25<sup>th</sup> there were many emigrants (abroad) and almost all those who were *charoleiros*, when they were able to get vacation time, (they tried) to get it at the end of the year, to participate in the *charolas*. Nowadays [...] the ones from that period are all retired, many have passed away, or they are back in Bordeira.<sup>193</sup>

One of the classic, and most emblematic marches from this generation of emigrants still used by *charolas* in Bordeira to this day is *Marcha dos Emigrantes*, composition of Zé Campeão, regarding his true-life experience – and of many

<sup>193</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro



others – as emigrants in France. According to António Pinto<sup>194</sup>, who fervently and regularly sings and recites this march, it was created in the late 1970's, early 1980's while Zé Campeão was in France. Below are the lyrics with a translation by the author.

### Marcha dos Emigrantes

#### Music and Lyrics: Joaquim José Gago Contreiras ("Zé Campeão")

<p>Nós somos os Emigrantes  Vivendo em terras distantes  Da nossa pátria tão bela  Mas nunca a abandonamos  Porque ao partir deixamos  A nossa alma com ela</p> <p>E é por isso que ao voltar  Voltamos a encontrar  A nossa própria vida  Tal e qual uma flor  Que regada com amor  Volta a estar florida</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Refrão</u></p> <p>Cheios de ilusões abalamos  Em busca da aventura  E ao despedir-se choramos  As lágrimas d'amargura</p> <p>Guiava-nos a luz da esperança  Ao eco dos nossos passos  E só tínhamos confiança  Na força dos nossos braços</p>	<p>We are the Emigrants  Living in distant lands  Far from our beautiful Motherland  But we never abandon Her  Because upon departing we leave  Our soul with Her</p> <p>It is for that reason that upon  returning  We find again  Our own life  Just like a flower  That watered with love  Blooms again</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Refrain</u></p> <p>Full of illusions, we left  In search of adventure  And on our departure, we cried  Tears of bitterness</p> <p>The light of hope guided us  In the echo of our steps  And we only trusted</p>
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<sup>194</sup> António Pinto, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

<p>Para quem nunca imigrou  E a sua terra deixou  Não compreende afinal  O que é sentir o prazer  De novo voltar a ver  A sua terra natal</p> <p>Mas há muitos que imigraram  Morreram e não voltaram  Á sua casinha querida  Durou pouco a ilusão  No fundo a imigração  É mais um drama da vida</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Refrão</u></p>	<p>In the strength of our arms</p> <p>Whom never emigrated  And left their homeland  Cannot come to understand  What it is to feel the pleasure  Of seeing once again  The land of your birth</p> <p>But many who emigrated  Died and never returned  To their beloved home  The illusion did not last long  At the end, emigration  Is one more of life´s dramas</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Refrain</u></p>
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SOURCE: Nelson Conceição

Another key element embedded in Bordeira's *charola* tradition is the festive ritual practice of commensality, with participants being offered food and drink and partaking of them together. Not solely limited to *charolas*, commensality is also practiced in Bordeira's other popular festive traditions (*Carnaval, Marchas Populares*, etc.), as well as in the year-round daily social life of the community. Social scientist Claude Fischler (2011) sustains that commensality among a human group is a fundamental, structuring act that achieves varying purposes: it is distributive of necessary resources among group members, it helps define group membership, produces crucial social bonding, provides the context to gather together family members and friends, promotes reciprocity among group members and assists in the socialization of young people. Fischler (2011, p.16) writes, "one of the obvious functions of commensality [...] is socializing individuals into specific rules involving cooperation". He emphasizes the traditional ritual significance of commensality in many cultures, and also observes the

contemporary trend of increased "individualization" of eating, a reflection of modern individualism.

Aside from the cafés and bars in Bordeira's town center – such as Café Pinto – that are key sites of sociocultural interaction and commensality of the community, not only on January 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> but year-round as well, the other instances of commensality concerning *charolas* take place at the residences of community members. *Charolas* in Bordeira, as in times past, will go around the town and perform at residences of friends and family, and it is customary to offer food and drink to the *charoleiros*. (Figure 86) (Figure 87) José Aniceto describes:

(The *charolas*) are a good moment of conviviality, and they involve practically everybody, all the families in Bordeira are involved at *charola* time. [...] It is a way to share with others. If I invite a *charola* to perform at my house, automatically I invite all the neighbors to come as well to hear the *charola* and also to eat what I offer to them. That's a way to receive people and open the doors of our houses. The house is open, a house is meant to be opened not closed.<sup>195</sup>



Figure 86 – *Charolas* “*Democrata*” and “*União Bordeirense*” performing at a private residence (Bordeira, January 6th, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

<sup>195</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe



Figure 87 – Guests partaking of food and drink prepared by homeowner for *charolas* “*Democrata*” and “*União Bordeirense*” (Bordeira, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Aniceto also describes the dynamic of commensality that historically has pervaded Bordeira’s relatively egalitarian social and professional life:

Nowadays, people are little more individualistic. In the past, people worked hard, stone quarrying was a hard job [...] People would work eight hours and then they had a need for conviviality. That was the role of the *Cocheira* [...] people would come down from work, go to the *Cocheira*, have a drink and maintain conviviality. It was practically an Assembly. [...] (In the *charolas*) there is conviviality among an engineer, a doctor, an architect, a stonemason, a quarry worker, a carpenter. In the past it was just stone workers and blacksmiths, now you find all kinds of professions. [...] I form part of a *charola* because of the conviviality with old friends, younger people, and even the grandkids are starting to participate, as well as the sons and daughters. It’s a way to bring people together – the family.<sup>196</sup>

In regards to the customary transmission methods, from one generation to the next, of Bordeira’s *charola* tradition, Pereira (2005) emphasizes the tradition’s inherent egalitarian nature and its lack of dependence on formal power structures - whether they be public institutions or private organizations – to ensure its continuity, an expression, he claims, that is representative of the traditional socioeconomic character of Bordeira itself, historically based on small land

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

holdings, collective industrial work in quarrying and stone-working, and a tightly woven endogamic community fabric. (PEREIRA, 2005, pp.79, 84) While acknowledging the critical importance of key figures within a *charola* that are involved in musical creation and rehearsal, as well as organization and logistical matters, Pereira states:

Despite the functional or logistical importance of one person or another in a *charola*, it is, above all, an extremely egalitarian structure where there is no boss with discretionary power that would emanate from any hierarchical authority. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.79)

Aside from personally participating in Bordeira's *charolas*, no formal, pedagogical institution or method exists to learn the tradition and participate in its various elements: accordionist, *começador*, *pancadaria*, singers, standard-bearer, improviser, etc. According to Zé Campeão<sup>197</sup>, being a *charoleiro* "can't be taught and can't be learned". Lead *começador* of "*União Bordeirense*" and mentor of young *charoleiros*, poet Rui Vargues concurs, "in my opinion, *charolas* are the people".<sup>198</sup> Several informants for this article emphasized this "organic" inter-generational transmission process, most often occurring within a family environment.

Accordionist Silvia Silva from Olhão, fourteen kilometers away from Bordeira on the coast, had originally participated in *charolas* of religious character. In the year 2000 she began participating in *charolas* in Bordeira. Currently participating in the *charola* "*União Bordeirense*", she described the large difference she encountered in the intergenerational transmission of these two traditions:

In Bordeira - since I have participated (in the *charolas*) since 2000 - there has always been a lot of young people. [...] They end up being involved because of their parents and they learned to listen and develop a taste for (*charolas*). [...] In Bordeira, there has always been a lot (of young people), they have strong roots and they start to live and feel (the *charola* tradition) from a young age.<sup>199</sup>

Although Pereira (2005, p.78), in his field work in 1997-1999, noted the predominance of males in Bordeira's *charolas*, he states that there were *charolas* with an equal number of male and female participants, or a majority of women. According to him, "this is significant, seeing the recent evolution of the structure

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<sup>197</sup> José Gago Contreiras, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

<sup>198</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro

<sup>199</sup> Silvia Silva, Interview, 2020, Olhão

of *charola* participants, due to a climate of equality between sexes mainly found among the younger strata of the local population". This phenomenon of increased participation of women and girls in Bordeira's *charolas* was observed in Curbelo's fieldwork in January of 2020. On this subject, Silvia Silva observes:

In Bordeira, I think there has always been many women (in the *charolas*), the girls we see now that are twenty years old [...] when I started, they were young girls and they participated in the (*charolas*) of young children.<sup>200</sup>

Though lacking formal institutional education structures that would act as mediators in its intergenerational transmission, Bordeira's *charola* tradition possesses certain "rites of passage" that form and prepare young people for full participation in adult *charolas*. In his field work at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Pereira (Ibid.) noted the practice of organizing *charolas* in Bordeira solely composed of children or teenagers. (Figure 88) He observed that upon reaching eighteen years of age, young *charoleiros* of these groups gained entry in to the well-established adult *charolas*.<sup>201</sup> Rui Vargues, who trains *charolas* composed of young people, stresses the importance of this learning process and emphasizes the natural advantages that these youth *charolas* have over those composed of adults:

(Us older *charoleiros*) hold rehearsals (with the young people) and we start to teach them, us older *charoleiros* do the percussion ("*pancadaria*") and the young people rehearse and do what we do, and they absorb everything much easier than the older *charoleiros*.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> 2019-2020 videos of a *bordeirense* youth *charola*, featuring *começadora* Clara Grou, can be found here: <https://youtu.be/ln7o0qTkWxo>

<sup>202</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2020, Faro



Figure 88 – Youth *charola* (F.C. Bomjoanense, Faro, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

In regards to the fieldwork carried out for this article, January of 2020 was not a conventional year for the *charolas* of Bordeira. In a collaboration between local civil society and regional government (*Freguesia de Santa Bárbara de Nexe* and the *Concelho de Faro*) a large celebration was organized to commemorate the "centennial" of Bordeira's *charola* tradition, popularly considering the period of 1918-1920 as the modern tradition's seminal moment. It was in this context that Curbelo conducted his fieldwork in Bordeira, in addition to other ancillary events in nearby Loulé and Faro in the first half of the month. It must be emphasized that this celebration of the "*Centenário*" was atypical of what Bordeira's *charolas* do on January 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> each year, though it possessed all the traditional elements that are normally included in the celebration of these dates in Bordeira. (Figure 89) What follows is a brief description of the chronology of the events that occurred in Bordeira on that 6<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020, which illustrate the traditional elements of *charolas* as described earlier in this article, as well as explore the exercise in *metamemory*, in the words of Candau, as expressed in the commemoration of the "*Centenário*".<sup>203</sup>

<sup>203</sup> Audiovisual documentation of the 2020 *Centenário* can be found on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/fVzik8HX9Q0>

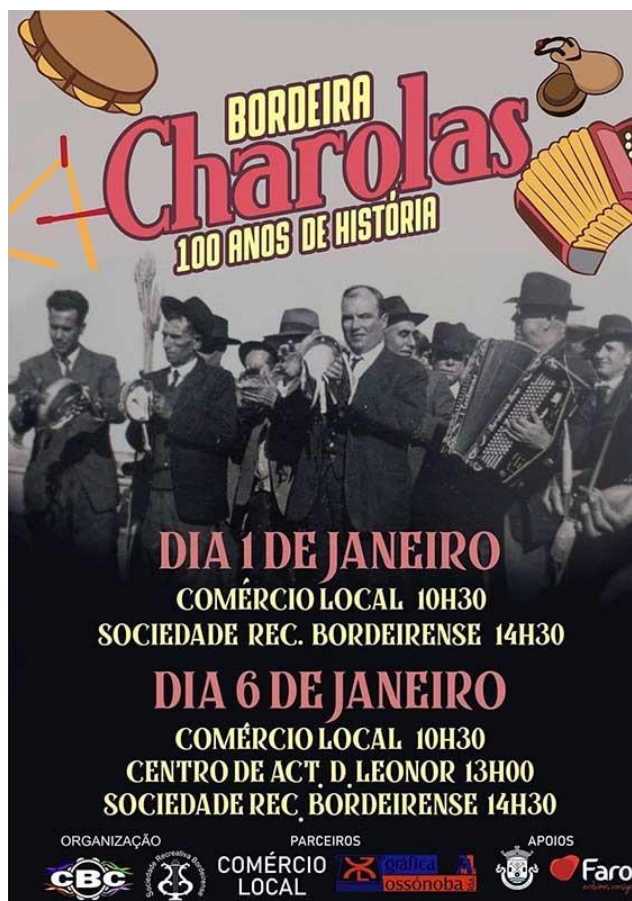


Figure 89 – Poster for Bordeira's 2020 Centennial celebration

The day began in the morning with local residents, and *bordeirenses* residing in other locales, co-mingling in Café Pinto in the "*Cocheira*" - the center of Bordeira's social interaction (PEREIRA, 2005, p.56) - inviting each other to shots of strong coffee ("*bica*") and local distilled spirits ("*medronho*"). This scenario is characteristic of Bordeira's traditional daily conviviality as mentioned by José Aniceto (2020) earlier in this text. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pereira (2005) described this characteristic conviviality, which traditionally has been central to the idiosyncrasy of *bordeirenses*:

"Conviviality", "confraternization", "union, joy of being alive and being together", "friendship and fun" are some of the aspects that stand out to the visitor when they first set foot in the cafés of the "*Cocheira*" during moments of leisure, in which the groups of customers converse and play cards while snacking at the tables. These snacks, no matter how basic, are always shared among all present. The environment is generally warm and, in contrast to what is observed in other locales, here there is no formal division of the space in regards to age or sex. There is spontaneous, interactive and harmonious sociability without formal barriers or hierarchies beyond the traditional codes of good manners and tact. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.56)



Afterwards, the participating *charolas*, as well as other attendees of the festivity, participated in a parade specifically realized for the Centennial – carrying standards and flags representing each *charola* and performing musical pieces known to all - which culminated in another symbolic center of *bordeirense* society: the *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense*. (Figure 90) There, a civic act was held, revealing a commemorative plaque for the Centennial, that included the participation of key *charoleiro* figures such as Zé Campeão, Joaquim Farias, Nelson Conceição and Rui Vargues, all informants for this article. The poetry recited and speeches given, which recalled deceased *bordeirenses* who had contributed to the well-being of the community, elicited emotive responses from many in the public, with several tears being shed. (Figure 91)



Figure 90 – Centennial parade (Bordeira, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 91 – Civic ceremony for the Centennial at the *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense* and inauguration of commemorative plaque (Bordeira, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Then, each *charola* went its course to perform itinerantly at various cafés, bars and private homes, as well as on the stage of the *Sociedade*. (Figure 92) Especially at the private homes, the millennia-old practice of ritual commensality was particularly evident. Homeowners, upon receiving *charolas* of fifteen to twenty people together with their followers, as well as friends and neighbors, made gargantuan efforts to prepare and provide abundant food and drink for the itinerant revelers, harking back to practices from centuries prior.



Figure 92 – *Charola* performing at a bar/café (Bordeira, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

At one home, where the *charolas* "*Democrata*" and "*União Bordeirense*" performed, of particular interest was the offering by the homeowners of "*borrego*

*assado*" (roasted mutton). Remembered by both Pinto<sup>204</sup> and Aniceto<sup>205</sup> as a tradition imported - in addition to new stone-working techniques and political thought - by *bordeirense* emigrants who had returned from Argentina in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of preparing "*borrego assado*" is recalled by Aniceto in the following fashion:

It was emigrants who returned from Argentina [...] – before that nobody did that here – a sheep on a stake in the form of a cross stuck in the ground and inclined, with embers spread on the ground. [...] They even brought traditional sauces from there (Argentina). [...] The emigrants who returned from Argentina would prepare these meals and invite their families, they returned with a certain financial gain. They would hold those meals to show (what they had earned from emigrating).<sup>206</sup>

Towards the end of the day all the participating *charolas* performed individually and, eventually, all together at the large venue *Centro de Atividades ao Ar Livre D. Leonor*. This grand finale event was also uncharacteristic of the yearly *charola* tradition and was carried out specifically in commemoration of the Centennial, and included the participation of figures of the local and regional public authorities. (Figure 93) The event ended with all the members of the participating *charolas* on stage performing together a composition created solely for the Centennial: "*Marcha do Centenário*" with music by *bordeirense* accordionist Daniel Rato, who emigrated to Sweden, and lyrics composed collectively by Rui Vargues, Nuno Bexiga, Renato Sousa, and Ruben Relvas. The lyrics synthesize both the popular conception that *bordeirenses* share of the origins and meaning of their modern *charola* tradition, as well as the role that it currently plays in the community's processes of Memory and Identity. Below are the lyrics and an English translation done by the author.

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<sup>204</sup> António Pinto, Interview, 2020, Bordeira

<sup>205</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.



Figure 93 – Final presentation at the Centennial celebration at the *Centro de Atividades ao Ar Livre D. Leonor*. (Bordeira, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

## Marcha do Centenário

Music: Daniel Rato

Lyrics: Rui Vargues, Nuno Bexiga, Renato Sousa, Ruben Relvas

<p>De porta em porta, já antes se fazia  P'la noite dentro, outro cantar soava  Mas não expressava o que o povo  sentia  E o que antes se ouvia  Em Bordeira mudava</p> <p>Em cada ano, o profano emergia  Voltavam filhos, da guerra que  findava  Que improvisavam, no dom da  poesia  Enquanto a melodia  O acordeão tocava</p>	<p>From door to door, as it was done in  the past  In the night, another song was heard  But it did not express what the people  felt  What was heard in the past  That, in Bordeira, changed</p> <p>Each and every year, the "profane"  emerged  Sons returned from the war that was  ending  That improvised with the gift of poetry  While the melody  Was played on the accordion</p>
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<p>E cada pedra, tirada da pedreira  Fez transportar Bordeira  Pra outro lugar  Foi pela arte do homem emigrante  Que sofrendo distante  Sonhava voltar</p> <p>Mais de cem anos de uma tradição  Que cada geração  Insiste em contar  E no futuro, pelos mesmos trilhos  Serão nossos filhos  A nos recordar</p>	<p>And each stone, taken from the quarry  Transported Bordeira  To another place  It was with the art of the emigrant  That suffering far away  Dreamed of returning</p> <p>More than one hundred years of  tradition  That in each generation  Insists in being told  And in the future, following the same  path  It will be our children  Who will remember us</p>
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SOURCE: Nelson Conceição

In conclusion, this section traced the ancient and modern roots of Bordeira's *charola* tradition as well as its contemporary historical development, and described its primary elements and transmission methods. It also explored how Bordeira's *charola* tradition has evolved to serve as a vehicle of collective memory, cultural identity, and social integration throughout successive generations of *bordeirenses* into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This article demonstrated how the secular festive ritual of *charolas* play the role of *sociotransmitter* of the collective memory of traditionally tightly-knit *bordeirense* society, both at home and in diaspora, and also provides an intergenerational social framework for the formation of that collective memory and the construction of cultural identity. Also, it was shown that Bordeira's *charola* tradition – particularly evident in the 2020 Centennial celebration – is not dependent on public authorities to be considered Cultural Heritage by its practitioners, a bottom-up dynamic characteristic of the historically cooperative and associative nature of Bordeira.

As far as the perennial role of *charolas* as a unique, central mechanism of the processes of Memory and Identity of the people of Bordeira, accordionist Nelson Conceição muses:

In all those moments of this history of the Centennial there are moments charged with emotion, because the First World War is a watershed moment, perhaps, the first big event for the *charolas*. [...] After the (Second) World War, that some will have to go to the (Colonial) War and others will flee the country to not go to war. [...] At the end of the day, it is our history, a connection with the past. We remember our parents, people who contributed something to the world, to the community, to our history, and we want to pay them homage in some way, always honoring them and bringing them to the present, to not forget.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2020, Faro

## 5 CASE STUDY – INTERIOR OF URUGUAY

### 5.1 *Rural dances*

In this section we will briefly describe the historical and sociocultural context for traditions of ritual festivities involving social dance and music in the rural areas of the interior of Uruguay. This section gives historical background to the arrival and interaction of diverse human groups to this geography, each one contributing unique cultural elements. Later, the festive rituals are described, focusing on their organizational and performative aspects, as well as their social role, meanings, and practices of commensality. Then, processes of integration and exclusion present in the trajectories of certain festive traditions are examined. Finally, this section delves into an attempt to describe the impact that 20<sup>th</sup> century authoritarian governments in Uruguay have had on its rural ritual festive traditions, as well as the impacts of sweeping transformations in demographics and economic-technological change.

Before entering into a description and analysis of festive ritual traditions involving music and social dance in the rural interior of Uruguay, we will briefly review the human groups that have made up the dynamic sociocultural context of that geography. These groups provided the core cultural elements that have made up the distinctive characteristics of festive ritual traditions of rural Uruguay.

The territory encompassed within the *Banda Oriental*, *Provincia Cisplatina*, and later, the sovereign *República Oriental de Uruguay*, has been the setting for various waves of migration, cultural mixture and conflict over the centuries. These changing dynamics commence with human presence in the region dating from 13,000 years ago, the descendants of these indigenous pioneers were the *charrúa* and *güenoa/minuano* ethnic groups. 2,000 years ago, *arawak*-speaking Amazonian groups, the descendants of whom were the *chanás*, arrived, and later in the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Amazonian-originated *guaraní* groups arrived to the Río de la Plata region. (LÓPEZ MAZZ, 2018, p.182-183)

As the region began to be a point of contention between the Spanish and Portuguese empires beginning with initial explorations in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and as each empire was establishing and consolidating its colonial, military, and

maritime power in the Atlantic islands (Canary Islands, Azores, etc.), Africa, Asia and the Americas, both imperial powers eventually sought to solidify their rival claims to this amorphous border region, though peripheral to the mineral wealth centers of colonial South America such as the Andean region. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Jesuits establish themselves in the region encompassed currently by Paraguay, the Argentine province of Misiones and parts of Rio Grande do Sul, and evangelize, acculturate, and politically and economically organize *guaraní* groups into an influential territorial power. As previously described, Franciscans carry out similar efforts on the eastern side of the Uruguay River in the *Banda Oriental*. Also in this period, Portugal founds Colonia del Sacramento at the mouth of the Río de la Plata to counter Spanish colonial presence in Buenos Aires. Colonia del Sacramento is a fortified enclave that will prove to host a diverse mix of trans-Atlantic and American ethnicities, that will influence the early demographic expansion in the *Banda Oriental*. (GONZÁLEZ RISSOTTO, RODRÍGUEZ VARESE, 1990, p.23)

Later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, families from the overpopulated, impoverished Atlantic island possessions of Spain and Portugal, the Azores, Madeira, and the Canary Islands – all previously-colonized insular locations that were key ports of call to all ships departing and returning along the colonial trade routes that connected Europe, Africa and the Americas – were brought as settlers to southern Brazil and the *Banda Oriental*, in a competing race to populate this vast, sparsely-inhabited region, with both powers staking rival territorial claims. (DOMINGUES DA ROCHA, 2005, pp.31-32; FERNÁNDEZ, 1963) Along with other Iberian groups, as the years went on, these groups grew and spread throughout this porous border geography – expanding the colonial agricultural and ranching frontier (MARTÍNEZ DÍAZ, 1988), and founding some of its primary urban areas that remain today. These varying groups brought with them cultural practices such as agricultural methods, music, dances, oral poetic traditions, and festive ritual traditions of popular Catholicism, many with deep syncretic roots stemming from the medieval period. (ASSUNÇÃO, 1967, 1970)

Africans arrived to the Río de la Plata region with European explorers and colonizers in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as Hernandarias. (MARTÍNEZ, 2019, p.89) The principal Spanish River Plate ports, Buenos Aires, and later



Montevideo were commercially and strategically important entry ports for the introduction of enslaved Africans, many of whom were sent further on to the Andean regions of the continent. Montevideo flourished as a port in the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries due to this human trade, with thousands of enslaved people brought by ships of various nationalities from Brazilian ports such as Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, as well as Western (Angola) and Southwestern Africa (Mozambique), among other origins. (Ibid., p.87-89)

Africans were enslaved in urban, as well as rural settings in a colonial context where labor was a scarce factor of production. This culturally diverse group, in addition to Afro-Americans in slavery within the Portuguese-dominated territory now comprising Rio Grande do Sul, brought cultural elements such as religion, music, language, dance, material culture, festival ritual traditions, culinary and agricultural practices – though the intensely oppressive Euro-dominant colonial environment conspired to suppress African culture and traditions.

As described earlier in this thesis, the territory of Uruguay north of the Río Negro, a sparsely-populated, porous border region between competing Spanish and Portuguese spheres of influence, historically had been dominated by Luso-Brazilian landowning ranchers from Rio Grande d Sul, a phenomenon stemming from the period of Portuguese rule as the Cisplatine Province. During the conflictive 19<sup>th</sup> century many *riograndenses* also moved to Uruguayan territory, fleeing civil war. (PALERMO, 2008, p.2)

In this period Rio Grande do Sul was an important center of enslaved labor forcibly employed in lucrative industries such as salted meat ("*charque*") in productive centers such as the *charqueadas* in the region of Pelotas, and enslaved black people were also sold further north to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo for profit. (Ibid., p.17) The Luso-Brazilian slave-holding landowners installed in Uruguay enjoyed significant mobility in transporting their slaves and livestock across the border with no legal or fiscal hurdles from the Uruguayan state due to its lack of ability to impose its newly-acquired sovereignty over this vast, rugged hinterland, far from Montevideo. (CHAGAS, STALLA, 2004, p.18; FLORES, 2014) This enabled these powerful landowners to act largely with impunity, supported by the laws and diplomacy of the Brazilian Empire. Palermo

(2008, p.17) describes the vast border area of northern Uruguay in this period as the ideal scenario for consolidation of power of well-funded and well-armed local strongmen ("caudillos"), with a vacuum of power and lack of presence of the State in this rural hinterland.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this condition of flux in terms of rule of law in Uruguay's northern border region, one of the main regions where Uruguay's African-descended population is located, made existence a great challenge for black people. Many enslaved people fled Rio Grande do Sul to Uruguay, taking advantage of that state's civil conflicts. However, freedom was not easily obtained in Uruguay, even after abolition was declared in 1846. Uruguay was forced to sign a treaty with Brazil in 1851, that stipulated the return of fugitive Brazilian slaves. Also, it was common practice for gangs of slave-raiders to capture fugitive Brazilian slaves as well, as free Uruguayan black people to sell in Brazilian slave markets. (CHAGAS, STALLA, 2004; PALERMO, 2008)

Post-abolition, numerous tactics were used by Luso-Brazilian slave-holding landowners established in Uruguay (many of whom also had properties in Rio Grande do Sul) to maintain de facto slavery – a factor of production crucial to their economic productive model – which included "*contratos de peonaje*" that rendered their slaves as legally-indentured workers on Uruguayan soil, or sending enslaved people born in Uruguay to be baptized in Brazil (which did not abolish slavery until 1888), thus officializing their status as slaves. Also, throughout Uruguay's numerous armed conflicts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century many black people were forcibly recruited into regiments of the different warring parties. (CHAGAS, STALLA, 2004; PALERMO, 2008)

As the territory now encompassed within the *República Oriental de Uruguay* commenced to work towards its sovereignty, beginning in the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, culminating in its independence with the British-negotiated *Convención Preliminar de Paz* in 1828, it received European immigration from abroad of diverse origins, not just of Iberian or insular provenance. With the repression of the trans-Atlantic slave trade by the British in the early 19<sup>th</sup>

century<sup>208</sup>, the new Republic had to resort to other methods to resolve one of the serious problems to the fledgling country's growth – a sparse population in a large, undeveloped territory and lack of workers. (THUL CHARBONNIER, 2017, pp.186-187)

In the middle decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Uruguayan State took a distanced stance on actively recruiting emigrants from abroad, and relegated this task to private initiative of entrepreneurial citizens, people such as businessmen Juan María Pérez (1790-1845) and Samuel Lafone (1805-1871). Private enterprises such as these earned commission on each immigrant recruited abroad that arrived in Uruguay to be employed in work, normally in the agricultural or ranching sectors. Also, it was common practice for maritime companies to send recruiters to impoverished corners of Europe to entice people to emigrate (often clandestinely, against the laws of their home nation) to the Americas, often employing dishonest and unscrupulous tactics in growing their profitable human transport business in this period. (THUL CARBONNIER, 2017)

In schemes utilized in other parts of the Americas, many of these recruited immigrants, fleeing economic stagnation and poverty, were "indentured" in that they were "bought" by *criollo* landowners upon arriving to Uruguay to earn substandard wages, locked in by a contract with the firm that brought them, as well as incurring a substantial debt with the same firm for the service of maritime transport – which oftentimes was a miserable experience, incurring illness, death, hunger, and shipwrecks due to lack of proper precautions in order to maximize profit. In this manner, many French Basque emigrants, emigrants from the easternmost Canary Islands off the coast of Africa: Lanzarote and Fuerteventura, and other groups, arrived to Uruguay and populated the rural areas of the new republic as landless workers. (ALONZO, 2009, p.140; THUL CARBONNIER, 2017) These emigrants, despite adverse conditions, also contributed their traditions, foodways, language, music, dance and ritual festivities to the developing popular culture of the nascent republic.

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<sup>208</sup> Trías Cornú (2019, p.116) clarifies, "In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Great Britain began to exert pressure to eliminate the slave trade and although in this effort there were humanitarian justifications at play, its principal interest was to foment wage labor with the goal to create markets (mainly in the Americas) that would consume the products generated by its industries."

Alonzo (2009, p.141) emphasizes the rural destinations of the Basque immigrants in this period, "in the early days of Basque emigration, the preferred destinations were the rural areas of our country, working in the country and as farmers, shepherders, meat plant workers, and dairy producers, primarily". In the same manner, the bulk of Canary Islander migrants were directed to agricultural work in the southern rural areas around Montevideo. (MARTÍNEZ DÍAZ, 1988) Additionally, during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, which was a politically turbulent time (inhibiting agricultural and ranching activity and economic growth) for the new Uruguayan republic, particularly marked by the protracted and fratricidal *Guerra Grande* (1839-1851), many recent immigrants were pressed into military service on opposing sides in various civil conflicts, as were freed slaves and fugitive slaves from Brazil. (TRÍAS CORNÚ, 2019)

In the same period that Basques and Canary Islanders were brought to Uruguay in the above-described immigration scheme, Brazilian and Uruguayan interests conspired to circumvent the new British-enforced ban on the trans-Atlantic maritime slave trade, by forcibly transporting Africans to Uruguayan ports, who had been captured in their home continent, under the euphemism "African colonists" ("*colonos africanos*") from 1832-1842. (BORUCKI, 2010) Borucki summarizes the functioning of this scheme, which brought young Africans from ports in Angola and Mozambique, and demonstrated the great influence of Brazilian commercial influences in independent Uruguay:

In Uruguay, the local government contracted Brazilian merchants to introduce "African colonists" [...] The merchants paid an enormous sum of money to the Government for the license to introduce these "colonists" who had to be younger than sixteen years old. Once in Uruguay, the merchants sold the rights to the labor of these "colonists" to cover the cost of transport and the dividends. This operation enabled the disembarking of African children in Montevideo to serve as slaves. [...] The "colonists" had to work twelve years for the person who had bought the rights to their labor. These types of contracts were similar to the arrangements between local merchants and Canary Islander and Basque colonists brought to Uruguay in those same years. (BORUCKI, 2010, pp.121,129)

Over 1500 young African boys and girls were brought to Uruguay in this scheme – involving traders from Angola, Mozambique, Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo - of continuing the profitable trans-Atlantic slave trade under the guise of "colonists". Forced to abolish this practice by Great Britain in order to

enter into a trade agreement with the European power, Uruguay ended this scheme in 1842. (BORUCKI, 2010, pp.147) Borucki (Ibid., p.148) highlights that these young people were the last documented enslaved people brought directly from Africa to a republic in continental Spanish America.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as Uruguay gradually modernized economically and politically (demarcation and fencing of ranchlands, development of communications and infrastructure, etc.) – within a trans-Atlantic context intimately linked to Europe, emerging global migration push-and-pull factors will motivate a myriad of European groups to migrate *en masse* to the Americas, especially the River Plate region and Brazil, a regional context in which Uruguay belonged. In regards to our object of study, it is telling that Ayestarán (1968, p.65-66) pinpoints the date of the commercial introduction of button accordions to Uruguay, employing local periodicals of the time, as being December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1852, precisely during this period, where they are advertised by a store near the port of Montevideo as "great accordions of novel invention".

One illustration of the diverse cultural consequences of these dynamic decades of immigration, accordionist and rancher, Edgardo "Pirulo" Martínez Irigoyen (b.1934), established in rural Piedra Sola on the border of the departments of Tacuarembó and Paysandú, recalls the experiences of his family, descended from French Basque immigrants, and with great affinity for music-making within the family domestic environment:

I was born in Montevideo and I was raised out in the country. I was born in Montevideo by chance, my grandparents were from there, my grandparents were French Basques and they lived in Montevideo [...] There were two Basque (emigrants) that came (to Uruguay) together, a Tafernaberry and Irigoyen, my grandfather, both came from there (the Basque region of France). They immigrated as workers in the Cerro neighborhood<sup>209</sup>, they worked at the slaughterhouse and played (button accordion). Those two Basques played the one-row button accordion, and then they came to Piedra Sola [...] and stayed. (MARTÍNEZ, 2002)

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<sup>209</sup> The Cerro neighborhood of Montevideo, characterized by the pronounced geographic accident that gives it its name (as well as the symbol of Uruguay, and possibly the name of Montevideo itself) was originally founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as "*Villa Cosmópolis*" to house trans-Atlantic immigrants. The booming meat export industries attracted recently-arrived immigrants from around the globe. A lasting reminder of this legacy are the street names of Cerro, which are almost invariably names of world cities and nations, such as Grecia, Vizcaya, Burdeos, Vigo, Turquía, etc.

One of the main European groups to emigrate to Uruguay in this modernizing period were Italians. Arriving in the Uruguay's post-independence period, prior to the unification of Italy, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Italians conformed the largest foreign immigrant group in Uruguay, with different regional origins. (BRESCIANO, 2010, p.113) Though the territorial domination of rural Uruguay by traditional landed interests proved to an obstacle for new immigrants to acquire land, Italians were able to development agricultural establishments in the southern area around Montevideo, as well as in the northern littoral region of the nation: Paysandú and Salto. However, the majority engaged in commerce and trades in the nation's major urban areas, especially the capital Montevideo. (BRESCIANO, 2010)

Mainly endogamous, Italian immigrant groups attenuated the assimilation and acculturation process in Uruguay by forming cultural-civic organizations and being engaged in the Catholic church, among other tactics. (Ibid.) Among the formative elements contributed to the developing Uruguayan national culture by waves of immigrants from Italy were language, culinary practices, traditions of popular Catholicism, architectural trades, music, and – of central importance to this thesis – free-reed instruments such as the diatonic button accordion.

Numerous Italian-descended musician interviewees<sup>210</sup> for this thesis accentuate the central importance that free-reed instruments, such as button accordion, *bandoneón* and piano accordion, have had in family conviviality, both in urban and rural settings, and as way to preserve a cultural connection with their trans-Atlantic region of origin, along with usage of the Italian language and dialects. Professional keyboardist and piano accordionist Hugo Fattorusso (b.1943) from Montevideo, illustrates:

We are absolutely (descendants) of Italians, from Baronissi, near Naples. My grandfather came to Uruguay [...] (he) left Italy, and he was buried in Uruguay, he never returned to Italy, he was a worker, he couldn't afford a return ticket to visit Italy after the War [...] For example, a *tarantella* played on accordion moves me emotionally, it's in my blood [...] (FATTORUSSO, 2002)

Likewise, piano accordion educator, Silvio Previale (b.1962) from Salto, descendant of Italian immigrants from Argentina, explains the cultural context of

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<sup>210</sup> Third and fourth generation descendants of Italian immigrants.

accordions within the Italian emigrant diaspora in the region, "(the accordion) was a cultural nexus. [...] Parents would buy an accordion for the children to play like their grandfather [...] who had been born abroad, who had emigrated from Italy [...]". (PREVIALE, 2016) (Figure 94)



Figure 94 – Silvio Previale (Salto, Uruguay, 2016)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

The button accordion was central to the festive rituals and conviviality of agricultural settlements of Italian immigrants and their descendants in rural Uruguay. Italian-descended musicians Gilberto Rodríguez Franchini (b.1947) of Baltasar Brum, Artigas, Héctor Collazzo (1933-2016) and Serafín Lazzo Banchero (1921-2007) both of Paysandú, and Guillermo Gallino Grilli (1927-2009) of Salto all recall their parents, grandparents or aunts and uncles playing the button accordion for dances as part of rural festivities among family members and neighbors, often to commemorate the completion of a collective agricultural task or a wedding, etc. Lazzo Banchero, whose mother and her family emigrated to Uruguay from Trieste in 1885, and Gallino Grilli, whose great grandparents emigrated to Uruguay from Italy, accentuate the maintenance of the Italian language among the older members of their families. According to Gallino (2002), "They spoke Italian, the family was of Italian descent. Even though they were born here, between father and son they spoke in Italian out of respect". (Figure 95) (Figure 96) (Figure 97) (Figure 98)



Figure 95 - Gilberto Rodríguez Franchini (Baltasar Brum, Artigas, 2002)

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 96 - Héctor Collazzo (Paysandú, Uruguay, 2002)

Source: CURBELO, 2018, p.106





Figure 97 - Serafín Lazzo Banchero (Paysandú, Uruguay, 2002)

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 98 - Guillermo Gallino Grilli (Salto, Uruguay, 2002)

Source: CURBELO, 2018, p.134

In the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after Uruguay had surmounted the hurdle of its last civil war, under the leadership of José Batlle y Ordóñez (1856-1929) the country developed as a modern welfare state and enjoyed relative economic prosperity and a growing middle class. In this period, Uruguay received a great number of emigrants, not only from Spain and Italy, but also from Eastern European nations such as Lithuania and Poland (including many Jews), and from the Middle East from territories under the Ottoman Empire such as Syria, Lebanon and Armenia. These more recent immigrants, by and large remained in the nation's large urban areas such as Montevideo and Salto, feeding the demand for laborers in industries such as meatpacking for export, however there were initiatives for formation of agricultural settlements of certain immigrant

collectivities in the country's undeveloped rural interior, primarily dedicated to ranching. Such was the case of the Russians emigrated to San Javier, Río Negro in 1913, and groups of Volga Germans arrived in Salto in 1929, among others. (PI HUGARTE, VIDART, 1969)

In addition to populations indigenous to the territory now comprised by Uruguay and the varying African and European human groups that arrived by sea in the colonization process and the process of the growth of the Uruguayan nation state, the *Banda Oriental*, and later Uruguay, has also historically been a destination for regional immigration from its neighbors: Brazil and Argentina, most specifically the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul and Argentina's littoral zone. Argentine influence has been most felt along Uruguay's fluvial border with its neighbor, the Uruguay River, and Brazilian influence is strongest in Uruguay's northern departments. (Ibid.)

With all three neighboring territories sharing a common colonial-era, pastoral cultural base (with distinct regional variants) of diverse Iberian, indigenous and African elements, the Argentine littoral has contributed hispano-guaraní influences in its immigration to rural Uruguay (among other influences), and Rio Grande do Sul has contributed Afro-and Luso-Brazilian influences. (Ibid., p.39) This regional immigration and cultural influence have been occurring for centuries, and can be evidenced in music, dance, language, religious practices and beliefs, cultural values, physiognomy, culinary traditions, festive rituals, etc.

This diverse cultural mixture of regional and trans-Atlantic nature of Uruguay's rural interior is evidenced in the interviews of musicians in the author's field work in the departments of Artigas, Cerro Largo, Durazno, Florida, Paysandú, Rivera, Rocha, Salto, Tacuarembó, y Treinta y Tres. Of the over one hundred interviewees, roughly a third affirmed being of Luso-Brazilian descent, however 40% possess Portuguese surnames.

Though all the interviewees were born in Uruguay, the national origins of their ancestors, when cited, reflect a wide diversity. Most cited are Italian and Spanish (including Galicia, Catalonia, as well as the Canary Islands) ancestry, then (French) Basque and Portuguese ancestry. Other European origins cited include German, Volga German and Russian. Several cited Argentine descent

(Corrientes and Entre Ríos) and some cite indigenous descent. Many interviewees had ancestors of a mixed diversity of national or ethnic origins.

Since the colonial period, the rural interior of the *Banda Oriental* was the setting for processes of transculturation and cultural hybridization involving a diversity of protagonists. With the various waves of trans-Atlantic immigration, and regional migration in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, these processes continued, and contributed to form the society and festive ritual traditions of Uruguay's interior, some of which are still cultivated today, while others have become extinct, having lost meaning and cultural importance to the subsequent generations.

Cuban author Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969) coined the terminology "transculturation" in his 1940 work "*Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*" in contrast to the term widely employed at the time: "acculturation" which implied a hierarchical situation of subaltern cultures adapting to a dominant culture. Ortiz (1978, p.97) held that "transculturation" was an indispensable concept to explain the formation of Cuban society and, hence, the Americas as a whole. He sustained that not only the island's native people, and enslaved Africans forcibly brought by Europeans, experienced a disassembling of their original cultures, but also the Peninsular elements, and later international immigrants, arrived to the island as inherently uprooted migrants, and had to adapt to their new (physical and social) reality in processes of transculturation, interacting with a myriad of other groups. Ortiz describes:

[...] each immigrant as someone uprooted from their native land (is) in a double struggle of maladjustment and readjustment, of deculturation and "exculturation", of acculturation and inculturation, and in the end of the process, of transculturation. [...] The process necessarily implies, as well, the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, what could be considered a partial deculturation. [...] *A child also possesses elements of both parents, but is always different from both.* In total, the process is a transculturation [...] (ORTIZ, 1978, pp.93, 96-97, italics are ours)

As previously stated, this process of transculturation initiates early in the colonial period in the sparsely-populated territory currently comprising the *República Oriental de Uruguay* (very different from the insular reality described in Cuba by Ortiz, but nonetheless similar in its cultural elements of origin, trans-Atlantic maritime connectivity and processes of transculturation), with the cultural and genetic mixture of various indigenous groups, Iberian groups and a diversity

of cultures from West and Southwest Africa, with an glaring imbalance of power relationships.<sup>211</sup>

Based on nation-wide genetic studies Sans (2009, p.3) (2014, p.167) estimates that, as a whole, Uruguay has 84% genetic contribution from Europe, 6% from Africa, and 10% from indigenous American groups. However, this is widely variant from region to region. The rural northern department of Tacuarembó shows estimates of 15% genetic contribution from Africa and 20% of indigenous American groups, compared with 92% of European descent in the southern port capital of Montevideo.

The rural interior of Uruguay has historically been a culturally and ethnically diverse geography, with varying groups engaging in commerce, contraband, conflict, coexistence, and cultural mixture in a temporal context of Luso-Spanish territorial conflicts.<sup>212</sup> One of these foundational groups were the Guaraní, reduced in the missions of Catholic religious orders, such as the Jesuits, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These missions, located in the actual territories of the Argentine littoral provinces of Corrientes, Misiones, the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, as well as Paraguay, possessed vast territories for the exploitation of agriculture and ranching. These ranching territories included large portions of the *Banda Oriental*, north of the Río Negro, river that bisects the nation of Uruguay. (BARRETO, CURBELO, 2009, p.2)

Over two centuries, many thousands of missionized Guaranís migrated to the *Banda Oriental* individually, and in groups, for numerous reasons over time: violent raids and enslavement by Brazilian *bandeirantes*, escape from the rigid collective mission socioeconomic system and desire for private employment, as well as the destruction of the missions and expulsion of the Jesuits in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century as a consequence of the 1750 Treaty of Madrid between Portugal and Spain. This mission Guaraní diaspora was spread out among settlements in

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<sup>211</sup> Sans (2009, p.4) accentuates that, based on genetic studies, "The data from Uruguay as well as that from other Latin American countries show the existence of preferential unions between indigenous women and European men, that would have occurred from the beginning of the Conquest [...]."

<sup>212</sup> Conflicts between the two maritime empires that were not limited to the Americas, but rather global in scope and played out in different continents, as well as on the Iberian Peninsula itself.

the Argentine littoral region, Brazil, Paraguay, as well as the *Banda Oriental*. (GONZÁLEZ RISSOTTO, RODRÍGUEZ VARESE, 1990)

González Rissotto and Rodríguez Varese (1990, pp.28-29) sustain that this group, mission Guaranís – already having incorporated and obtained notable proficiency in Western trades and cultural practices – between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries became the primary demographic element in the sparsely-populated rural interior of the *Banda Oriental*, and were crucial to the founding of numerous towns and cities. (BARRETO, CURBELO, 2009, p.1) They were key to the cultural and genetic mixing process of rural Uruguay, and Guaraní was largely spoken in rural Uruguay into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an item reflected in the vast number of Guaraní toponyms in the country. (GONZÁLEZ RISSOTTO, RODRÍGUEZ VARESE, 1990, pp.47, 49-51)

In addition to cultural contributions of language, culinary and medicinal traditions, ranching and agricultural techniques, popular religiosity, etc. the mission Guaranís also contributed their musical talents and traditions to the incipient *Banda Oriental*. González Rissotto and Rodríguez Varese write:

[...] the mission Indians were practically the primary musicians in rural Uruguay until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their influence indicates the intense musical activity that went on in the towns of the Missions, they accompanied almost all activities with music, from dawn until dusk. (GONZÁLEZ RISSOTTO, RODRÍGUEZ VARESE, 1990, p.44)

The musicality of the mission Guaraní and their descendants, could be potentially evidenced in the histories of rural Uruguayan accordionists. There are numerous narratives regarding indigenous-descended musicians. As an example, Lauro Ayestarán cites an 1893 report in the Montevideo periodical "*El Heraldo*" describing a rural dance event:

[...] the accordion open and closed its bellows of red and gold paper in the artful hands of an old Indian, famous for playing in a manner, in the words of the rural folk, that that he seemed to make the accordion speak [...]. (AYESTARÁN, 1968, p.66)

Likewise, Gau de Mello (2015) describes the figure of "*El Indio Medina*", a well-known frequenter of festive musical events, in years past, in the rural northern countryside bathed by the Yaguarí river in the department of Rivera:

[...] He would go to all the dances and wherever there was singing and music, he could be found there. A rustic rural man, a hybrid archetype even in his name, a mixture of ethnicities. (GAU DE MELLO, 2015, pp.43-44)

Also, button accordionist Chico Soares de Lima (b.1910), interviewed in Rivera in 1974, by a son of Lauro Ayestarán, relates that he was born and raised in the 5<sup>th</sup> Section of Rivera in the rural settlement of Cuñapirú and also describes the way he learned to play the button accordion:

(I learned to play the accordion) with an Indian, of indigenous descent, but for all intensive purposes – Indian, they called him "*El Indio Lulú*" [...] I learned by ear. [...] I learned my repertoire only from him (in Cuñapirú) (SOARES DE LIMA, 1974)

All these aforementioned American and trans-Atlantic emigrant groups were placed in interaction and juxtaposition with each other in the socio-geographic context of rural Uruguay in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Festive rituals, such as social dances, proved to be crucial moments of socialization and confraternization among diverse groups of people amid a rural landscape possessing relatively low population density. Mendoza de Arce (1972) describes the importance of these dance festivities for cultural mixing in rural Uruguay:

It is evident that the role played by the dissemination of international forms of music and dance proved to be an important factor in immigrant acculturation, at a moment [...] when the phenomenon of fusion was going on. (MENDOZA DE ARCE, 1972, p.163)

Conversely, ritual festivities involving social dance and music also served to be contexts of socioeconomic and racial segregation, especially in northern rural Uruguay, border region with Rio Grande do Sul, where the sociocultural and socioeconomic effects of the centuries-long institution of slavery have been longest felt, as described earlier in this thesis. Gau de Mello (2015) and Chagas and Stalla (2009) described the pervasive history of racial segregation in social, ludic settings in the urban and rural contexts in the north of Uruguay - a nation that had long touted its success throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a racially-homogenous, middle class, social welfare state. This segregation in social, ludic settings reflected the socio-racial inequalities were still inherent to Uruguay,

particularly in its deep interior dominated by ranching *latifundios*, in this period. According to Chagas and Stalla:

[...] it is necessary to critically analyze the period called "*neobatllismo*",<sup>213</sup> in that much touted social welfare did not reach all the inhabitants of the country equally, and in particular the Afro-Uruguayans. [...] In the same fashion, they (Afro-Uruguayans) could not utilize "public spaces" such as bars, cafés or clubs. (CHAGAS, STALLA, 2009, p.17)

Gau de Mello, writing about the border region encompassed within the watershed of the Yaguarí creek in the northern departments of Tacuarembó and Rivera, observes:

Many customs have been associated with the rites of movement, of entering as belonging. To not enter a place is to not belong to that place. In the Yaguarí, Afro-descendent men did not enter to social dances of white people, Afro-descendant women entered but would watch from the door. [...] If dances are manifestations of life in society, and if (dances) were part of yesteryear's festivities, and the form they took was as such, it was a form of discrimination. [...] These kinds of narratives are part of many oral histories [...] (and) are repeated until the 1970's in numerous localities in the watershed (of the Yaguarí creek). (GAU DE MELLO, 2015, p.56)

Accordianist Walter Roldan, in his decades of performing at rural dances in northern Uruguay, reminiscences on practices of racial segregation at social dances held at clubs and private residences. He illustrates an example personally witnessed by him within the general region described by Gau de Mello (2015):

At the crossings in Caraguatá (department of Tacuarembó), there is a dance hall [...] At that club in the 1970's they denied entry to a professor because he was black. They didn't let him into the dance. [...] The owner taking the tickets at the door (said), "Black people can't enter my club!" [...] things that occurred in the past.<sup>214</sup>

Similarly, accordionist and rancher Edgardo Martínez recalls his experiences with socio-racial segregation at festive events in rural Tacuarembó in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century:

When we could go to the black people's dances, because in Piedra Sola there were many descendants of slaves because there was a large ranch called Estancia La Gloria and it had many slaves, at the beginning of the century. There was a General Neto, a Brazilian general who had many slaves, so all the black people from Piedra Sola had "Neto" as a last name. There are still many that do. In Tambores, another town, there were many black people in that area, descendants of slaves, almost all with the last name "Neto". They would hold black people's dances, black people didn't go to the white dances. I would

<sup>213</sup> The period under Uruguayan president Luis Batlle Berres (1947-1951).

<sup>214</sup> Walter Roldán, Interview, 2003, Tacuarembó



go play (accordion) at the black people's dances. [...] I was friends with everybody, great people, but at the white people's dances – there was a club in Piedra Sola – black people wouldn't go. [...] there weren't necessarily racial problems. [...] They themselves (black people) would segregate themselves (at the social, ludic events). I am talking about 40, 50, 60 years ago.<sup>215</sup>

As alluded to by Martínez, in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Afro-Uruguayans in the interior of the country, in response to exclusion and discrimination of their presence in spaces of ludic interaction and festivities of the white majority, such as social clubs, or event centers, took the initiative and collectively founded black "clubs" – social, cultural, and physical spaces for festive, political and civic activities. (CHAGAS, STELLA, 2009, p.99) This also occurred on the other side of the border in Brazilian cities such as Jaguarão - RS and Pelotas - RS. These institutions came to be important centers for black communities to celebrate the festivities that mark important life milestones of families and communities. (Ibid., p.106)

For example, Chagas and Stella, having interviewed relatives of its founder, describe the founding and functioning of a historic black club in the city of Tacuarembó:

In the city of Tacuarembó, *Club Ansina* - "the black people's club" was founded and presided by Martín Madruga. He started it in the beginning of the 1940's in his house in Barrio López. [...] Its activity revolved around holding dances where "only black people entered" due to the fact that "they didn't let us go to the other dances". [...] With the moving of the club to the city's downtown, the Afro-descendant population and their "*bailongos*"<sup>216</sup> of *tangos* and *milongas* gained more visibility among the rest of the population of Tacuarembó: "people would go to check out the way black people danced". (CHAGAS, STELLA, 2009, pp.99-100)

In addition, the historic protagonism of Afro-Uruguayans as musicians animating festive ritual events involving social dance in the nation's interior must be noted. (GAU DE MELLO, 2015, p.56) A paradigmatic example, highlighted by Gau de Mello (2015, pp.70-74), was the well-known bandoneonist Pilar Meneses in the department of Rivera, whose parents both played the eight-bass diatonic button accordion. (Figure 99) (Figure 100) Gau de Mello (Ibid.) emphasizes that Meneses, who performed at innumerable events and school kermesses in the

<sup>215</sup> Edgardo Martínez, Interview, 2002, Tacuarembó

<sup>216</sup> Regional term denoting an animated social dance.

region in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, "Pilar performed out in the country, but also in the city, and because of that he was able to become a highly-urbanized rural musician". Chagas and Stalla contextualize this period for Afro-Uruguayans, with greater difficulties in the nation's interior:

For the Afro-Uruguayan population, the paths to economic ascension were basically two: the attainment of a university degree or exceptional achievements in the artistic or athletic fields [...] Music and dance were manifestations that made recognition possible. (CHAGAS, STALLA, 2009, p.75)



Figure 99 – Pilar Meneses and his group (Rivera, Uruguay)

Source: (GAU DE MELLO, 2015, p.71) Archive of Nelly Santana



Figure 100 – Pilar Meneses as a boy (Rivera, Uruguay)

Source: (GAU DE MELLO, 2015, p.73) Archive of Nelly Santana

## 5.2 *Kermesses*

The practice of social dances in the rural and semi-rural urban periphery regions of the interior of Uruguay had played an important role in ludic social interaction of dispersed population groups during the 19th and 20th Centuries. With the arrival of the button accordion - amid Uruguay's further integration into the trans-Atlantic maritime circuits of movement of goods, ideas, culture and migrants - local rural Uruguayan adaptations of popular couple dance music in vogue in Europe in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as *polca*, *mazurca*, *habanera*, etc. came to overtake older collective group dance forms, such as *pericón* and *media caña*. (CURBELO, 2017; MENDOZA DE ARCE, 1972) The small groups that performed for these dances were generally composed of guitar and diatonic button accordion (later *bandoneón* in the early 20th Century and eventually piano accordion in the second half of the 20th Century), or oftentimes

simply a lone button accordionist. Occasionally, percussion elements were employed in the accompaniment.

In rural communities, though these social dances were often held in informal locations such as private residences, storage areas, etc., as the Uruguayan State established itself and exerted its effective control over its rural interior beginning in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the rural public school came to be an important physical and institutional setting for community social interaction, including social dances. With Varela's education reforms which extended nationalist, secular, Spanish-language public education (and with it the presence of the State centrally-governed from Montevideo) deep into the interior of northern Uruguay, a region with a strong predominance of Luso-Brazilian cultural, economic and political influence, the Uruguayan public school took on a central, formative role in the cultural and civic life of rural communities of this region. (PADRÓN FAVRE In: AROCENA, 2011, p.118)

In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Uruguayan law *Ley n° 8012 de 28 de octubre de 1926* established the creation and exercise of functions of *Comisiones de Fomento* for each public school. Periodically elected democratically from local community residents, these civic commissions are tasked with collaborating and supporting their local school and public educators. (URUGUAY, 1926) (ANEP, 2004) Often this activity has taken the form of organization of benefit events, such as dances, to raise funds to cover teacher salaries, school-related capital expenses and other items. The important symbiotic civic society/public education nexus that the *Comisiones* have maintained is portrayed critically by Limber Santos in the following way:

The *Comisiones de Fomento* still have a major role in the institutional workings, however, on occasions, it is too much related to their economic contribution through organization of benefit events and other fundraising activities. [...] (SANTOS, 2009, pp.145-146)

In Uruguay, ludic events, such as social dances, that are held to raise funds to benefit a social cause or an institution, such as a school, have been typically referred to as *kermesses*. *Kermesse*, *kirmess*, or *kirchweih* in German, is a term borrowed from Western European tradition where it was employed to refer to a community celebration of the anniversary of a founding of a church or a certain patron saint's day. These celebrations involved a religious observance,

music-making, dancing, drinking, eating, and general carousing by a determined local community. (Figure 101)



Figure 101 – Kermesse (1592)

Source: <http://arthistoryreference.com/t145/20342b.htm>

The *kerb* tradition of German-descended communities of Rio Grande do Sul in southern Brazil, bordering Uruguay, stems from these types of celebrations. Not only did traditional *kerbs* (involving up to three days of religious observance, feasting and dancing) raise funds for local Protestant or Catholic church parishes, but they also played a crucial role in the social integration of geographically dispersed German rural colonies, strengthened family ties, reaffirmed ethnic identity, and provided an important setting for mingling of the sexes and establishing prospects for marriage, thus contributing to this ethnic collectivity's social reproduction. This tradition was particularly important in the period, beginning in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the German colonization process of Rio Grande do Sul was in its initial stages, State presence was minimal in far-flung rural areas, living and working conditions were rustic and harsh, and German immigrant communities had to depend on endogamous self-determination, cooperation, and mutual aid practices to survive and prosper. (FOCHESATTO, 2016; MENASCHE & WEDIG, 2010)

In Uruguay, the practice of *kermesses* was not solely associated with benefitting rural public schools. The mainstream and ethnic press of Montevideo and departmental capitals of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries bear witness to the widespread practice of *kermesses* by a diversity of charitable, civic, and cultural associations to raise funds for certain social initiatives and causes. These fundraising events were often associated with members of urban high society (Figure 102). The Basque-Uruguayan magazine *Euskaro Español* from Montevideo observed in 1924, in its report on a recent fundraising event (Figure 103):

In using this method, the Directive Commission has not invented anything new. *Kermesses* are a resource employed by all recreational and social societies nowadays. The *Club Español* has done them, the *Club Nacional de Foot-ball*, *Club Italia*, *Casa de Galicia*, the *Círculo Andaluz* and other important institutions. (EUSKARO ESPAÑOL, 1924, pp.6-7)



Clausura de la Kermesse de beneficencia realizada en el "Centro Gallego"

Figure 102 – *Kermesse* in the Centro Gallego, Montevideo – 1919

Source: Mundo Uruguayo

<http://bibliotecadigital.bibna.gub.uy:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/26816>



Figure103 – *Kermesse* in the *Centro Euskaro Español*, Montevideo – 1924

Source: Euskaro Español

<http://bibliotecadigital.bibna.gub.uy:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/28063>

The seminal turn-of-the-century *gaucho* traditionalist periodical *El Fogón* from Montevideo observed ironically in 1895 about the proliferation of *kermesses*, European-style fundraising events, in the format of a fictional conversation between two characters, Justiniano and a traveler, who are standing in Montevideo's central *Plaza de Independencia* observing the goings-on of the street hawkers:

<b>Viajero:</b> Amigo mío, ¡hay mucho movimiento!	<b>Traveler:</b> My friend, there's so much hustle and bustle!
<b>Justiniano:</b> Sí, todos gritan, pero nadie vende. ¡Aquí, medio mundo casi se muere de hambre!	<b>Justiniano:</b> Yeah, everybody shouts but nobody's selling. Here, most people are almost dying of hunger!
<b>Viajero:</b> ¿Qué plaza es ésta?	<b>Traveler:</b> ¿What square is this?
<b>Justiniano:</b> La Plaza Independencia.	<b>Justiniano:</b> Its <i>Plaza Independencia</i> .
<b>Viajero:</b> ¿Y aquel galpón de madera?	<b>Traveler:</b> And that wooden building?
<b>Justiniano:</b> Una <i>kermesse</i> .	<b>Justiniano:</b> It's a <i>kermesse</i> .
<b>Viajero:</b> ¿Y qué es eso?	<b>Traveler:</b> What's that?
<b>Justiniano:</b> ¡Una moda alemana, para sacar dinero a todo el mundo!	<b>Justiniano:</b> It's a German fad to get everybody's money!

<b>Viajero:</b> ¿Y por qué se llama <i>Kermesse</i> ?	<b>Traveler:</b> Why is it called a <i>Kermesse</i> ?
<b>Justiniano:</b> Porque ya no es de buen tono hablar en castellano.	<b>Justiniano:</b> Nowadays it's not fashionable to speak in Spanish anymore.

(EL FOGÓN, 1895, p.199)

The same periodical, one of the first *gaucho* traditionalist publications in the Río de la Plata and a key outlet for regional popular *payada* poetry in *décima* form, (CASAS, 2018) also wrote in 1895 regarding the fundraising *kermesses* carried out to benefit organizations such as the *Liga Patriótica de Enseñanza Popular*, a late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Uruguayan movement of prominent public figures in Montevideo and the country's interior that sought to extend primary education into rural Uruguay as a method to instill discipline in its populace (traditionally known for its rebelliousness from so many decades of violent civil conflict led by rural *caudillos*) and shape the mentalities of their children according to the moral and civic models of the day, in a period in which rural Uruguay was rapidly modernizing and being inserted into the workings of global capitalism and liberal political thought. (ISLAS, 1999)

La «Liga de la Enseñanza» que no afloja en su tarea de hacer que los orientales escribir su nombre sepan (pa que un día sus derechos con todo vigor ejerzan,) hoy, si el tiempo lo permite, dará principio a sus fiestas. Habrá cantos y sortijas, doma de potros (y en esta no entran ciertos redomones que muy frescos se pasean en dos pies por esas calles, sino potros de adeveras.) Habrá música, refrescos,	The «Education League» that does not let up in its work of making sure that Uruguayans know how to write their name (so that one day they can exercise their civic rights,) today, weather permitting, will be the beginning of their festivities. There will be songs and games, rodeo riding (and in this some half-wild ponies will not take part, those that calmly walk on two legs on these streets, rather ponies that are for real.)
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<p>aire barato, carreras,          tiro al blanco, <i>veliocípos</i>,          (o cosa que se parezca;)          mate amargo, churrasqueada,          y a la mar de cosas buenas.          La <i>salida</i> será gratis          Pues no se cobra por ella          y solo por la <i>dentrada</i>          se pagará una friolera.          El producto se destina          a formar nuevas escuelas,          donde faltan a montones:          ¡sobre la misma frontera!          Allí, donde por <i>descuido</i>          de los que mandan la tierra          conversan los <i>orientales</i>          en idioma <i>brasílera</i>.          ¡Ya ven ustedes si es cosa          de tenerla muy en cuenta,          la que la <i>Liga Patriota</i>          se propone con sus fiestas!          Por eso, como buen criollo,          con entusiasmo, la <i>empriosa</i>          de los <i>ligueros</i> apoyo          con <i>tuita</i> mi alma y mis fuerzas.          Que nadie falte a la cita          que hoy se da en Punta Carreta;          ¡señores, a divertirse,          que faltan muchas escuelas!          [...]  <i>Kermesse</i> del Patronato,  <i>kermesse</i> del Ateneo</p>	<p>There will be music, cold drinks,  <i>aire barato</i>, horse races,          shooting contests, <i>veliocípos</i>,          (or something similar;)  <i>mate amargo</i><sup>217</sup>, a barbecue cook-out,          and many other good things.          Leaving the event will be free,          that won't be charged,          only at the door          will an entry fee be charged.          The money will go          to build new schools          where they are much needed          On the (northern) border!          There, because of inattention          of the leaders of our land,          Uruguayans speak          in Brazilian language.          You see now that it is something          very important to consider          that which the Patriotic League          proposes with its festive events!          That's why, as a good <i>criollo</i>,          with enthusiasm, I support          the project of the <i>ligueros</i>          with all my soul and might.          Nobody should miss the date          that happens today in Punta Carreta;          everybody, have fun because          many schools are sorely needed!          [...]  <i>Kermesse</i> of the <i>Patronato</i>,</p>
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<sup>217</sup> South American traditional practice of drinking tea of the plant *Ilex paraguariensis*.

<p>y <i>kermesse</i> tras <i>kermesse</i>...  ¡pa <i>pechadas</i> está el tiempo!  La verdad es que la cosa  da resultados y muy <i>güenos</i>,  pues siempre se encuentra gente  dispuesta a largar dinero.  Los unos por patriotismo,  los otros (lo más, yo creo,) por ver su nombre en las listas y en papeles gaceteros.  Pero el caso es que se logran muchas obras de provecho, y ya que no de otro modo de esa manera tendremos lindo «Asilo de menores» y un más lindo Ateneo.  Sólo hay un inconveniente en las <i>kermesses</i>, me pienso, y es que con tantas <i>pechadas</i> resultará el fin de cuento, que la <i>mitá</i> de la gente se nos va a enfermar del...<i>pecho</i>.</p>	<p><i>Kermesse</i> of the <i>Ateneo</i>  and <i>kermesse</i> after <i>kermesse</i>...  The mood is to dole out money!  It is true that it gives very good results, because there are also people who are willing to give money. Some give out of patriotism, and others (the majority, I think,) give to see their name on the lists and in the social pages of the news. But the truth is that many good works are achieved, we would not be able to have, by any other way, a beautiful «Children´s Home» and an even more beautiful <i>Ateneo</i>. There is only one drawback to the <i>kermesses</i>, I think, is that with so much doling out of money, at the end of the story half of everybody will all be sick in the chest.</p>
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(EL FOGÓN, 1895, p.83)

The archives of society sections of periodicals of the interior of Uruguay give testimony to the wide-spread practice of *kermesses* to benefit rural schools, organized by their respective *Comisiones de Fomento*. (Figure 104) Arocena, in his 2018 study of rural Uruguayan accordion and *bandoneón* music, described the continuity of this practice in rural schools in Uruguay´s northern border area with Brazil, areas where local public schools take on increased civic-social importance because a dearth of other civic society associations in local rural communities in that region. (AROCENA, 2018, pp.93, 103, 108),

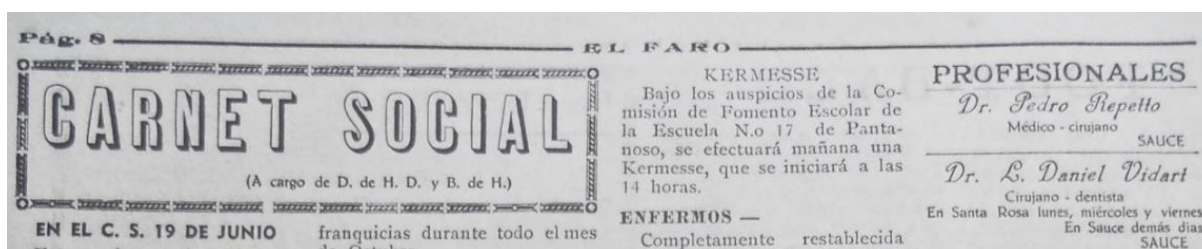


Figure 104 – Announcement of *kermesse* at rural school in Canelones department, 1940,  
Source: El Faro <http://bibliotecadigital.bibna.gub.uy:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/51090>

Various informants for this thesis, who are accordionists that have participated for years in rural *kermesses*, express the importance of the collaboration of local agropastoral producers and local families in practices of commensality in providing food stuffs - often reflecting local cultural food ways - for the fundraising efforts of *kermesses* of rural schools (or other social institutions) in northern Uruguay. Angelita Perdomo (b.1970) of the small town Rincón de Valentín in the department of Salto describes when she used to perform with a small musical group at local *kermesses* as a teenager (Figure 105):

There was a lot of unity at those dances, they were beautiful. People would get together, and they would collaborate – even more when the dances were held to benefit a local health clinic and funds were raised to pay the doctor’s salary so she wouldn’t leave (the town). So, when those dances were held, people collaborated even more. [...] (There would be auctions) and people would bake cakes to auction off and raise more funds so that the doctor would stay in the town.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>218</sup> Angelita Perdomo, Interview, 2002, Rincón de Valentín



Figure 105 – Angelita Perdomo, Rincón de Valentín, Salto 2002

Source: CURBELO, 2018, p.64

Accordionist and rancher from Tacuarembó, Edgardo Martínez (b.1936), member of a musical family of French Basque descent (Figure 106), who has property in the region of Piedra Sola on the border of Paysandú and Tacuarembó, remembers:

The rural dances were very beautiful, mainly the ones held at the schools that were held as benefits. So, we who had ranches would donate a steer for the barbecue cook-out. A lot of people would come, and it generally coincided with a horse race. Normally, there was a horse race and at night there was a dance, that's when we performed.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Edgardo Martínez, Interview, 2002, Tacuarembó



Figure 106 – Edgardo Martínez, Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2002

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Accordionist Walter Roldán (b.1943) from Tacuarembó who, like his brothers, performed with a small orchestra at *kermesses* at rural schools in the region for many years, recalls, "normally dances were held at schools, and to increase the amount of funds raised, people would auction off a roasted chicken, or a roasted suckling pig's head - those type of things – to add to the money raised at the door". (Figure 107) <sup>220</sup>In a similar manner, the Rodríguez brothers, Juvín (b.1945), Rodolfo (b.1936) and Heriberto (b.1943) from the rural locale of Sopas in Salto department, accordionists and bandoneonists, describe the practice of dividing the proceeds from the door and sales at the bar with the hired musicians at *kermesses* at rural schools, and supplementing the school's income with auctions of donated food and drink items (Figure 108):

One of the things that they don't do anymore, in those dances at rural schools, they used to hold American-style auctions to raise funds, they auctioned off cakes, bottles of alcoholic drinks, things like that.

<sup>220</sup> Walter Roldán, Interview, 2017, Tacuarembó

Nowadays, they don't do the auction, they have the dance but nobody auctions anything. They charge at the door and that's it [...] the bar and the door, half would go to the musicians and the other half (to the school). [...] But nobody does auctions anymore.<sup>221</sup>



Figure 107 – Walter Roldán, Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2013

Photo: Federico Estol



Figure 108 – Hermanos Rodríguez, Salto, Uruguay, 2002

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Accordionist Rosendo Romero (b.1961) of Pueblo Gallinal in Paysandú (Figure 109) performed at dances in his region, in the towns of San Javier,

<sup>221</sup> Rodríguez Et. Al., Interview, 2002, Salto

Porvenir, Piedras Coloradas, Orgoroso, Cerro Chato, Sauce del Queguay and San Francisco, and recollects on how the hired musicians not only had to perform dusk to dawn at rural school *kermesses*, but they also had to supply electricity as well as drinks to be sold to the dance attendees:

Back then, we travelled by truck, there weren't many busses, the roads were really bad. [...] Back then there was no electricity so you had to bring a generator [...] we would bring the generator and the *cantina* (drinks to be sold at the dance) and everything in the truck. (We had to bring) *cantina*, orchestra, generator, everything to the rural school or a social club, whichever it was. Now there is electricity everywhere and you don't need to bring a generator. [...] (Before,) the dances were held at schools, the majority had large halls, others had a dance floor. [...] There weren't any social halls back then, unless a neighbor let people use a barn or something, there wasn't any other place to hold a dance. [...]<sup>222</sup>



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<sup>222</sup> Rosendo Romero, Interview, 2002, Pueblo Gallinal

Figure 109 – Rosendo Romero, Pueblo Gallinal, Paysandú, Uruguay, 2002

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Similarly, Walter Roldán, who eventually took the decision to stop performing at rural dances because of the numerous logistical difficulties they implied and the resulting human physical toll on his health, describes the process of performing at rural school *kermesses* organized by local *Comisiones de Fomento* for fundraising purposes to cover capital expenses, building repairs, costs of the school cafeteria, etc.:

I would perform at rural schools and some clubs where they held dances. You had to play for many, many hours, because people in the countryside would get around by horse and buggy and in the morning and you couldn't end too early, you had to wait for day to break so that people could prepare their horses and wagons [...] In order to make the gigs make economic sense, I had to bring the instruments for the musicians, and sound amplification, and to carry it all around, there was a period in the 1970's or so that I had a vehicle, amplification, the instruments and two other musicians. We brought a drum set and a *bandoneón* [...] (we would play) a half hour of *jazz*<sup>223</sup> and a half hour of *típica*<sup>224, 225</sup>

Accordionist Omar Angioni (b.1952) from Quebracho, Paysandú department also describes the infrastructure limitations of isolated rural areas in northern Uruguay in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and the implications this had on the practice of rural school *kermesses* in the region (Figure 110):

The *kermesses* out in the country were far away from the city, for example, it was difficult to get to them, because of transport problems, it was very difficult to bring an orchestra from the city, it was expensive and there weren't any proper vehicles, there were dirt roads and sometimes it would rain two or three days prior (to the dance) and it was impossible to get there. It was far to go, 25, 30, 40 kilometers of dirt road, back then. So, it was impossible back in those days. Now there are paved roads, and its faster. But before, it was impossible to get there, so you had to make do with what you had at hand, those were the rural accordionists that would play at horse races and birthday parties [...] (they would invite them to perform), and sometimes there would be two, or three accordionists at the same dance, and each one would play some. That was the music back then, but the people danced and had a good time. [...] That's all there was, back then, you couldn't aspire to anything beyond that. [...].<sup>226</sup>

<sup>223</sup> Term utilized to refer to a mix of popular Latin American and North American dance genres such as: foxtrot, *bolero*, *samba*, *cumbia*, etc.

<sup>224</sup> Term referring to traditional dance music of the urban areas of the River Plate region: *tango*, *milonga*, *vals*, etc.

<sup>225</sup> Walter Roldán, Interview, 2016, Tacuarembó

<sup>226</sup> Omar Angioni, Interview, 2002, Quebracho





Figure 110 – Omar Angioni, Quebracho, Paysandú, Uruguay, 2002

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Oftentimes, rural school *kermesses* in northern Uruguay were preceded by the practice of rural sports, primarily horse racing. In accordance with the memories of many informants for this thesis, Walter Roldán clearly remembers:

Normally, at the (rural) schools there was a horse race and then a dance. The horse race happened before dusk, there was a police order that all races had to occur before dusk. Sometimes it was almost nighttime when the horse races were held, then they had a celebration for the race winners and they received their cash prizes, ultimately there was nothing left to do, so people wanted to dance. [...].<sup>227</sup>

Accordionist Guzmán Parra (b.1944) (Figure 111), born in Tambores on the border between the departments of Tacuarembó and Paysandú, formally learned piano accordion as a child in the small city of Paso de los Toros, Tacuarembó. He had dance orchestras that toured regionally in a Ford A through rough rural terrain, performing at dance events such as *kermesses* at rural schools that were held acoustically and by lantern light in locales lacking electricity.<sup>228</sup> He recalls the ancillary ludic activities that were carried out during the dances, with the purpose of further raising funds, in the *kermesses* where he

<sup>227</sup> Walter Roldán, Interview, 2016, Tacuarembó

<sup>228</sup> Guzmán Parra, Interview, 2002, Pueblo Gallinal

performed at rural locales such as: Charata, Carpintería, San Benito, Laureles de Achar, Sarandí Navarro, and Las Argüellas:

People used to do *polca con relaciones*<sup>229</sup>, there were various games that aren't done anymore, like the *polca de las damas*<sup>230</sup>, the telegrams, people would send "telegrams", like written messages. The Jail was when a woman would capture a man, and they would have to pay to get him out and dance with him. They were all games that were organized for school benefits. [...] (We would perform) in areas where, nowadays, the schools are gone, but everywhere they would do benefit events in those schools.<sup>231</sup>



Figure 111 – Guzmán Parra, Guichón, Paysandú, 2002

Photo: José A. Curbelo

<sup>229</sup> A practice where periodic pause intervals in the melody of a *polca* during a dance is used as a space for certain dance participants to exchange verses of improvised popular poetry in quatrain format. Oftentimes these exchanges of verses are directed at each other between a man and a woman and take on a comic character and is full of innuendo.

<sup>230</sup> *Polca* where the women select their dance partner.

<sup>231</sup> Guzmán Parra, Interview, 2002, Pueblo Gallinal

The social importance of public-school dances for dispersed rural communities was a phenomenon not strictly limited to northern Uruguay, a region bordered both by Argentina and Brazil. Bandoneonist Jorge Medina (b.1955) performed as a boy with a trio composed of piano accordion, *bandoneón* and guitar: *Los Sobrinitos de Donald* (Donald's Nephews) formed by his music professor, Juan Carlos Rubiolo in the city of Paysandú (bordering Argentina along the Uruguay River), an influential music educator that formed a myriad of musicians in the region. The trio was hired on numerous occasions, over the course of three years, to perform at rural school dances in the interior of the Argentine province adjacent to Uruguay, Entre Ríos. Medina recalls [...]:

[...] Back then, you would arrive at a (rural) school where you were hired to play, you would arrive and there was nothing but countryside. We would hear our folks say, "What are we going to do here, when you can't even see one house?" But it was an amazing thing, we would go inside the school where they would feed us dinner and when we went outside it was full of people, full, it was amazing, and (every rural school dance) was the same way. You would go outside and there would be pickups and trucks, (wagons) [...] they would come from everywhere. [...] This happened at many locations, you would get there and it was all deserted, only one house or so off in the distance.<sup>232</sup>



Figure 112 – Jorge Medina, Paysandú, Uruguay, 2016

Photo: José A. Curbelo

The Zinchuk family of the small Argentine city of Tres Isletas in the Chaco province in the littoral region also recalls the practice of *kermesses* at the rural

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<sup>232</sup> Jorge Medina, Interview, 2016, Paysandú

schools of their region, an agrarian area of diverse European immigration such as collectivities from Russia and Ukraine. Demonstrating great similarities with the recollections of *kermesses* of musicians from northern Uruguay, Oscar Zinchuk describes:

(The *kermesses*) were a way to have fun, a distraction for the people, people would have picnics, *kermesses*. Maybe it was to construct a building, to buy paint, to buy chalk, to make roads, fix up the school building, those type of things. They would hold raffles, they would raffle off a cake, and they would auction cakes as well, I remember. They would have soccer championships. They would charge for the inscription and you would play, and a portion went for a prize to the trophy winner. Then they would have a *truco*<sup>233</sup> championship, a *carrera de sortija*<sup>234</sup>, and a horse race.<sup>235</sup>

Óscar's aunt, Raíza Zinchuk (b.1944) describes the autonomic organization of *kermesses* by local residents of immigrant origin, when she was younger in the agricultural colony of Pampa Vargas:

Back then we didn't ask for help from the Municipality or the Government, there were commissions of people of immigrant origin ("*gringos*")<sup>236</sup>, that during the week would seek donations from the residents of the *colonia*<sup>237</sup>, and everyone would donate a chicken or a turkey, or something like that. [...] And on Thursday and Friday or Saturday, the women would bake their sweet bread, they would slaughter the chickens, pluck all of them, and the following day all that was sold and was eaten by the people. The picnic (*kermesse*) would start at nine in the morning. They would hold raffles, and with that they would build the classrooms, buy a bell if there was no bell, flags, benches, all that. [...] People would dance. The musicians, the *gringada*<sup>238</sup> almost all of them knew how to play the (button diatonic) accordion. My dad played the accordion.<sup>239</sup>

With the arrival of technological modernization, improved roadway infrastructure, mass media technology, and rural electrification to far-flung rural areas of northern Uruguay in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the musical practices related to the fundraising *kermesses*, and other social dance events, began to transform. Where on one hand these advances helped the local

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<sup>233</sup> Traditional card game.

<sup>234</sup> Similar to *carrera de cinta*, a test of equestrian dexterity consisting of riders on horseback attempting to hook hanging ribbons at full gallop. It is an ages-old Spanish tradition also practiced in Latin America.

<sup>235</sup> Zinchuk, Et. Al., Interview, 2019, Tres Isletas

<sup>236</sup> Colloquial term utilized in southern South America to refer to people of immigrant origin, primarily non-Hispanic European groups such as Italians, Germans, etc. Not necessarily pejorative in meaning, in difference to the way the term is utilized in North and Central America in reference to people from the United States of America.

<sup>237</sup> Term used to refer to an agricultural settlement.

<sup>238</sup> Term referring to a group of *gringos*.

<sup>239</sup> Zinchuk, Et. Al., Interview, 2019, Tres Isletas

musician and made their task less tiresome, on the other hand they introduced dynamics and elements that will eventually threaten to render the local musician obsolescent. According to many informants of this thesis - for the most part, accordionists who have been long-time animators of *kermesses* and other social dance events in Uruguay's interior - this factor, compounded with recurrent macroeconomic crises and governmentally-imposed restrictions, bureaucracy and taxes, served to discourage and provoke the decline of independently-produced social dance events in northern Uruguay, such as *kermesses* at rural schools. (CURBELO, 2017) This situation has also been exacerbated by a decline in rural Uruguayan population due to migratory movements of rural-to-urban exodus, a characteristic that is pronounced in Uruguay, a "macrocephalic" nation with one of most urbanized populations in the world. (RIAL, 1984)

This general environment of rural population decline, and the aging of rural demographic profiles, with reduced possibility for social reproduction, has meant fewer child and adolescent students for many isolated rural public schools. This directly impacts the viability of maintaining certain rural public schools – some with attendance in the single digits, and has its obvious repercussions in fundraising efforts for schools – dependent on the participation and contribution of local populace - such as the traditional practice of *kermesses*. The rural school, once the pioneering civic-educational presence of the incipient Spanish-speaking central Uruguayan state in the sparsely-populated multi-ethnic northern region, has seen its role threatened by adverse demographic and economic factors, a phenomenon that has not gone unnoticed by local and national authorities in the past decades. (ÁLVAREZ, 2020)

We will now present the perceived impacts on *kermesses* and social dances, within the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>, of the technological, governmental, economic and demographic factors anteriorly mentioned. The descriptions and observations are supplied by musicians themselves, obtained through oral history collection, as they themselves possess intimate knowledge of the cultural changes they have perceived over the past decades in relation to the tradition of *kermesses*, their organization as collective, civic-educational benefit events, and the musical practices and aesthetics employed as part of *kermesses* in rural northern Uruguay.

In 2003, button accordionist and vocalist José Sismande (b.1961) (Figure 113), born and raised on a cattle ranch in the 6<sup>th</sup> Section of the department of Flores where his father was the foreman, and now residing in the city of Durazno, described the aesthetic and organizational impact, in his region, of the arrival of electricity, in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, on the practice of holding *kermesses* for the benefit of local rural schools:

They gradually stopped holding that kind of dance because bands started performing at the school *kermesses*, before that the dances were held with just an accordion, or maybe accompanied by a drum, more recently, accompanied by a full drum set as well. Then they started with bands, with electric guitar, when electricity arrived to the whole country, in all the school dances they started using the electric guitar and keyboard and people gave up the *gaucho* music that there used to be. They gave up the accordion and gave up the tradition. Now, it's all electronic: keyboard and electric guitar. [...] (That change happened) about fifteen years ago. [...] they used to have some great dances at the schools (with accordion), they had very successful benefit events, now with electric guitar and everything (the schools) have to pay a lot, it's expensive. Those rural schools, some schools have even closed. [...] Before that, the *kermesses* were great, they were done with accordion, Elías Romani was the accordionist at all those rural schools (in the local area). He held the dances by himself playing the piano accordion. A great musician.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> José Sismande, Interview, 2002, Durazno



Figure 113 – José Sismande, Durazno, Uruguay, 2003

Photo: José A. Curbelo

In his statements, Sismande highlights the Uruguayan rural public's changing musical tastes as it became more exposed to other cultural influences made possible by electrification and increased access to international mass media products in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He also stresses that those changing tastes demanded a musical product that required more musicians and novel electric-powered instruments and this factor increased the musical artist expenses that *Comisiones de Fomento* had to cover in the production of a *kermesse*. It must be remembered that the primary purpose of a *kermesse*, aside from serving as a ludic sociocultural nexus between community members, is to raise as much funds as possible in benefit of a given rural school, its infrastructure and educational activities.

Some traditional accordionists that played *kermesse* dances during this transition were able to adapt in ways such as learning the piano accordion and

electronic keyboard to perform "tropical" music,<sup>241</sup> and other genres, that came in vogue in Uruguay in the 1960's and 1970's, partly sparked by the regional success of the Colombian group, *El Cuarteto Imperial*.<sup>242</sup> Such was the case of professional piano accordionist Ari Pereira (b.1932) (Figure 114) born and raised in Guarapirú, a small rural locale in the interior of Paysandú department. His family is of Brazilian descent and had a long musical tradition. He was raised in a rural musical environment that consisted of two-row button accordion, *bandoneón*, and guitar, all three of which he learned, and his father played two-row button accordion in the local dances. According to Pereira, "I switched (to the piano accordion) because I made my living from music, the *bandoneón* was already in decline, there were few *típica* orchestras left, so I changed. [...] I could do more things and it entered in tropical music, tropical music was always played on (piano) accordion".<sup>243</sup> Also, piano accordionist Washington Montes (b.1960) from the border city of Artigas (Figure 115) switched to playing the electronic keyboard for fifteen years, during the growth in popularity of tropical music in northern Uruguay, only to eventually return to the piano accordion later in life.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Local term generally referring to derivants of popular music genres originating in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean region: *cumbia*, *plena*, *son*, *bolero*, *merengue*, etc.

<sup>242</sup> More information about the vast trajectory of the *Cuarteto Imperial* can be found here: <https://www.cuartetoimperial.com/web/index.php/quienes-somos/historia-cuarteto>

<sup>243</sup> Ari Pereira, Interview, 2002, Paysandú

<sup>244</sup> Washington Montes, Interview, 2016, Artigas





Figure 114 – Ari Pereira, Paysandú, Uruguay, 2002

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 115 – Washington Montes (center), Artigas, Uruguay, 2016

Source: CURBELO, 2018, p.154

As new foreign electronic developments of the international music industry arrived into the Uruguayan market in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, they provided novel technological options for musicians in the interior of Uruguay to animate social events, such as dances and *kermesses*. These new technologies also allowed musicians to perform professionally at events at a cheaper price, by replacing band members with computerized technology. The reduction in price proved important to musicians in maintaining themselves competitive and professionally active during periods of regional macroeconomic crises, such as experienced in Uruguay from 1999 to 2002.

Piano accordionist and keyboardist Jorge Ferreira (b.1963) (Figure 116) had formal music education, beginning as a teenager, in the city of Salto with a well-known music educator Da Costa Leite, and he began performing professionally at twenty years old. Among his musical professional activity, which included rural dances, Ferreira worked in the Uruguayan city of Bella Unión, on the triple border with Argentina and Brazil, as a keyboardist. The establishments where he performed were frequented by the diverse workers of the local sugar cane industry ("*peludos*"), and he had to acquire and execute a vast repertoire of songs and international genres to satisfy the requests of that public.<sup>245</sup> Interviewed in 2002, at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, he shared his observations of the transitions occurred throughout his long trajectory as a professional musician in northern Uruguay in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

(Music with accordion) has been killed off by music sequencers. People buy a large, professional keyboard, record the music, and then go with one keyboardist and two or three singers and that's the orchestra. So, a lot of people ended up doing that because they say that it is perfect music, and it's cheaper. It's not the same as performing live music. [...] (That all occurred a while ago), perhaps in 1990, around there. (There were keyboards before that) but not with the technological innovation to be able to record all the instruments solely with a keyboard. I played keyboard, but never with that new computer technology that they have nowadays. [...] A lot of (professional musicians) have told me that I am behind the times, that I should give up playing the accordion, and study computer science to sequence music. Where does your musical ability end up? Everything will be all done by machine.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Jorge Ferreira, Interview, 2002, Salto

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.



Figure 116 – Jorge Ferreira, Salto, Uruguay, 2002

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Guitarist, vocalist and long-time local radio personality, Basilio Morales, from Río Branco, Cerro Largo also corroborates Ferreira's experiences. (Figure 117) For many years Morales led the band *Tennyson Combo*, composed of several musicians and performing a wide variety of musical genres at innumerable social dance events, including *kermesses*, throughout eastern Uruguay. Morales observes:

Technology began to change the panorama and steal work, not only from musicians, but you know how technology has done away with many jobs. (In the past) to perform at a dance with a decent ensemble, you needed at least four or five musicians to sound good. Nowadays, one person goes with a discotheque and they have ten musicians (inside the machine). (Or a keyboardist performs). (Figure 118) A singer, instead of having two or three guitarists accompany them, they use a recording and they can still sing. All of this began to steal work from musicians.<sup>247</sup>

<sup>247</sup> Basilio Morales, Interview, 2016, Rio Branco



Figure 117 – Basilio Morales, Río Branco, Cerro Largo, Uruguay, 2016

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 118 – Dance with the group "Amigos do Sul", composed of keyboard and vocalist, with sound system and DJ service provided by "La Potencia Disco", at an event of the *Asociación Vanguardia de Jubilados y Pensionistas* at the *Club Deportivo Militar Olimar Artigas*, Río Branco, Cerro Largo, Uruguay, 2016

Photo: José A. Curbelo

With the arrival of electricity to rural localities in northern Uruguay, not only was the increased use of electronic musical instruments, such as electronic and, later, computerized keyboards, made possible, but also the employment of a technological option that depended on recorded sound: the discotheque. This option, controlled by a sole figure: the Disk Jockey, all but eliminated the

dependence on human presence to perform professionally for a social dance event, such as a *kermesse*. Regarding this, Washington Montes opines:

For me particularly, one of the biggest problems for the musicians were DJs, electronic music. In electronic music, the DJ merely appropriates the music that the musician has created and recorded - the one who originated everything - with that (the DJ) earns a whole bunch of money, and takes the musician out of the equation. For me, that has always been wrong. Nowadays, a DJ is famous. But why? He doesn't do anything, the DJ simply plays a recording and speaks with people, but the music was created by musicians who don't even have work, and the DJs earn a lot of money off the music of that person. For me, that's just wrong.<sup>248</sup>

The sentiments of Montes are echoed by Walter Roldán who also observes the impacts of DJs, during his extensive musical career, on the organization and economic success for benefit *kermesses* at rural schools in northern Uruguay, particularly in Tacuarembó, in past decades:

People would say that (music of *Nueva Ola* Argentine singers such as Palito Ortega, Jhonny Tedesco, etc.) was in fashion, and someone started a radio show and began to inculcate young people that that was the best music, and to be in style you had to listen to The Beatles, and it had to be that music, the kids didn't even understand the lyrics of The Beatles, but they became fanatics. They danced to that music, they only wanted that. (Traditional) music started to decline, and musicians had to change instruments to be able to play *cumbia*. [...] The owners of the discotheques sometimes had radio shows and they would book and promote dances. [...] The discotheque would charge for the DJ service, for publicity, for the sound system and for the band (hired by the discotheque) [...] Sometimes the rural schools had to pay with proceeds from the *cantina* to pay those exorbitant expenses. A lot of schools stopped producing dances, because the lion's share of the proceeds would go to the owners of the discotheque that would do publicity on the radio, that's the way it was.<sup>249</sup>

Guzmán Parra, in 2002, also observed:

Many musical ensembles have disappeared because of the discotheques. [...] Nowadays, with a discotheque, you replace an orchestra. (With an orchestra) you have to bring a truck-full of instruments. [...] The musical ensembles simply record music for the large discotheques. [...] Its much more beautiful to dance to a live ensemble than to a discotheque, however, considering the financial capacity, the money that you have to shell out to bring an orchestra, its anti-economic to bring a live group. It's more economic to bring a discotheque. [...] Nowadays the keyboards have programs and they practically play by themselves, a musician does very little, when they have a programmable keyboard [...] they know very little about music. [...] In about the 1960's, 1970's the musical ensembles with accordion began to decline. [...] Then the instruments with sophisticated

<sup>248</sup> Washington Montes, Interview, 2016, Artigas

<sup>249</sup> Walter Roldán, Interview, 2016, Tacuarembó

technology, like keyboards, arrived [...] nowadays the accordion, bass, and drums are all played electronically.<sup>250</sup>

Bandoneonist Bernardo Carriquí (b.1947), who studied classical *bandoneón* with René Marino Rivero at the Conservatory in Tacuarembó, used to perform at regional dances, including rural school *kermesses*, with *música típica* ensembles beginning in the 1960's. (Figure 119) He recalls that every weekend there used to be social dance *kermesses* with small ensembles in the rural areas surrounding the city of Tacuarembó. This began to change in the 1970's with the entry of the discotheques, according to him, "the schools don't have any more dances, and here (in the city) they do some dances with discotheque, very few orchestras are hired [...] When the discotheques arrived they started to do away with the orchestras". Also, beginning in the mid-1970's Carriquí remembers the decline of the prestigious municipal Conservatory of Tacuarembó, known for *bandoneón* instruction, as well as the massive entry of tropical music. into the Uruguayan media market, winning territory from the more traditional *música típica*. As far as the continuity of the practice of social dance *kermesses* in his region, Carriquí observes, "I believe that the school dances ended up being prohibited. [...] The school dances were to raise funds for the maintenance of rural schools [...] there is none of that now".<sup>251</sup>



Figure 119 – Bernardo Carriquí, Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2016

Photo: José A. Curbelo

<sup>250</sup> Guzmán Parra, Interview, 2002, Pueblo Gallinal

<sup>251</sup> Bernardo Carriquí, Interview, 2016 Tacuarembó

Many informants cite the important role of local and national government-imposed bureaucracy, regulations, fees, and prohibitions, at certain periods of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, in the discouragement and decline of the practice of holding social dance events, such as *kermesses* at rural schools. Basilio Morales (2016) observes:

(Rural dances) stopped being held because of the taxes and regulations that were applied as time went on. Back when we performed all week, we hardly paid any taxes, we just paid police service which was cheap. There were no (authors copyright) fees to be paid, and the authorities didn't inspect the (dance) locales for that.<sup>252</sup>

Accordianist from Piedra Pintada, Artigas department Vicente Tejeira (b.1956) (Figure 120) used to perform at *kermesses* in the rural interior of departments in the border region with Brazil: Artigas, Salto, Rivera at locales such as Masoller, Tranqueras and Rincón de Valentín. His group was composed of accordion, guitar, drum set and conga drums and they performed a varied dance repertoire composed of Brazilian *música gaúcha*, *cumbia*, and traditional genres such as *tango* and *vals*. According to Tejeira the group would charge a minimal fee to the teachers and school commission presidents that would hire them for *kermesses* so that the events would be more economically beneficial for the rural school in question.<sup>253</sup>

Tejeira described, in 2002, the difficulties that later emerged in the organization of social dance *kermesses* in his region. At that moment, he had already been musically inactive for ten to twelve years.:

The rural dances are declining. (In order to hold a dance) you have to pay everything and you have to obtain a permit that costs about one thousand pesos, and there are no funds, so (a dance) can't be held, and the bands are very expensive. [...] A band charges, at minimum, three hundred dollars, the ones that charge the least. They bring (their own sound system) but if it is a benefit event, you don't raise enough funds to pay the band. Plus, for a benefit *kermesse* you have to obtain a permit from the departmental government and they charge you, you have to pay for a permit from the police department, as well as pay (the policemen who work at the dance) by the hour [...] In the past the police were merely notified (of a social dance *kermesse*) when they used to do their regular patrols, and it was fine. Not anymore [...] (the police) have to emit a permit, for example, if there is a benefit dance within a police precinct, like the Third Precinct in Pintado Grande, and there is a benefit in this locale - which belongs to the same precinct - one of the events has to be cancelled. [...] (the police) allows only one benefit event per day in the precinct. This is doing away with (all the

<sup>252</sup> Basilio Morales, Interview, 2016, Rio Branco

<sup>253</sup> Vicente Tejeira, Interview, 2002, Piedra Pintada

dances). Now, all they do in a school benefit event is a horse race or a soccer game, but even so, I don't think they charge for a permit for soccer, but they charge for a permit for horse races.<sup>254</sup>



Figure 120 – Vicente Tejeira (left), Piedra Pintada, Artigas, 2002

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Accordionist Euclides Díaz (b.1955) from Tacuarembó, a veteran of decades of performing at social dances in the region, was interviewed in 2016. (Figure 121) He describes the gradual accumulation of taxes, fees, and regulations of social dances that created pressure to economize on the musical aspect of the events, ending up in the commonplace practice of hiring discotheques. According to Díaz:

Nowadays, to hold a dance it's a sacrifice, because in the past you didn't have to obtain so many permits as you do now. Nowadays, to hold a dance you have to pay for permits from step one, you have to pay the Fire Department, the Police, security, ANDEBU<sup>255</sup>, you have to get permits from everywhere, and hope they approve your request. [...] A lot of times people won't hold a dance because they are worried about losing money. They try to spend the smallest amount possible, (so they) hire a discotheque for young people and not hire an orchestra, because the discotheque is cheaper. A discotheque goes with one person and their sound system, they don't bring any musicians, and they produce the dance. [...] Thirty years ago, so many fees weren't required as they are now. The police would give you a permit and they wouldn't charge a thing [...] the policemen would stand guard at the dance.<sup>256</sup>

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> "Asociación Nacional de Broadcasters Uruguayos" National Association of Uruguayan Broadcasters

<sup>256</sup> Euclides Díaz, Interview, 2016, Tacuarembó





Figure 121 – Euclides Díaz, Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2002

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Washington Montes, in Artigas, has had the same experience as Díaz. In relation to rural dances and school *kermesses* where he performed for decades, according to Montes:

Back then (the dances) were fabulous because you could make a profit, not like nowadays where you have to pay for so many things. You have to pay the Police, AGADU<sup>257</sup>, social security taxes, Fire Department and everything. Back then, none of that existed, you would organize the dance, let the local police know, hold the dance, pay the musicians and that was it. There wasn't as much bureaucracy as there is now. (All of that started in the 1970's, perhaps) Fifteen years ago you could still hold dances. [...] The school *kermesses* stopped being held. Back then, there were four, five ensembles that worked every weekend because there were four, five, six schools that would hold dances and everything worked out. Due to the amount of taxes and regulations that they have imposed it's impossible because the institution doesn't fundraise anything, on the contrary, if you're not careful you can end up losing money.<sup>258</sup>

In regards to the evolution of relations of the police with dance events in the interior of northern Uruguay, Walter Roldán remembers about his neighborhood, Diego Lamas, on the periphery of the city of Tacuarembó:

<sup>257</sup> "Asociación General de Autores del Uruguay", Uruguay's artist copyright entity.

<sup>258</sup> Washington Montes, Interview, 2016, Artigas

In the 1950's up to the 1970's there were many (house) dances held in this neighborhood. The friendship and trust were great enough, that I even saw some police take off their jackets and guns and participate in the dances, because it was a family environment. [...] In the 1960's (the police started demanding permits to hold dances), they were regulations that people had to obey. (The police) thought that (the dances) were too much, at least the authorities unfamiliar with the practice thought that way [...] Those new regulations were made by people sitting behind desks that thought that maybe it was dangerous to society to hold dances like that, and they started imposing laws and regulations that ended up stopping the dances. They stopped the family house dances.<sup>259</sup>

These increased police restrictions in the 1960's, as described by Roldán, could possibly be a result of the measures enacted during the government of Jorge Pacheco Areco (1967-1972), a presidency that paved the way for the instauration of Uruguay's civic-military dictatorship (1973-1985). These measures employed already existing emergency powers stipulated in the Uruguayan Constitution. These "*Medidas Prontas de Seguridad*" (Emergency Security Measures) are found in Art.168, Cap.III, Sec.IX of the Constitution and authorize the Executive to "Take emergency security measures in serious and unforeseen cases of foreign attack or internal disturbance". (URUGUAY, 1967)

Many informants make particular reference to the imposition of fees levied by the *Asociación General de Autores del Uruguay* (AGADU), Uruguay's artist copyright entity, as a primary contributor to financially de-incentivize independent dance events such as house parties, and school *kermesses* in northern Uruguay over the past decades. This peculiar phenomenon merits further examination of the history and workings of this institution.

AGADU was founded in 1929, its most current Statute was approved by the Uruguayan Government in 1969, and it is affiliated with the *Confédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Auteurs et Compositeurs*. Article One of its Statue declares that AGADU is "a civic institution that has the specific function [...] consistent with the defense and protection of author's copyright of its direct members and the affiliates of foreign copyright entities with which (AGADU) maintains pacts of reciprocity". (AGADU, 1966) The organization currently still

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<sup>259</sup> Walter Roldán, Interview, 2016, Tacuarembó

levies mandatory fees on live events involving music.<sup>260</sup> Establishing differing price tiers, which also vary according to the estimated number of event attendees<sup>261</sup>, AGADU's website explains and justifies the maintenance of this practice:

In the same sense that private events incur various expenses, the cost of the use of musical repertoire should be factored in. The payments that are made to AGADU for realizing private events are directed towards national and foreign authors based on the musical repertoire utilized.<sup>262</sup>

Walter Roldán describes how the application of these measures played out in his region of Tacuarembó over the past decades:

Then (in the house parties), they started forcing you to obtain a permit from the local police precinct, and AGADU charged you (as well). You had to pay AGADU, and it went to such extremes, that in order to have a birthday party, or something like that, and you were bringing a live musician, you had to pay author's copyright, and it wasn't a small sum of money. [...] (The young people) started going to the clubs to dance, and the people who held birthday parties wouldn't do them at home anymore, they would go to a club or a social hall, but you always had to pay AGADU. [...] (AGADU) started to exert pressure and these regulations were enacted. Nowadays, a birthday party for a fifteen-year-old that has to rent out a social hall at a club – something that is completely family-based, it's not commercial – still has to pay AGADU.<sup>263</sup>

### **5.3 Weddings and other ethnoreligious-associated events**

Up to this point in this thesis, we have covered festive rituals in trans-Atlantic (Spanish and Portuguese-speaking) contexts of rural exodus, emigration diasporas of small localities, as well as festive rituals of secular, civic character. Before engaging in discussion in the final chapter, it is important to describe the diverse dynamics and importance of festive rituals within contexts of religio-linguistic ethnicity, especially those deeply marked by traumatic migration experiences. The festive rituals explored in this section will be from case studies from the experience of 20<sup>th</sup> Century migration to the interior of Uruguay of unique

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<sup>260</sup> Experienced by the author in non-lucrative community-based album release events in Uruguay's interior where AGADU representatives made purposeful appearances to charge the author the Association's mandated fee in cash.

<sup>261</sup> [https://www.agadu.org/yo\\_difundo\\_cultura\\_tarifas\\_fiestas\\_privadas.php](https://www.agadu.org/yo_difundo_cultura_tarifas_fiestas_privadas.php)

<sup>262</sup> [https://www.agadu.org/yo\\_difundo\\_cultura\\_permisos\\_fiestas.php](https://www.agadu.org/yo_difundo_cultura_permisos_fiestas.php)

<sup>263</sup> Walter Roldán, Interview, 2016, Tacuarembó

religio-linguistic, ethnic collectivities from Russia: specifically, Volga Germans, and members of the New Israel religious sect.

The choice of these two groups stemmed from the author's twenty-year investigation on free-reed instruments in Uruguay (button accordion, bandoneon, etc.), instruments that have represented the flood of European emigration in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and that have had great protagonism in these two collectivities' traditional festive ritual practices in contemporaneity. In these cases, it is important to consider that these non-Spanish speaking, non-Iberian endogamous groups, in their arrival and acculturation processes, have possessed three levels of distinction from the cultural milieu of their destination (rural northern Uruguay): language, ethnicity, and religion. These characteristics will color the cultivation and adaptation of festive rituals, afford greater meaning to their transmission and importance of those rituals in group cohesion, and also contribute to formation of concepts of "Us vs. Them" *vis à vis* larger Uruguayan society.

In this last section of this chapter, based on oral histories and documentary research, we will focus on festive rituals that accentuate religio-linguistic, ethnic differentiation and affirmation: group religious practices and life events such as weddings. The adaptations and transformations of these festive rituals over time demonstrate the processes of assimilation suffered by these groups with the passage of succeeding generations. Firstly, we will start with some additional historical background information so the reader can better understand the context and trajectory of these two groups' over one-hundred-year presence in Uruguay, a presence that was preceded by traumatic situations: persecution in Russia, and the arduous immigration process, trauma that is transmitted within the interior of the collective memory of these groups and serve as markers of group identity. Previously, in the second chapter of this thesis, this historical context was generally summarized.

Guigou (2011) describes the context during the presidency of Batlle and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, after Uruguay fought its last Civil War, Montevideo held effective control of national territory, and the small nation embarked on an ambitious modernization process, in line with the European models of the day:

This modernization process, with its peculiar democratization characteristic, included the search for groups – mainly Europeans, that is, “white” people – to populate a rural area considered to be barbarous and uncivilized [...] It was supposed that the dichotomy of barbarity-civilization would be resolved with the integration of groups that brought technical knowledge, sought to progress, and knew novel forms of agricultural production. [...] Increasing the rural population resulted important for the definition of sovereignty in relation with neighbors Argentina and Brazil. (GUIGOU, 2011, p.35)

It was in this initial period of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that Uruguay engaged in policies of attracting European immigrants to settle its rural interior, with incentives on facilitating the entry of migrants and the acquisition of land on relatively favorable economic and legal conditions. (KALLINKA, 2017, pp.92, 109) Similar policies were engaged in by Uruguay’s neighbors – each possessing vast territories: Argentina and Brazil who at times actively competed with each other in recruiting migrant groups from Europe, brought to the New World from the Old via international shipping lines. (WEYNE, 1986, pp.97-99) This was also a period in which the United States – principal magnet of European migration – began enacting more restrictive immigration policies, diverting some migrant flows to South America.

In order to commence to understand the cultural trajectory of these unique endogamous, agriculturally-oriented collectivities that arrived to northern Uruguay, and to more fully comprehend the significance of their festive ritual traditions, one must have a basic notion of their past in Russia, their collective migratory experience, and eventually their process of acculturation, adaptation, and social reproduction in their new environment in South America.

Though, prior there had been a German presence in Russia from at least the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, it was during the reign of Catherine the Great (1762-1796 A.D.) that a migratory policy was instated that incentivized German colonization of certain Russian territories. (KLOBERDANZ, 1975, p.210) Kloberdanz succinctly summarizes the push-pull factors that influenced the German migrants’ decision at that historical conjecture:

Suffering from the ravages of Seven Years War, many German peasants were lured by the auspicious benefits promised by Catherine II in 1763: land, thirty-year religious liberty, self-government, and perpetual exclusion from military service. Approximately 27,000 peasants and craftsmen (including whole families) from throughout the

German states [...] answered the call of Catherine the Great.  
(KLOBERDANZ, 1975, p.210)

With the German migrant families, of both Protestant and Catholic religious profession, settling in communal agricultural communities in the vast geography bathed by the Volga River, certain historians have described Catherine the Great's usage of these foreign settlers as a "living barrier against the hordes of the steppes" in the Russian Empire's territorial ambitions in the areas dominated by nomadic tribes. (WEYNE, 1986, p.71)

Facing great hardships in Russia, throughout generations, of an extreme climate, episodes of violent assaults of their villages, cultural, linguistic and religious differences, etc. the Volga Germans developed their own society, expanded their population, grew their agricultural production, and adapted to their Russian surroundings, adaptively acquiring traits of Russian rural culture. (KLOBERDANZ, 1975, p.212; WEYNE, 1986, p.72) Kloberdanz (1975) sustains that this experience in Russia greatly molded the Volga Germans' culture and worldview, though with "crystallizing" traits of 18<sup>th</sup> Century German culture and language, at the same time it developed concepts of "Us vs. Them" in response to their new surroundings, surroundings which also accentuated the communal religious fervor, work ethic and endogamy of the collectivity as survival tactics, traits which were carried to the Americas,

During the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881 A.D.), many of the privileges promised by Catherine the Great to the Volga Germans were revoked, including the exemption from the vastly-reviled obligatory military service. These measures and subsequent official policies of "Russification" began to provoke processes of mass migration of Volga Germans to other geographic areas, both within Russian territory (Siberia, etc.) and abroad, particularly the Americas. (KALLINKA, 2017, p.117) This migratory exodus will be exacerbated by the Revolutionary period, and though an autonomous Volga German republic was established by the victorious Soviets, mass famine in 1921, forced collectivization, and the protracted Soviet-Nazi aggressions in World War Two when the Volga German collectivity is again repressed and viewed as traitorous, this time by Josef Stalin,

drove the bulk of the remaining Volga Germans from their homes. (LONG, 1992, p.524)

In the selection of countries of destination of emigration, different Volga German collectivities sought to obtain favorable settlement conditions, as those afforded in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in Russia. The American nations (Canada, Brazil, Argentina, etc.) presented differing policies for these migrants, and each nation had interest in populating their undeveloped, rural interiors (possessing indigenous populations) with European agriculturalists, and generally Volga German farmers sought lands appropriate for wheat production. (KALLINKA, 2017, pp.117)

The first Volga Germans to settle in rural northern Uruguay arrived in 1914 to the department of Paysandú from the adjoining Argentine province of Entre Ríos which had been an important center of Volga German immigration since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>264</sup> (KALLINKA, 2017, p.118; MEDINA, 1988, p.123) Years later, a group of 6,000 Volga Germans from Siberia were assisted by the German ambassador in Moscow to obtain German passports and depart the USSR to Germany. After arriving in Germany in 1930, the majority of this group emigrated to the Americas, including Brazil. That year, the group that was destined for Brazil arrived in the southern state of Santa Catarina. Their experience there was complicated by the abrupt forced adaptation attempt to the physical and cultural environment of the rugged and undeveloped interior of the subtropical state at that historical moment. (KALLINKA, 2017, pp.124-125; MEDINA, 1988, pp.176-178) According to button accordionist Otto Frey (b.1934) descendent of these migrants:

Our parents had a very bad experience in Brazil [...] without being able to speak Portuguese [...] where they were sent, with no money [...] they were not able to adapt to the adverse and abundant subtropical fauna ("*bichero*") of the locale, and they sought other options. (FREY, 2002)

The mentioned "other options", recommended by one or another German-speaking migrant in the region, ended up meaning a desperate, epic and "Argonautesque" expedition down the Uruguay River in hand-made rafts of close

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<sup>264</sup> These first settlers "were characterized by their marked religio-cultural traditions", according to Medina (1988, p.123).

to 100 souls, made up of men, women, and children which almost met with tragedy, if they had gone over the rocky cascades of Salto Grande, were it not for the watchfulness of local bystanders. (MEDINA, 1988, p.177)

Previously, a few hundred of this group of Volga Germans refugees had arrived to Paysandú from Brazil via train, and were received and oriented by local German-speaking resident Alfred Von Metzen, later to be ubicated in German-speaking agricultural settlements in the immediate region. (Ibid.) One of these settlements was Colonia Santa Blanca, where the Frey family was interviewed by the author.<sup>265</sup> (KALLINKA, 2017, p.128) (Figure 122)



Figure 122 – Photograph taken in Brazil circa 1929-30 of members of the group of Volga Germans that arrived to Paysandú. Note the button accordionist in the front row.

Source: Personal archive of Emilia Müller de Frey

We will now enter into the primary subject of this section, ritual festive traditions surrounding ethno-linguistic religiosity, and life passage events, most namely, weddings. Firstly, we will address the collective religious ceremonial aspect, precisely because that has been a crucial central organizing factor in the social life of the collectivities in question. This religiosity is invariably linked to music, and social memory of collective musicking. (ATELA, 2003; WEYNE, 1986)

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<sup>265</sup> The agricultural settlement Santa Blanca was founded in 1938, near Chapicuy, Paysandú with families from other German-speaking settlements. Their Protestant church was founded in 1953. (KALLINKA, 2017, p.129)



Per Weyne, in diasporic Volga German communities, which are divided among varying Protestant denominations (with predominance of Lutheranism) and Roman Catholicism, in southern South America:

As in Russia [...] religious gatherings constituted the center of sociability. [...] (music was composed of) hymns, printed generally in Germany or the Baltic states [...] that were distributed among the settlers through the Church and each family had a collection. [...] These hymnals are key sources to reveal group cultural aspects regarding religiosity, literacy, and maintenance of the settlers' mother tongue. (WEYNE, 1986, pp.237)

Atela (2003, p.129), in her research in Volga German communities in the Argentine province neighboring Uruguay's littoral region, Entre Ríos, describes that musical practices among these collectivities are divided among the religious "hymns" and "dance tunes".

The health and vigor of the religious life of the culturally and religiously-diverse German-speaking communities in Rio de la Plata has been constant concern in the over two centuries of their existence. This has expressed itself in the procurement of German-speaking clergy to attend to the spiritual needs of the communities' members, also, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, to be able to officiate civic registry for Protestants, which at the time was monopolized by the Catholic Church. (WEYNE, 1986)

Walter Schmidt of rural Paysandú, a Volga German descendent, recalls of the popular Protestant religious-musical practices of his upbringing, which were carried on by his brother who embarked in the profession of itinerant Protestant preacher:

[...] here in our (rural) area, a (Lutheran) pastor would only come every three months [...] our father would sing hymns, that he had learned as a child (in Russia) (accompanied by my brother who played button accordion).<sup>266</sup>

Emilia Müller de Frey (b.1941) in Colonia Santa Blanca, in the author's fieldwork in 2002, as an illustration of the distribution of German-language Christian musical literature among Volga German communities, sang an 18<sup>th</sup> Century hymn of parting (learned from such literature) accompanied by her husband Otto Frey (1934-2011) on button accordion, that she roughly translated

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<sup>266</sup> Walter Schmidt, Interview, 2002, Paysandú

as, "true friendship should never be broken" (*Wahre Freundschaft soll nicht wanken*, in German). (Figure 123) The lyrics are as follows:

<p><i>Wahre Freundschaft soll nicht wanken, wenn man gleich entfernt ist, lebet fort noch in Gedanken und der Treue nicht vergißt.</i></p> <p><i>Keine Ader soll mir schlagen wo ich nicht an dich gedacht; für dich werd ich Liebe tragen bis in tiefe Todesnacht.</i></p> <p><i>Wenn der Mühlstein traget Reben, und daraus fließt süßer Wein, wenn der Tod mir nimmt das Leben, hör ich auf dein Freund zu sein.</i></p>	<p>True friendship should not waver when you're a long way away lives on in thought and who does not forget loyalty.</p> <p>No vein should beat in me where I didn't think of you; for you I will carry love until the deep night of death.</p> <p>When the millstone bears vines, and sweet wine flows from it, when death takes my life I stop being your friend.</p>
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Source: [https://www.lieder-archiv.de/wahre\\_freundschaft-notenblatt\\_503390.html](https://www.lieder-archiv.de/wahre_freundschaft-notenblatt_503390.html)

Rough translation: Google Translate



Figure 123 - Otto Frey.

Source: Personal archive of Emilia Müller de Frey

This unique confluence of religio-linguistic ethnic difference in situations of traumatic immigration in radically new surroundings generates varied and pragmatic concepts of "Us vs. Them", conditions and dynamics of belonging to a collectivity, and ways of defining and viewing the "other". It is in this realm that collective religiosity (as mentioned, strongly tied to music, language, and collective ritual musicking) comes into play, oftentimes occupying a central role in diasporic communities, even more so if the motivation of their emigration is related with religious persecution or difference. Grinberg writes:

The immigrant, in their struggle for self-preservation, needs to cling to elements of their native environment (familiar objects, music of their land, memories and dreams in whose content aspects of their native land are manifested, etc.) to be able to maintain the experience of "feeling as oneself". (GRINBERG, 1984, p.156)

Emilia Müller de Frey's narrative of the arrival of the group of Volga German families to rural Paysandú illustrates group preservation tactics in the migratory process *vis à vis* the "other" of a new host society:

Nowadays there are more blonde people, but at that time there were few, (the immigrants) were desperate because they didn't speak the language. Where they went, they would try to find blonde people or with white skin that could help them communicate, buy, (etc.) [...] My father and uncle set off to find work, the women remained [...] after ten days of work faraway, the day came to be paid, and their payment consisted of leftovers from their employer's lunch and a duck. It makes you both laugh and cry. [...] When returning home on horseback, my father told his brother-in-law, "you have more children than I, I give you the duck".<sup>267</sup>

This is the appropriate moment to give the historical background of the other migrant collectivity covered in this section, the Russians that migrated to Uruguay in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century with the New Israel religious sect, and initially settled in San Javier, department of Río Negro. Their story is extensive, diverse and fraught with conflicting viewpoints, so an objective general background will be presented, as a more detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis and

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<sup>267</sup> Emilia Müller de Frey, Interview, 2002, Colonia Santa Blanca

has been carried out previously by several authors. (GUIGOU, 2011; KOSHKIN, 2011; MARTINEZ, 2013)

Emerging from a centuries-old Russian phenomenon of religious sects, in dissidence with the dominance of the Orthodox Church, practicing varieties of communal living, messianism, millennialism, and ritual practices of various folk culture origins, the New Israel sect split off from an older sect in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Old Israel. This split, due to dissension about leadership succession, after the death of Old Israel's founder Petrovich Katsanov, saw the new sect based in Voronezh district. (PETROV) The sect leader who brought New Israel to Uruguay, Vasili Lubkov (b.1869-ca.1930) was declared the spiritual successor to the new sect's previous leader, Vasili Mokshin. (ETKIND, 2003; MARTÍNEZ, 2013, p.17) During a period of oppressive domination by the Tsar and the Orthodox Church, the sect is said to have achieved one hundred thousand adherents in Russia (Ibid.) Persecuted religious minority sects were viewed as contexts that were ripe with dissidence against the Tsar and the Church, and early protagonists of the process of the Russian Revolution at times viewed these sects as vehicles to assist in bringing about their revolutionary ends. (ETKIND, 2003)

The agriculturally-centered iconoclastic New Israel sect had a communal socio-productive system, unique experiential group rituals, a belief system that centered around their leader, and a particular practice of contracting union between husband and wife (which included divorce) – which eschewed elements of the Orthodox Church. The sect's doctrine and religious practices were purposefully shaped and honed by Lubkov himself.

Lubkov had become a New Israel convert in 1886, and two years later was arrested and exiled to Transcaucasia where he came into contact with a diversity of religious traditions, including the Doukhobors, a pacifist sect with unique ritual practices that included ecstatic group dancing. Accounts attest to this ecstatic dancing becoming incorporated into New Israel ceremonies, and Lubkov introduced the practice of mass religious pageants, in the line of medieval religious dramas, that recreated Biblical stories with Lubkov playing the role of Christ. (MARTÍNEZ, 2013, p.18; PETROV) Also, Petrov sustains:

The obsession with the idea of community-building also seems to have been imported from Transcaucasia [...] Lubkovites were taught that the

Kingdom of God is the "righteous, moral, perfect life of men on Earth" that they were supposed to build. (PETROV)

In attempts to consolidate his followers into building a community where their group spiritual practices could be carried out fully and unhindered, Lubkov attempted to establish a New Israel colony in different parts of Russia, including in Tiflis, Georgia. When the Tsar's promises of religious freedom in the October Manifesto of 1905 proved to be crumbling, and persecution of religious minorities intensified, Lubkov began actively investigating options to conduct a mass migration of New Israel to another country, initially visiting Canada and United States in his search. (PETROV)

In this period, the Uruguayan consul in the Caucasus region, José Rischling, had become interested in the adherents of the New Israel sect as candidates for emigration to Uruguay, in the government's quest to "civilize", populate, and develop the small nation's rural interior. He officially recommended the Uruguayan government to facilitate the entry of the sect for resettlement. While travelling to Canada, Lubkov is approached by the Uruguayan consul to the United States, and the negotiations to resettle in Uruguay commence, which already at that point was the will of the New Israel members in Russia who had authorized purchase of land in the Americas for resettlement. (GUIGOU, 2011, p.37-38)

In 1913 the first New Israel colonists, made up of 590 men, women and children, begin to arrive to Uruguay, withstanding the long trans-Atlantic maritime voyage and the squalor of the *Hotel de Inmigrantes* in the port capital, Montevideo. (MARTINEZ, 2013, p.23) In total, 2,000 New Israel sect members emigrated to Uruguay, making up 10% of the sect's total membership. (MURATOV, KLIBANOV apud PETROV) This migratory flow continued until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Welcomed by Batlle's *Colorado* government, the members of New Israel are settled in the northern littoral region of the Uruguay River in the department of Río Negro, a region, accessible by ocean-going vessels, that had already been a center of diverse, overseas immigration since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, with important foreign capital investments, such as the meat processor and exporter

Liebig's Extract of Meat Company.<sup>268</sup> The close to 3,000 hectares of land secured belonged to the ranching family of *Colorado* party official, José Espalter, who was also the nation's *Ministro de Agricultura y Fomento* (Minister of Agriculture and Development) at the time.<sup>269</sup>

The rental contract with the Espalter family had a duration of ten years, and rent had to be paid by the sect every six months. The contract, similar to other rural colonization initiatives, was guaranteed by the State in case of non-payment, and the State also provided technical assistance, implements and seeds to the settlers. However, the Uruguayan private initiative-centered contractual arrangements starkly contrasted with the collective organization of New Israel economic and social structure, which they had brought with them from Russia. The contractual arrangements in Uruguay were made, hence, with the collective which implied with their sole leader, Vasili Lubkov, who monopolized all finances and dealings with the Uruguayan State. (MARTÍNEZ, 2013, pp.25-27)

As the sect grew and developed in their isolated, rudimentary rural conditions over the years, facing great hardships, they recreated the communal spiritual practice of their religion, born in southern Russia, centered on the sect's place of worship, the *sabraña*. Martínez describes the worship practices that occurred there:

Two times a week they would meet in the hall, lacking any images – men on the right, women on the left – to hear the sermons of “*Papá*” (Father) (Vasili Lubkov). They would sing hymns and danced in circles in liturgical ceremonies whose intensity shocked some journalists from the capital [...] The *sabraña* was a place for sermons, but also political discourse. There, Lubkov spoke of spiritual and worldly matters. He informed about the economic situation, organized work tasks, called for group unity and praised – and condemned – sect members. (MARTÍNEZ, 2013, p.29)

Guigou also describes New Israel sectarian narratives (in this case of a Mr. Pablo Malarov) of funeral memorial rites for deceased members, involving communal music:

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<sup>268</sup> Internationally famous for corned beef exports from Fray Bentos, Rio Negro.

<sup>269</sup> José Espalter, in his future function as Uruguayan Minister of Foreign Affairs during the Terra dictatorship was awarded the “*Reichsadler*” (Golden Eagle) from Nazi Germany in 1938. (KALLINKA, 2017, p.135)

Until the 1950's, the religious leader would tell the life story of the deceased, and about their experience in the sect. It was a communal farewell, in which the funeral could last an entire night. Psalms dedicated to the deceased were sung. [...] (Malarov) told me that there were "professional" composers of these psalms dedicated to the deceased. These composers did not receive monetary compensation for their work. He also told me – as well as did other residents of San Javier – that they had a custom of again remembering the deceased thirty days after their burial. They would gather in the *sabraña* to eat and drink. (GUIGOU, 2011, p.106)

Nicolás Puchkariov (1922-2014) and his wife Cinavia Safronov (1924-2003) (Figure 124), children of New Israel founders of San Javier, recall the musical practices of the generation of their parents and grandparents. Safronov (2002) remembers, "Our parents and grandparents (had) religious music, they would be in a circle [...] there would be youth present, but not many, and they would sing, they had divine voices and chorales". She recalls the hymns sung were written by Lubkov and his wife.



Figure 124 – Nicolás Puchkariov and Cinavia Safronov (Paysandú, Uruguay, May 23, 2002)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Collective ritual festivities of the sect, outside of the *sabraña*, involving communal musicking and commensality also were commonplace. Petrov writes that the most important feast day of New Israel in Russia was a three-day commemoration of the exile and return of Lubkov from Transcaucasia (May 30-June 1). Safronov remembers of her upbringing in San Javier:





disputed until this day, hence, this thesis will give a cursory portrayal so the reader may have an understanding of the challenges and dynamics related with this community's festive rituals, so as to allow discussion and comparison with the other case studies in the final chapter. The example of San Javier will prove to be a very poignant contribution to the analysis of festive rituals as vehicles of cultural transmission, social integration and social control.

Martínez bluntly sustains that:

San Javier functioned as a small theocratic state governed by an authoritarian man that decided in the name of the collectivity, pronounced against discordants, was partial to his favorites and changed wives for ever younger, and younger women. [...] The seed of opposition against Lubkov began almost at the very founding of the settlement. In the beginning there were acts of spontaneous disobedience that later became open and organized rebellion. [...] The conflict that divided San Javier was cultural and religious, but also political and economic. (MARTÍNEZ, 2013, p.31, 33)

As previously mentioned, Lubkov was the interlocutor between the isolated Russian-speaking settlement and the Uruguayan State. Acquiring abilities in the Spanish language, functional knowledge of the nation's legal and financial system, and monopolizing the administration of the settlement's agricultural production, which was entrusted to him collectively, Lubkov, supportive of the ruling *Colorado* party, was able to obtain credit from the *Banco Hipotecario de Uruguay* (BHU) (Uruguayan Mortgage Bank) in his name as representative of the community. The sect's unique culture and Lubkov's marital habits came to the frequent subject of press (at times sensationally in a "yellow journalism" fashion) in national journals, portraying the sect as being alien. (GUIGOU, 2011; MARTÍNEZ, 2013)

When Lubkov obtained knowledge of the political developments post-Russian Revolution, he eventually decides to resettle in Russia with a group of New Israel sectarians settled in Uruguay. In 1926 they depart to Russia, however not without saddling the remaining settlers with crippling debt in their names with the BHU. Lubkov is eventually detained by the Soviet authorities in Russia and exiled to Siberia. His final fate is unknown, with accounts stating he was murdered. (GUIGOU, 2011; MARTÍNEZ, 2013)

As the 20<sup>th</sup> Century progressed, the New Israel settlers that remained in Uruguay, engaging in agricultural production, became more and more *uruguayized*, and adept in their dealings with the Uruguayan State, with each successive generation. With an inherent collective and resistant spirit, the group became involved for struggles for land possession, and better government services, provoking violent, repressive reaction from the State during the dictatorship of Gabriel Terra (1933-1938). (GUIGOU, 2011; KOSHKIN, 2011; MARTÍNEZ, 2013)

Later in the century, as other Russian refugees arrived to Uruguay who had opposed the Bolsheviks, as well as other Slavic immigrants, Koshkin (2011, p.75) writes, “the Second World War was accompanied by a deep rupture among the immigrants of the first wave all over the globe, Uruguay was no exception”. In this tragic period, the San Javier Russian community organizes to provide material support to the USSR, in its fight with Nazi Germany, in the form of goods and money obtained from benefit events. (KOSHKIN, 2011, p.60). In the community, Slavic-oriented civic society associations and the Communist Party had been established.

The USSR sent Soviet literature to the community, which is the southernmost Russian-majority community in the world, and residents of San Javier engaged in active contact with the Soviet Union, where they still had many relatives. Some migrated to the USSR, others went to study and return to Uruguay. (KOSHKIN, 2011, p.65) Eventually, during the period of Uruguay’s U.S.-backed Cold War-era civic-military dictatorship (1973-1985) San Javier and Uruguay’s Russian collectivity is demonized by the regime, obliging the town to live with military surveillance, detentions, and forced disappearances, which provoked the destruction of precious elements of cultural heritage in the form of libraries, literature, and generally criminalized anything related to Russian culture. (MARTÍNEZ, 2013) With the return of democracy in the mid-1980’s, Slavic cultural institutions in Uruguay were able to recompose themselves.

Next, based on informant’s narratives, we will present traditional ritual festive practices related to matrimony which involve collective musicking and commensality (imbued with symbolic significance). In these narratives the unique and contextual emic distinctions between “Us. vs. Them” are explored, within a

context of immigration, endogamy, acculturation and assimilation within a peripheral, multicultural and rural South American geography: the interior of northern Uruguay.

Already establishing the central importance of festive ritual ethnoreligious practices to the social organization of the two northern Uruguayan migrant collectivities in question: descendants of Volga Germans and Russian New Israel sectarians, we will move on to the final topic in this section: festive rituals related to matrimony. The anthropological and socioeconomic aspects of matrimonial selection have been analyzed by numerous academics, including Bourdieu, who sustains that:

While it was the first and most direct function of the marriage strategy to reproduce the lineage and thereby its work force, it also had to assure the safeguarding of the patrimony and that in an economic environment dominated by scarcity of money. (BOURDIEU, 2002, p.550)

Whitmeyer (1997, p.162) references a “Darwinian explanation of pro-ethny” in endogamous marriage practices, and sustains the inherent link between ethnicity and endogamy (Ibid., p.170). According to him, in regards to the isolated rural environments in which the immigrant collectivities who are subjects of our investigation, in rural northern Uruguay, have been located “(the most important factor is) how people earn their livelihood. If people are locally self-sufficient, they are likely to be locally endogamous and thus have a local identity”. Considering the huge cultural and economic investment in marriage selections of family offspring, the cultural-religiously-charged ritual festive aspect of such pairings are to be expected. We will later display how this is played out in the “no-man’s land” of remote, rural northern Uruguay.

Beginning with accounts of traditional marital ritual festivities, we will preface with a background of rigidly defined “Us vs. Them” definitions forged in the “no-holds-barred” ethnic (with geopolitical underpinnings) conflicts for survival of Eurasia, in the past three centuries. Per Kloberdanz:

Isolated from their German homeland for a century and a half, the Volga Germans of prerevolution Russia displayed unusual provincialism in their dealings with fellow villagers, neighboring colonists, Russian colonists and the world at large. [...] During their long sojourn in central Russia, the Volga Germans gradually developed numerous defense mechanisms that accentuated their cultural identity and served to

insulate them from a potentially hostile world. (KLOBERDANZ, 1986, p.281)

As Kloberdanz (1986) sustains, these “Us vs. Them” differentiating practices were applied not only to non-Volga Germans but also to religious schisms brought from Germany (Catholic vs. Lutheran vs. Mennonite, etc.), between village settlements and within different neighborhoods of a settlement, demarcated by the central church square. These inherent differentiating practices will be brought with Volga German immigrants to the Americas and will influence in marital strategies, commemorated in their consumption with ritual festive practices.

In the multicultural and fluctuant (and often violently conflictive) environment of northern Uruguay, similar to the littoral region of Argentina, Volga Germans were again confronted with a dynamic context to apply identitarian survival strategies that had been viscerally engrained in Russia. (WEYNE, 1987, p.73) However, the conditions were more propense to assimilation and mixture in this region conformed of porous borders with Argentina and Brazil. A similar dynamic will occur with Russian descendants of the New Israel sect, as the cultural-religious enclave evolved within the context of multicultural, rural southern South America.

Festive rituals, involving collective musicking and commensality, surrounding marriage will prove to be motives for comingling and cultural cross-pollination with other ethnicities within the rural context. What follows is a brief exposition of accounts of both Russian and Volga German informants of these festive practices during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

To commence, considering the centuries-long, tragic history listed above, the observation of accordionist Nicolás Puchkariov, regarding his musical life experience in rural northern Uruguay, is very heartening:

(The Russians) and the Germans are happy collectivities. If you see the Germans, the way they play the accordion is amazing, almost like the Russians - the same polka. If you hear a German playing accordion its

almost the same thing as a Russian polka, and they are very jovial, just like the Russians.<sup>274275</sup>



Figure 125- Friedrich Schulz (with accordion) and family (Revista Quinto Día, Paysandú)

Source: Personal archive of Emilia Müller de Frey

Puchkariov, residing in the city of Paysandú, goes on to describe the festive commensality that occurred in wedding celebrations within the rural, agricultural context of Russian-descendant collectivities in northern Uruguay:

Out in the country [...] in the weddings, the bride dressed in white just like nowadays [...] The women would bake cakes, there were no commercial bakeries back then. We did everything, out in the country. We would slaughter (animals) and hold the festivity appropriately, in the natural way. [...] (One time) in the wedding of our friend we spent three days drinking, singing and dancing. It rained and there was mud up to our knees.<sup>276</sup>

He describes his own wedding with Cinavia:

Our wedding festivities lasted four or five days. The table would be set, and the next day there would be more and more accordion music, until

<sup>274</sup> Nicolás Puchkariov, Interview, 2002, Paysandú

<sup>275</sup> It can be inferred that Puchkariov is referring to Volga Germans, ethnicity that shared the same geography of the region of origin, prior to emigration, of the New Israel settlers: southern Russia. A Russian polka Краковяк «Krakowiak» was registered from accordionist Otto Frey in 2002 by the author, learned from his uncle who had emigrated from Russia, Friedrich Schulz (Figure 125): <https://archivo.8bajos.org/registro/%d0%ba%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b2%d1%8f%d0%ba-krakowiak-polca-rusa/>

<sup>276</sup> Nicolás Puchkariov, Interview, 2002, Paysandú

all the relatives left, dancing and merry-making, so much food was prepared and much drink was offered, because that was the importance that was given to weddings.<sup>277</sup>

The couple explains the goings-on of the marital festivities of the “mixed marriage” of their daughter with a groom of Italian descendant (of compromised socioeconomic status) with abundant relatives in Paysandú. Per Nicolás, “I slaughtered two fat hogs, a steer, sixty chickens, sixty ducks to roast in the oven [...] eighty or ninety cakes were baked [...] in two outdoor ovens in the backyard, by four women who worked a whole week”. Cinavia adds, “All the sweets (plum, squash, peach) were all home-made, we had everything on the farm”.

Accordionist Enrique Perg (1933-2017) of Quebracho, Paysandú, belonged to an agricultural family with several musical relatives, whose parents immigrated to rural northern Uruguay from Germany (after passing first through Argentina and Brazil) (Figure 126) He recalls the traditional wedding festivities of that collectivity - who planted crops such as wheat and sunflower – which were animated by button accordion and violin with singing in the German language.<sup>278</sup> Noting that these wedding festivities went days on end, he remembers that his sister’s wedding lasted three days and two nights of non-stop reveling. Perg describes a peculiar practice, during that time, in order to keep the party going at the wee hours of the morning:

A bunch of old farmer friends would get together, (with) my deceased father, an old settler [...] and they would go around to the neighbor’s houses and steal chickens, turkeys and even piglets and bring them to the wedding party for the next day. [...] The same animals that they stole (would be cooked and offered to their owners). [...] Everybody was friendly and happy because everybody had something stolen. Even us, the owners of the house. They would come around and say “Oh yeah? Now it’s your turn!” and they would go straight to the pig sty. They would slaughter and roast a piglet and that was that. Nobody complained, it was total harmony in those years. Great wedding parties were held.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> A *polca* played by Perg “Federico” was recorded by the author in 2002: <https://archivo.8bajos.org/registro/federico-polca/>

<sup>279</sup> Enrique Perg, Interview, 2002, Quebracho



Figura 126 - Enrique Perg (Villa Quebracho, Paysandú, Uruguay, January 8, 2003)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Emilia Müller de Frey, of Colonia Santa Blanca, Paysandú (roughly 30 km. from Quebracho) (Figure 127) also recalls the weddings of her youth lasting up to three consecutive days, which implied heroic and exhausting effort on behalf of the bride and groom's mothers, who were responsible for the preparation and serving of food and drink during the entire course of the celebrations animated by button accordion and violin, which normally had a large number of invitees. Müller de Frey meticulously described the numerous nuptial celebration traditions of her Volga German-descendent community.



Figure 127 – Emilia Müller de Frey (center) and Otto Frey (right)

Source: Frey family archives

Per Müller de Frey, the couple would process to the local courthouse, with the accompanying revelers in tow travelling by truck, all were dressed formally, the women wearing white dresses. Later, upon arriving to the storage barn or improvised party space of the family residence where the festivities were to take place:

(They were greeted with shouts of) “Here come the bride and groom!”, and the musicians were waiting – the accordionist and violinist. The accordion was decorated, flowers were attached, the violinist also had flowers attached. These were colored paper flowers [...] the bottles to serve drink also had flowers.<sup>280</sup>

Similar practices are registered by Atela (2003, pp.142-146) from Volga German informants in Entre Ríos, musicians Alejandro and Enrique Henkel, who had performed at innumerable weddings of the collectivity, one of the most important festive rituals of that group. As the dancing, festivities and commensality commenced in the weddings described by Müller de Frey, for the attendees of this immigrant collectivity, the motive to get together was crucially important, “it was very happy because in these festivities, people were able to see each other again, people who had not seen each other in years, perhaps the last time was in Brazil”.<sup>281</sup>

Müller de Frey, in addition to the incessant accordion and violin music, dancing of polkas, Russian polkas<sup>282</sup>, and waltzes, and group commensality and conviviality among relatives, acquaintances, and friends, mentions other unique customs such as the theft of one of the bride’s shoes as a collective fundraising scheme to benefit the newlyweds. She describes, “there was always someone who would go under the table and steal the bride’s shoe and auction it off (amongst the attendees)”. Müller de Frey also recalls the special, florally-decorated throne-like chairs that were dedicated for the use by the newlywed couple.

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<sup>280</sup> Emilia Müller de Frey, Interview, 2002, Colonia Santa Blanca

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Accordionist Otto Frey (2002) recalls, “During that time there were people that «played in Russian» [...] Russian polkas, back then it was very common. The older people liked them, the old (accordionists) liked playing them and the dancers like to dance them. [...] Many people learned them in Russia, and they had accordions and learned. Here they kept on playing, many people did and even people from here learned how to play them, up to today”.



Lastly, she remembers the traditional practice of an emotional parting ceremony, that involved collective musicking, dedicated to the newlyweds. She describes:

Before the newlyweds bade farewell, it was common for the bridesmaids and groomsmen to would form a circle around the couple seated in their decorated chairs. (They sang.) The accordionist and violinist knew the song by heart. It was a song of farewell for the newlyweds, of bidding farewell to youth, it had beautiful lyrics. The bridesmaids and groomsmen would hold hands and walk in a circle singing, they bade farewell to youth, friends, and they thanked their parents for all that they had done for them. They would turn to a side, slowly, and then the music changed and it was like a polka [...] they would say "Long-live the newlyweds!", and then do it all again, turning and singing. It was sad, it was a very beautiful song, but sometimes sad.<sup>283</sup>

In her investigation of Volga German communities in Entre Ríos, Argentina, Atela (2003) registers similar ceremonies of bidding farewell at weddings. Musicians, the Henkel brothers told her of an emotional experience of accompanying a ceremonial song of farewell at a wedding of a 16-17-year-old:

The bride bade farewell to her family and when [...] we played the song the bride got up, grabbed her little sister and left the circle. "No, no, no, please stay", and she cried and cried, even we all cried. (ATELA, 2003, p.143)

Various informants attest to - beyond the endogamous survival-strategy practices inherited from collectivities' traumatic experiences in Russia - the ethnic inter-mingling and gradual acculturation and assimilation processes in the new culturally diverse environment of rural northern Uruguay in ritual festivities such as wedding celebrations and informal social dances held in small communities. Similar phenomena will occur in adjacent geographies of southern Brazil and the littoral region of Argentina, providing the genesis for this macro-region's unique popular cultures. In closing this section, what follows will be a selection of poignant narratives that illustrate this phenomenon.

Accordionist Enrique Perg (2002) describes that it was his generation – second-generation Volga German descendants in Uruguay – that began to intermix with *criollo* Uruguayan society in a ritual festive context, which included rural wedding celebrations. Initially learning button accordion with his German

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<sup>283</sup> Emilia Müller de Frey, Interview, 2002, Colonia Santa Blanca

family members, Perg absorbed repertoire and techniques from *criollos*. According to him, “[...] everything began to be mixed later on, *tangos* and those kinds of things, *milongas*, we began to mix everything then”.<sup>284</sup> Russian descendent, accordionist Nicolás Puchkariov<sup>285</sup> also attests to the process of musical acculturation of immigrant-descendant button accordionists in northern Uruguay, acquiring rhythms such as *maxixa*, *chote*, *mazurca*, and criollo-style *polca*. His nephew, button and piano accordionist Víctor Jolochin (1944-2017) bears testimony to the same phenomenon. (Figure 128)



Figura 128 – Víctor Manuel Jolochín Puchkariov (Paysandú, Uruguay, July 11, 2002)

Source: CURBELO, 2018, p.79

As far as ethnic intermingling of autochthonous and immigrant collectivities in rural ritual festive contexts in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century the narratives are very interesting. Enrique Perg nostalgically reminisces:

(In the dances) Uruguayans and Germans were all together. Back then it was a beautiful thing, we were united, Uruguayans, Germans and Russians we all got together, and we were one. We were like one family. [...] There used to be hundreds of Uruguayan rural workers who worked out in the woods, and they would come to the wedding celebrations of my sisters, and they were like family. It was complete

<sup>284</sup> Enrique Perg, Interview, 2002, Quebracho

<sup>285</sup> Nicolás Puchkariov, Interview, 2002, Paysandú

harmony in those days, even the Police who would be on patrol would come to dance with us.<sup>286</sup>

In a similar vein, accordionist Víctor Jolochín<sup>287</sup>, who played in numerous *kermesses* and local dances, recalls the fecund, ethnic musical cross-pollination that occurred in those contexts, “Here in San Javier the *criollos* danced more than the Russians [...] to Russian music. I saw myself all those country guys (“*paisanos*”) dancing there”.

Similarly, *criollo* horse tamer and piano accordionist Alberto Percíncula (b.1950) (Figure 129), who married a German-descendant from Colonia Santa Blanca, recalls:

When I was 16-17 years old, I would go the German dances here in the area, in the German colony, Santa Blanca. [...] I frequented the dances and they used to play a lot of button accordion. (Otto) Frey played back then. [...] I always liked (his style) because he only played German music [...] waltzes and polkas. You end up learning the rhythms. [...] People danced more (to his music) with the little button accordion, than to the hired ensembles. The Germans love the accordion.<sup>288</sup>



Figura 129 - Alberto Percíncula (Paysandú, Uruguay, June 16, 2002)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

<sup>286</sup> Enrique Perg, Interview, 2002, Quebracho

<sup>287</sup> Víctor Jolochín, Interview, 2002, Paysandú

<sup>288</sup> Alberto Percíncula, Interview, 2002, Paysandú

## **6 ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS: TRADITION, RETRADITIONALIZATION AND RESILIENCE**

### **6.1 Presentation**

Now we reach the chapter of this thesis that will carry out analysis and synthesis of the three diverse case studies examined. Acknowledging that the reader has most likely been bombarded with profuse information galloping across geography and history in the preceding chapters (some readers perhaps are now wondering where all this is ultimately headed), this chapter will seek to synthesize the diverse trans-Atlantic empirical examples presented, and describe and identify two general dynamics: forces that lead to the gradual or abrupt extinction of communities' festive ritual traditions (those traditions being central to processes of memory and identity), and those that lead to their continuity, adaptation, and intergenerational perpetuation. Examined in each case will be causes, motivations, tactics and results of the phenomena of tradition, redtraditionalization, and resilience of festive ritual traditions.

Specific emphasis will be placed on examining communities' internal dynamics of response to crises (economic, migratory, sanitary, etc.) that contribute to rupture in the transmission of their festive ritual traditions, responses that can take the form of processes of patrimonialization and retraditionalization through actions of protagonists such as civil society, institutions of memory, the public sector, etc. Also examined will be the community-felt effects of technological, macroeconomic and geopolitical transformational factors, elements which are inherently intertwined in the exercise of power. Employed in this chapter are diverse authors that, in varying degrees, have dealt with these themes in different historical contexts, and dialogue with the oral histories of the informants of this thesis.

Understanding that the festive ritual traditions examined in this thesis are contemporary expressions of vibrant cultural practices of rural popular classes that have centuries-old roots - products of layering and hybridization of cultures across numerous generations throughout diaspora - and that these traditions have existed in historical contexts of domination, colonialism, political turmoil, and state-building, this chapter will briefly examine the historical constants of elite

repression and cooptation of popular culture which involves purposeful breakdown or manipulation of intergenerational transmission of culture for strategic reasons, planned macroeconomic and geostrategic transitions imposed and encouraged by ruling regimes, and imposition of technology and technocracy.

Conversely, this chapter will also identify longstanding tactics of peripheral subaltern groups for cultural survival and social reproduction, oftentimes in diaspora due to rural exodus or global migration. The chapter will examine tradition as a vector of memory, and retraditionalization and patrimonialization as tactics of resilience when faced with ruptures in the intergenerational cultural transmission of festive ritual practices.

Leaning heavily on diverse historical examples, this chapter also will examine these factors in the rapidly developing, "disruptive" and "innovative" Pandemic/Global Crisis scenario of 2020-2022, the period in which the author conducted a good portion of his most recent field work. We will examine each case in the order that they were presented in the thesis: *Chacarrá*, *Charolas* of Bordeira and chromatic accordion of the Algarve, and finally traditional ritual festivities animated by free-reed instruments in rural northern Uruguay, most specifically in rural public school *kermesses*. In each case, specific analysis will be carried out on the double-edged effects of digital technology on rural festive ritual traditions – omnipresent, connected digital technology (one component of the ongoing "Fourth Industrial Revolution" (SCHWAB, 2016)) being the emerging, triumphant victor and new global paradigm (for the time being) resulting from the 2020-2022 Crisis.<sup>289</sup>

To commence, we will conduct a bibliographic review of concepts of certain key authors – illustrated through specific, poignant historical examples - that shed light on the topics of this chapter, and contrast and compare those authors' ideas to build a theoretical construct through which to interpret and

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<sup>289</sup> Schwab (2016, p.7) considers that "the fourth industrial revolution is unlike anything humankind has experienced before" which, in sum, involves the "fusion of technologies across the physical, digital and biological worlds" innovating in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Automation, Nanotechnology, 3D Printing, Implantable Technologies, Gene Editing, etc.

analyze our empirical evidence gained through decades of ethnographic field research on both sides of the Atlantic.

## 6.2 Bibliographic Review

Firstly, in relation to the focus of our thesis: festive rituals and the social cohesion they foment, we turn to Durkheim. Greenwald states that, according to Durkheim:

[...] the bonds that join men are the representations of social reality which they entertain in common [...] it is primarily through ritual that collective representations are enabled to persist with some measure of authority in the minds of individuals. Insofar as a number of persons share ideas of collective identity and organization, they feel the need periodically to infuse new life into these ideas. This they do by means of ritual and especially through the agency of ceremonial gatherings. (GREENWALD, 1973, pp.165-166)

Among the various forms of rituals within human spiritual practices, Durkheim emphasizes the centrality of ritual commensality:

In many societies, the meal is taken in common to create a bond of artificial kinship among the participants [...] At the beginning, sacrifice is instituted not to create a bond of artificial kinship between man and his gods but to maintain and renew the natural kinship that at the beginning united men. (DURKHEIM, 1995, pp.341, 344)

Such ritual festivities belong to what Burke defines as “traditional oral culture” of popular social classes, who, in relation with the elites of society, have maintained a peripheral status, albeit with significant interaction between the two. (BURKE, 2009, pp. xv, 8) Referring to Europe of 1500-1800 A.D., Burke describes the gradual process of repression of popular traditional oral culture practices by elites:

[...] the initiative for reform came originally from elites, especially the upper clergy, before it spread more widely through society. It was part of what is variously called, following rival social theorists Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault, a process of ‘civilizing’ or ‘disciplining’, which began as an attempt by elites to control the behaviour of ordinary people, but was gradually internalized [...] and so turned into self-control. (BURKE, 2009, p.12)

Beik, (1980, p.99) observing that the European traditional oral culture of the time was structured around seasonal cycles of festivals that were "a calendar of 'dense moments' fulfilling collective needs: fertility rites, emotional discharges,

rites of passage and redefinitions of the community", synthesizes Burke's arguments regarding the phenomenon occurring in this period:

The offensive against traditional values – against the mingling of sacred and worldly, of work and leisure, of ribaldry and celebration – was not launched by rationalizing businessmen, but by clergy of all sects. [...] The result was an all-encompassing onslaught not just on the selected excesses but on the very system of beliefs which bound communities together [...] group sociability was sacrificed to vertical ties between each individual and the state. (BEIK, 1980, pp.99-100)

As burgeoning colonialism spread early modern Europe's influence around the world, elite repression and control measures of traditional popular oral cultures was extended to the Americas and elsewhere and were applied to non-European cultures such as Native Americans and Africans. This repression of language, ritual festivities, ceremonies, and other carriers of ethnic and spiritual identity took many forms: family separation, forced schooling, prohibition of ceremonies involving ritual commensality, music, and dance, etc. These measures aimed to enforce and maintain cultural and religious dominance of the metropole among the subjects of their colonies, for perpetuity into the foreseeable future. Upon independence of the colonial possessions, these practices were often perpetuated in processes of "internal colonialism" by newly-created states.

As an example of this phenomena, Reis (2005) eloquently describes the elite tactics of limiting, prohibiting, or criminalizing ethnically and linguistically-diverse African ritual festivities involving commensality, music and dance in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bahía in Brazil, practiced by native-born Africans and their descendants. Tactics such as these have been commonplace in areas of the Americas that employed slave labor from Africa. Describing the changing elite perceptions of these ritual festivities from innocuous release valve of social tensions to dangerous precursor to popular armed revolt, Reis illustrates:

What is constant (in these ritual festivities) is a sentiment of alterity, collective singularity and often opposition. That is the reason why all black celebrations under slavery, albeit some more than others, represented a means of expressing slave and black resistance, and therefore, a source of concern for those in command. On the other hand, celebrations also developed as means of negotiation with other sectors of society, with locally born blacks and mulattos and whites, too. The several meanings and the many forms taken by slave celebration often confused those responsible for its control. [...] (REIS, 2005, p.202)

After a Muslim African-led rebellion in 1835 in Bahía, Reis (2005, p.206) states that there was "a period of great tension in the province, in which every public festival facilitating a concentration of blacks became a reason for alarm". Conversely, he also observes:

But on the whole, the drums announced another kind of movement. Rather than a frontal attack on slave society, they communicated that the Africans and their descendants had not accepted being mentally enslaved. (REIS, 2005, p.210)

In Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul (near the border with Uruguay), another historically important concentration of slave labor – in this case primarily in the salted meat (*charque*) export industry, numerous local press reports from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century (near the dawn of abolition) also describe elite repression of festive ritual traditions of Africans and Afro-Brazilians, oftentimes related to traditional spiritual practices. (MONQUELAT, 2015)

Monquelat relates a journalistic account from 1875:

If the *maxixes* (dance parties) were a nuisance and the Police repressed them with imprisonment, the *batuques* (drumming, dancing and singing) bothered the neighbors. The *Jornal do Comércio* [...] pleaded that the Police prohibit the "*mina*"<sup>290</sup> black women from holding their *batuques* "into the hours dedicated to the rest of the neighborhood residents". (MONQUELAT, 2015, p.28)

The same author describes a journalistic news item from 1878:

[...] a slave of Mr. Porfirio Honório da Silva was arrested upon Police orders, for being at a dance, together with other black people, without the permission of his master [...] A slave of Ms. Maria Auta was also arrested being found with others worshipping "*Santo Manipanso*"<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Group originating in Ghana

<sup>291</sup> *Manipanso* is a term that has been used in Brazil to designate wooden anthropomorphic fetishistic figures of Central African origin utilized by religious practitioners in ceremonies involving divination, music, dance, herbal practices, healing and trance. According to Possidonio (2015, p.4) who emphasizes the proliferation of Central African religious traditions in cosmopolitan Rio de Janeiro, "The *manipansos* [...] crossed the Atlantic and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century represented the continuity of Central African religious manifestations on Brazilian soil". Noting the popularization of the term in 19<sup>th</sup> Century press due to the constant appearance of Central African religious practitioners in the police blotter of local newspapers due to elite repression, Possidonio states:

The propagation of a religious terminology marked by strong Central African influence was not solely because of the press [...] but rather, mainly, through the force of custom, seeing that the city (Rio de Janeiro) during the slave trade was intensely marked by the entry of slaves from



[...] and on that occasion " diverse objects that served him" were apprehended [...] (MONQUELAT, 2015, p.58)

Aside from prohibition, cooptation, and control of popular ritual festivities, another tactic for elite control and conditioning of popular classes has been the institution of compulsory public education. Employed by diverse world regimes – across the spectrum of political thought and systems – to achieve diverse goals such as: cultural and linguistic homogenization of diverse populations encompassed by the State, instilment of national or civic identity and nationalistic worldview, indoctrination in an ideology (Roman Catholicism, laicism, Communism, etc.), suppression of cultural identities deemed threatening to the State, etc., mandatory public education is directed at the most promising and susceptible members of society: children. Oftentimes, mandatory public education interferes with the traditional processes of intergenerational oral transmission of culture and values within families (which can be precisely the intended ultimate goal). Obviously possessing certain egalitarian, intellectual and cultural benefits, mandatory public education can also be seen as a method to control and shape the bodies and minds of popular classes to hence afford effective long-term control by elites over a territory, economy, or society.

As an example, Kolås, writing in regards to Chinese state education in Tibet – geography annexed by the People’s Republic of China in the 1950’s – contextualizes:

Soon after the founding of the People’s Republic of China, public education spread into many of the minority areas. The emphasis on educational facilities was originally connected with the Chinese Communist Party’s strategy to solidify control of the border areas and “civilize” the people who inhabited the frontiers of China. (KOLÅS, 2006, p.95)

The same author summarizes:

[...] one of the primary goals of education in Tibetan and other minority areas is to consolidate “ethnic minorities” (Ch: *shaoshu minzu*) and persuade their children to become patriotic members of the all-inclusive family of China. Education is directed toward disseminating Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ideology, and officials of the educational system still state that the goal of minority education is to maintain

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Central West Africa, mainly in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. (POSSIDONIO, 2015, p.18)

socialism. More important, the educational system aims to subordinate local ethnic identities to national unity and at the same time convey the message that the minorities are "backward" (Ch: *luohou*) compared to the Han. (KOLÁS, 2006, p.93)

A particularly egregious form of mandatory public education being weaponized against collectivities in achieving elite domination of a territory or population, and attempting to weaken traditional intergenerational cultural transmission, can be found in the State policies of indigenous boarding schools in the United States and Canada during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Barnes and Josefowitz define these State-run schools as "total institutions" where "a single bureaucratic authority handles the daily human activities of groups of people in a place that bars departure or intercourse with the outside world". (BARNES; JOSEFOWITZ, 2019, p.67)

The same authors list the varied tactics that these institutions employed to forcibly acculturate indigenous students into a particular, narrowly-defined, hegemonic conception of Euro-North American Christian society of the time. These tactics have included: forced separation from family members, corporal punishment, forced labor, systematic racist physical, mental, verbal, and sexual abuse, prohibition of native language use and practice of cultural traditions, etc. They sustain that many researchers have concluded that:

[...] total institutions commonly employ such practices (i.e., removal of reminders of previous life and individuality, strict rules, and harsh punishments) as a means to separate the individuals residing within their confines from their former social activities, roles, and sense of self. (BARNES; JOSEFOWITZ, 2019, p.68)

Barnes and Josefowitz equate the mandatory attendance by indigenous students at these State boarding schools to a forced, involuntary emigration to a new culture and language, separated from familial and cultural ties. The authors note the purposeful institutional breakdown in the traditional intergenerational oral transmission of culture:

While attending Indian Residential Schools, many students missed the opportunity to learn Aboriginal cultures, ways of life, and religious practices, and many lost their first language. [...] Those lacking strong connections to any culture or religion were impaired in relation to healing, as culture and religion often supply the support, practices, and understandings necessary to recover from loss and trauma. (BARNES, JOSEFOWITZ, 2019, p.72)

However traumatic these experiences were for internees, Barnes and Josefowitz (2019, pp.70-71) also stress the practices of resilience, solidarity, and continuance of cultural traditions by institutionalized indigenous youth. Nelson (2009, p.220) also notes that, at times, instead of weakening internees' indigenous identities, the oppressive experiences at the mandatory boarding schools served to harden their resolve to maintain, defend and cultivate their native identity and culture.

When examining the societal and cultural repercussions of major strategic decisions made in the areas of economy, military affairs, and governance, it must be acknowledged that such decisions, throughout history, have been, by and large, made by elites. C. Wright Mills (1981) defined the modern elite as the key decision makers in the economic, political and military spheres. According to Wright Mills, the elite act within institutions:

These hierarchies of the State, companies and military constitute the means of power, in this fashion today they have importance without precedence in human history – in their cupola, are the command positions of modern society [...] (WRIGHT MILLS, 1981, p.14)

Macroeconomic shifts and transitions, geostrategic actions – such as foreign wars and internal state repression, technocratic policy changes in public education and other sweeping actions that impact society (and, hence, the practice and intergenerational transmission of its festive ritual traditions) are largely the product of the machinations and goals of sectors of a nation's ruling elite, especially so under non-democratic regimes – as was the case in Portugal (1926-1974), Spain (1939-1977), and Uruguay (1973-1985), the three nations contemplated in this thesis.

We will very briefly go over the macro-transitions that occurred in Salazar's Portugal, Franco's Spain in the crucial period of the late 1950s and 1960s. These transitions impacted the dynamics of emigration, rural exodus, and internal migration, hence their effects were felt in the central theme of this thesis: the continuity and transmission of festive ritual traditions.

Naomi Klein (2008) has emphasized the provocation and usage of crisis situations by regimes to enact sweeping, lasting systemic economic/strategic

change, a method she denominates "shock treatment". She states that contemporarily this is "now the preferred method of advancing corporate goals: using moments of collective trauma to engage in radical social and economic engineering". (KLEIN, 2008, p.8)

Klein likens these effective methods to physical and psychological torture tactics, studied and practiced by intelligence agencies such as the CIA, that aim to "put prisoners into a state of deep disorientation and shock in order to force them to make concessions against their will". (KLEIN, 2008, p.15) Such strategically-employed physical and psychological abuse was employed by institutions involved in New World slavery and indigenous internment (as described above) – forcibly imposing elite designs on a (rebellious) subaltern populace.

The early years of the authoritarian regimes on the Iberian peninsula in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century – both regimes arriving on the scene preceded by decades of partisan political and social turmoil, and in a context of rising European authoritarianism - were marked by rural poverty, underdevelopment, Catholic conservatism, repression, scarcity and rationing of goods, autarkic policies, protectionism, corporatist management of economic production, and relative isolation from the rest of the world, particularly in the case of Spain, still reeling from the devastating effects of the fratricidal Civil War and the reprisals of the Franco regime on its former belligerent opponents.

Classified as "Predator States" (CABALLERO, 2002, p.4) Portugal and Spain under Salazar and Franco (mutually mistrustful of each other) were sustained by alliances between conservative sectors, the Church, and powerful national economic interests. (MOSCA, 2007, p.354) Dictatorial systems, these regimes were run by their executives and an elite close to the center of power, that would reap the economic and political benefits of this relationship – as well as the exploitation of overseas colonies, as in the case of Portugal. (Ibid., p.345) In the case of Spain, Caballero (2002, p.7) writes, "the *Caudillo* (Franco) was not limited except by his own will. In this way the regime has absolute capacity of decision to be able actually to shape without obstacles the political-economic program that it considered useful". Mosca (2007, p.343), writes that in Portugal

there existed, "the necessity of authoritarianism as an instrument for application of economic policy. Corporativism is a key item to understand the *Estado Novo*".

Achieving, for the most part, to avoid the arrival of the violent conflicts of World War Two onto Iberian soil in the 1930s and 1940s, after the victory of the Allied Powers over the Axis, both regimes were the only remaining Western European fascist states, and Franco had to eat his words and renounce his previous material and moral support of the Axis and admiration of Hitler and Mussolini. (ROSENDORF, 2014) Both states were veritable pariahs on the post-War global stage, for being Western European fascist states, but also in the case of Portugal, for maintaining an overseas colonial empire within an increasingly post-colonial global political climate. However, in the emerging global Cold War pitting democratic capitalism versus Communism, Salazar's *Estado Novo* and Franco's regime were vehemently anti-Communist, and therefore an asset to the United States. (CABALLERO, 2002, p.11)

Rosendorf summarizes:

Franco found himself and his dictatorship decidedly on the wrong end of US politics, policy and public opinion. And with the US the colossus of the new global postwar order, this was a very dangerous place for the Franco regime. (ROSENDORF, 2014, p.2)

It is in the post-World War Two period, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, that both regimes, presiding over relatively impoverished nations, feel pressures to enact economic reform, increase openness to international trade and foreign investment, and achieve greater participation in the emerging post-War global system (Bretton Woods, international trade organizations, etc.). In the case of Spain, according to Rosendorf:

(The Franco regime) sought with considerable success to harness key elements of American soft power, including US overseas tourism, Hollywood film production, American advertising and public relations [...] in order to overcome the stigma of right-wing dictatorship, past association with the defeated Axis powers and a general aura of poverty, stagnation and human misery. (ROSENDORF, 2014, pp.3-4)

It was in this period that Franco's regime enters into agreements to allow U.S. Military and Naval bases on Spanish soil and begins to receive military and financial aid from the United States Government. (Ibid.) Portugal had already

been a beneficiary of the Marshall Plan, entered into NATO in 1949, and became member of multilateral international organizations as the 50s and 60s progressed: United Nations, FMI, EFTA, GATT, opening itself up for more liberalization, foreign investment, etc.

Caballero describes the effects in Spain of this gradual opening:

[...] agreements with the U.S.A. allowed the entry of currency and with it the import of goods of equipment essential to increasing production. [...] In these years, Spain experienced an industrial revolution that in 1958 allowed industrial production practically to double that of 1950 [...]. (CABALLERO, 2002, p.13)

In 1959, Spain enacted IMF-recommended economic austerity and liberalization reform – the *Plan Nacional de Estabilización Económica*. The effects of these measures, according to Caballero were:

The application of the Plan in July 1959 as an indivisible program caused a traumatic shock in the economy. After a brief initial depressive effect, the objectives sought - price stability, contained exchange rate, adjusted balance of payments, reduction of imports, and increase of tourism and foreign investment- became reality. The Plan established the bases for a stage of strong growth that allowed the Spanish economy to register the highest rates of the western world [...]. (CABALLERO, 2002, p.17)

Sanchís Llopis describes the following period 1960-1975:

The results of our analysis of sectorial productivity show that the so called «Spanish Economic Miracle» arose, to a great extent, from swift progress in technology in specific industries. [...] These were the technologies developed in the United States in the first quarter of the twentieth century and which spread through Europe after World War II. [...] (SANCHÍS LLOPIS, pp.386-387)

Another effect of these measures, whose effects have been deemed the "Spanish Miracle" was increased Spanish emigration to more developed Western European industrialized economies such as Germany and France, exacerbating the longstanding phenomena of emigration and rural exodus.

Roughly in the same period, Portugal's *Estado Novo*, at the same time that it was further integrating into the world stage, and gradually liberalizing its economy and foreign commerce, embarked on the bloody project of the Colonial War (1961-1974) to maintain its overseas territories at any cost, prompted by

independence movements in its colonies (as described earlier in this thesis).<sup>292</sup> According to Murteira (p.281), what occurred in simultaneously pursuing these contradictory goals was a "process of economic disintegration of Portugal and its overseas territories".

The same author calls attention to the fact that emigration increased fivefold from 1960 to 1970, and the nation came to be increasingly dependent on emigrant remittances, leading to "sub-development" in Portugal and dependence on exogenous factors in the functioning of the nation's economy. (MURTEIRA, pp.281-282) Mosca (2007, p.358) notes that the conflict period also generated industrial economic movement within Portugal and abroad due to wartime infrastructure, transport and agroindustry demands.

In addition to the sweeping societal effects of elite-enacted economic and strategic policies, other influences affecting communities of popular sectors of society and the practice and continuity of their local festive ritual traditions invariably include: introduction and dissemination of technology, and increasing technocracy within government and society. This aspect is of particular importance to the cases examined in this thesis.

The specific rural communities of the interior of northern Uruguay, Andalucía, and the Algarve of the informants for this thesis, during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, went through a radical transformation from being relatively isolated, tight-knit, non-electric, analogue, agrarian, pastoral or artisan communities to digitally-connected, electrically-powered communities, at times with periodic influx of urban newcomers, and outflux of ruralites. This dynamic is particularly pronounced in Andalucía and the Algarve which saw a drastic make-over of their regional economies in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century to cater to the modern international tourism industry as a prime economic driver.

The various festive ritual traditions of the regions examined - which have arrived via chains of intergenerational oral transmission well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - have their roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> and previous centuries. Though gradually adopting

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<sup>292</sup> Mosca (2007, p.359) also notes, in the conflict, Portugal formed "alliances whose objectives were not just Portuguese sovereignty, but also to construct a Southern Africa of white-dominated regimes, protected from Communism".

changing technology in the research, documentation, and dissemination of the festive ritual traditions examined, by and large the informants for this thesis – tradition bearers – note a menacing aspect of rapid, disruptive technological development which goes against the qualities that they view as inherently necessary to the practice and transmission of these ages-old traditions: intergenerational oral transmission within families (“learning by doing with others”), informal in-person gathering of friends, neighbors and families in ritual festive atmosphere of conviviality and commensality, collective musicking, improvisation, evocation of ancestors and notable community members and preservation of community memory and identity, cultivation of regionally-specific music, poetic and dance styles, minimal electronic mediation, etc.

Seeing as the pace of disruptive technological revolution has rapidly snowballed in the years leading up to the 2020-2022 Crisis, and has no sign of abetting, in this following section we will examine different perspectives on the effects of technology and technocracy on society, and, ultimately, the effects on the continuity of festive ritual traditions within communities. This topic was previously expounded upon in preceding chapters, however in this section we will bring new authors into the discussion.

To begin, Neil Postman sustains:

Every technology is both a burden and a blessing [...] Nonetheless, we are currently surrounded by throngs of [...] one-eyed prophets who see only what new technologies can do and are incapable of imagining what they will *undo*. [...] For it is inescapable that every culture must negotiate with technology, whether it does so intelligently or not. (POSTMAN, 1992, p.9)

Similarly, Wiener, in the 1950s, advised:

The new industrial revolution is then a double-edged sword. It can be used in the benefit of Humanity, only if Humanity is able to survive sufficiently to enter a period where that benefit would be possible. It can also be used to destroy Humanity, and if it is not employed intelligently, it can quickly go down that path. (WIENER, 1968, p.151)

Postman, in the early 1990s, described processes of "technology's intrusion into a culture" as well as its capacity to revolutionarily change societies and cultures (i.e. printing press, etc.) (POSTMAN, 1992, pp.14, 19)



Technocracies<sup>293</sup> made possible with the Industrial Revolution on both sides of the Atlantic – the United States being the paradigmatic example "gave us the idea of progress, and of necessity loosened our bonds with tradition—whether political or spiritual. [...] Technocracy also speeded up the world [...] And this meant that there was no time to look back or to contemplate what was being lost", according to Postman. (1992, p.41)

Denominating technocracy's ultimate evolution as "Technopoly" and defining the term as "totalitarian technocracy", Postman holds that the United States, due to its peculiar historical circumstances and evolution, is a culture that has effectively become a Technopoly (Taylorism, Fordism, etc.). (Ibid., p.44) He passionately states

The technocracy that emerged, fully armed, in nineteenth-century America disdained such (traditional) beliefs, because holy men and sin, grandmothers and families, regional loyalties and two-thousand-year-old traditions, they are antagonistic to the technocratic way of life. They are a troublesome residue of a tool-using period, a source of criticism of technocracy. They represent a thought-world that stands apart from technocracy and rebukes it—rebukes its language, its impersonality, its fragmentation, its alienation. (POSTMAN, 1992, p.92)

Vallet de Goytisolo (1977) sustains that technocracy is an ideology that seeks to mathematically and quantifiably rationalize all human phenomena to be able to totally control it effectively and efficiently. According to him, instead of discovering and exploring the inherent divine, natural order of human life, technocracy – through a small cupula of technocrats - seeks to arbitrarily impose utopian ideas upon human existence, through instrumentalized ("weaponized"?) application of science. The goals of technocracy, with a narrow focus on economic factors, are to achieve totalitarian mechanical organization of society, social homogeneity and material linear "progress" without limits, according to the author.

Also, according to Vallet de Goytisolo (1977, pp.166-177), the praxis of technocracy, which he describes as the manipulation of humans as "things" as opposed to sentient beings through diverse means such as: public education,

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<sup>293</sup> Rule by technicians and technical experts

control of mass media communication, urban population concentration, etc. is ordered as follows:

The first stage consists of denigrating the past [...] creating a psychosis of change [...]. The second stage is to work to convince of the necessity to organize something more perfect and, above all, different from what exists [...] Studies must be fast, quantitative, and utilize surveys, computers and novel terminology [...]. The third stage is planification. The fourth stage is destruction, because to develop the projected plan of the third stage, it is necessary to eliminate the previous institutions and structures. [...] The fifth stage [...] is carrying out the intended plan. (VALLET DE GOYTISOLO, 1977, pp.161-164)

Jacques Ellul, referring to "technique" as overarching processes and methods to achieve a determined end, clarifies:

[...] wherever a technical factor exists, it results, almost inevitably, in mechanization: technique transforms everything it touches into a machine. Another relationship exists between technique and the machine, and this relationship penetrates to the very core of the problem of our civilization. It is said (and everyone agrees) that the machine has created an inhuman atmosphere. The machine, so characteristic of the nineteenth century, made an abrupt entrance into a society which, from the political, institutional, and human points of view, was not made to receive it. [...] (ELLUL, 1964, p.4)

Writing in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, he goes on to ominously describe technique's global socioeconomic role:

Technique integrates the machine into society. It constructs the kind of world the machine needs [...] It clarifies, arranges and rationalizes [...] It is efficient and brings efficiency to everything [...] Man is not adapted to a world of steel, technique adapts him to it. [...] when technique enters into every area of life, including the human, it ceases to be external to man and becomes his very substance. (ELLUL, 1964, pp.)

Beniger (1986, p.6) argues that the Industrial Revolution brought on a "revolution of societal control" leading to innovations in communications and information processing which assisted in bureaucratic and technocratic rationalizing of socioeconomic activities to more effectively control society. According to him:

By means of rationalization, therefore, it is possible to maintain large-scale, complex social systems that would be overwhelmed by a rising tide of information they could not process were it necessary to govern by the particularistic considerations of family and kin that characterize preindustrial societies. In short, rationalization might be defined as the destruction or ignoring of information in order to facilitate its processing. (BENIGER, 1986, p.15)

With technologies, developed in the private sector, of mass communication and mass feedback (market surveys, etc.), companies and governments were able to reach millions of citizen consumers to sell services and products and conversely better understand and program the consumers' preferences and habits to more effectively market to them and profit from them. (BENIGER, 1986, pp.20-21) According to Beniger, "All living systems can be reprogrammed [...] By far the most generally programmable structures to be found in any living system are the brains evolved from the vertebrates, especially the human brain". This phenomenon is referred to as "neuroplasticity" by Prensky (2001, p.3).

Stating the obvious, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, digital technology has inserted itself in the medulla of global society, communications, culture, government, and economy, and will remain there for the foreseeable future, consolidating its dominance and reworking human existence to its benefit and perpetuation, therefore its nature and dynamics must be analyzed and problematized, seeing that it is a disruptive revolutionary element in the millenias-old human presence on planet Earth. Writing immediately prior to 2020-2022 Crisis, Hassan calls to:

[...] prioritise [...] a humanist understanding of the processes of a machine, a logic, that has not only rapidly colonised every part of the inhabited planet, but has also suffused the consciousness of almost every person within it in terms of his or her engagement with each other through networks of communication, production and consumption: I call it digitality. (HASSAN, 2020, pp.1-2)

The same author contextualizes:

Digital machines and their logic are (in the operation of their logic) like nothing we have ever seen before. Everything previously, going back to the dawn of our species and our drift toward technology invention and use, was some kind of analogue technology. From the wheel to the radio signal, and from writing to television, analogue technology fashioned our world and fashioned us, making possible such human-scaled processes as knowledge and communication, cities and institutions, Enlightenment and modernity, conceptions of time and space. Digitality changes all these and more, starting with the total transcending of the human scale. Time and space are now different categories of perception, condensed into immediacy and acceleration at the general level through, for example, the now-ubiquitous smartphone. (HASSAN, 2020, p.4)

Stating that, in digitality, capitalism now has a new virtual space and frontier (an "automated sphere wherein much of social-cultural, economic-political life now takes place" (HASSAN, 2020, p.8)) to expand and increase accumulation, Hassan (2020, p.6) explains that, "This is a logic of accumulation, by virtue of its virtuality, that is able to colonise social and cultural life much more deeply than before, exposing almost every register of existence as vulnerable to commodification".

Calling attention to the fact that digital technology and communications were born of the demands of the U.S.A. military-industrial complex during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Cold War, Hassan explains:

Only computing could order the world in the required way. And with networked computers the only feasible solution to Cold War exigencies, digital computers began to shape the technological core of the world's foremost military and economic power, first in defence systems, spreading then into business, and then further into culture and society. (HASSAN, 2020, p.41)

With modern "digital lifestyles", constructed within the limits of corporate-controlled digitally-connected communications networks ("platforms"),<sup>294</sup> often being described as a source of "alienation", Jaeggi defines the term in the following fashion:

Alienation means indifference and internal division, but also powerlessness and relationlessness with respect to oneself and to a world experienced as indifferent and alien. Alienation is the inability to establish a relation to other human beings, to things, to social institutions and [...] to oneself. An alienated world presents itself to individuals as insignificant and meaningless, [...] as a world that is not one's own, which is to say, a world in which one is not "at home" and over which one can have no influence. The alienated subject becomes a stranger to itself; it no longer experiences itself as an "actively effective subject" but a "passive object" at the mercy of unknown forces. (JAECCI, 2014, p.3)

Andrejevic (2009, p.54), warning of the "digital enclosure" that people have allowed themselves to be enveloped by, in this period of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, defines the term as such, "this process of enclosure refers to a variety of strategies for

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<sup>294</sup> Schwab (2016, p.17) admits, " The consequence of the platform effect is a concentration of few but powerful platforms which dominate their markets. The benefits are obvious, particularly to consumers: higher value, more convenience and lower costs. Yet so too are the societal risks".

privatising, controlling, and commodifying information and intellectual property". Calling the alarm to the generalized practice of digital surveillance and tracking of the online activity of private citizens by corporate interests (for commercial reasons) and governments (for geostrategic, military, and internal security reasons), the same author explains:

When we participate in the interactive digital economy, we become lab rats, subject to large-scale, ongoing controlled experiments conducted by a new breed of market researchers. The goal of such experiments is to discover combinations of past behaviour, location, demographics, and temperament, that make individuals more likely to be influenced by a finely-pitched marketing appeal. (ANDREJEVIC, 2009, p.47)

Calling attention to proliferation of "electrical information devices for universal, tyrannical womb-to-tomb surveillance", McLuhan (2006, p.12), in the 1960s, provided a myriad of insights relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. According to him, "the medium, or process of our time – electric technology – is reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life. [...]". (Ibid. p.9) Establishing that electronic communications media create an all-encompassing "environment" to human existence, from which no aspect of life is immune, McLuhan writes:

We have now become aware of the possibility of arranging the entire human environment as a work of art [...] Application of this knowledge would be the equivalent of a thermostat controlling room temperature. It would seem only reasonable to extend such controls to all the sensory thresholds of our being. We have no reason to be grateful to those who juggle these thresholds in the name of haphazard innovation. [...] Environments are not passive wrappings, but are, rather, active processes which are invisible. The ground rules, pervasive structure, and over-all patterns of environment elude easy perception. [...] A strange bond often exists among antisocial types in their power to see environments as they really are. (MCLUHAN, 2006, pp.69, 89)

Numerous authors, acknowledging the transformative, revolutionary role of connected digital technology in human society, have positions that neither idealize nor demonize this technology, but rather view it as yet another "cognitive tool" enhancing innate natural human abilities (MCLUHAN, 2006) (MEMMI, 2013, p.2) within the trajectory of our species' evolution on this planet. Memmi (Ibid.) emphasizes the "democratization" of cultural production that connected digitality enables, however, cautions to not underestimate the role of traditional

institutions: press, universities, etc. to interpret and mediate the massive overload of digital content. He observes:

The increased productivity and capacity for expression made possible by electronic networks could be a cause for cultural confusion and disarray as much as for creativity. A healthy society maintains a dynamic balance between integration and renewal, cohesion and innovation. For the time being, it seems that the balance has shifted toward innovation and disorder [...] (MEMMI, 2013, p.8)

Prensky (2001), at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, coined the popularized term "digital native"<sup>295</sup> to describe generations born and raised with access to digital technologies. Calling for a renovation of "outdated" analogue teaching and learning practices, Prensky touts that:

It is now clear that, as a result of this ubiquitous (digital) environment and the sheer volume of their interaction with it, today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors. (PRENSKY, 2001, p.1)

He goes on to sustain that, "Digital Natives' brains are likely to be physically different as a result of the digital input they received when growing up". (Ibid.)

Similarly, digital technology guru Negroponte (protagonist of the One Laptop Per Child initiative – which in Uruguay has taken the form of *Plan Ceibal*, analyzed later in this chapter) trumpeted rosily in the mid-1990s about the advent and dominance of connected digital generations:

The real cultural divide is going to be generational. [...] Computing is not about computers now. It is about living. [...] As we interconnect ourselves, many of the values of a nation-state will give way to those of both larger and smaller electronic communities. We will socialize in digital neighborhoods in which physical space will be irrelevant and time will play a different role. (NEGROPONTE, 1995)<sup>296</sup>

Selwyn (2009, p.371), on the other hand, criticizes the "technological determinist view of social change" and like Memmi, emphasizes the continued relevance of mediation of traditional (non-digital) institutions (libraries, schools,

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<sup>295</sup> As opposed to "digital immigrant" who came to utilize digital technology later in life. (PRENSKY, 2001)

<sup>296</sup> Over ten years later, Schwab (2016, p.71) also stated, " The issue of digital exclusion (or digital divide) becomes ever more pressing, as it is increasingly difficult for people to participate in the digital economy and new forms of civic engagement without proper internet access and/or without access to a connected device or sufficient knowledge to use that device. "

universities, etc.) in young people's digital activities, research and production. (Ibid., p.375) Skeptical of claims of increasing generational divisions along the digital divide faultline and calls to radically digitize all aspects of life by "policymakers, technology vendors and opinion formers", Selwyn describes degraded intellectual abilities of "digital natives" researching solely in online environments (habits which carry on into their higher education), and states:

Aside from the detrimental effect on "traditional" skills and literacies, concerns are beginning to be raised that digital technologies may be contributing to an increased disengagement, disenchantment and alienation of young people from formal institutions and activities. (SELWYN, 2009, p.368)

On the other hand, World Economic Forum (WEF) founder, Klaus Schwab (2016, p.8) emphasizes the cruciality of the forces of "disruption" and "innovation" in the pushing through The Fourth Industrial Revolution, which he considers as inevitable and desirable, and acknowledges that this fast-moving WEF-sanctioned Revolution alters "the «what» and the «how» of doing things but also «who» we are" and involves a fusion of the "physical, digital and biological domains". (Ibid., p.8, 12)

Cautioning to globally "avoid a popular backlash against the fundamental changes underway" Schwab (Ibid., p.13) simultaneously acknowledges that these changes exacerbate global income inequality and the "great beneficiaries of the fourth industrial revolution are the providers of intellectual or physical capital – the innovators, the investors, and the shareholders" and that numerous professional sectors will inevitably "greatly diminish" and experience massive employment loss due to automation. (Ibid., p.16, 39-40)

While positing older people as having a slowing effect on the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" for being more conservative in their habits and behavior, (Ibid., p.33-34) and stating the centrality of technologically-adaptable young people in this process, Schwab admits that:

The big challenge for most societies will be how to absorb and accommodate the new modernity while still embracing the nourishing aspects of our traditional value systems. The fourth industrial revolution, which tests so many of our fundamental assumptions, may exacerbate the tensions which exist between deeply religious societies defending their fundamental values and those whose beliefs are shaped by a more secular worldview. [...] Being overwhelmed due to ignorance is

precisely what we should avoid, particularly when it comes to how the many diverse communities that comprise modern society form, develop and relate to one another. (SCHWAB, 2016, p.86)

Schwab (Ibid., p.78) goes on to sustain that this revolution will redefine individual, family and cultural identity – especially across migratory diaspora (mediated via digital communications) which he portrays as a "huge driver of wealth". On this topic he states:

From a broad societal standpoint, one of the greatest (and most observable) effects of digitization is the emergence of the "me-centred" society – a process of individuation and emergence of new forms of belonging and community. Contrary to the past, the notion of belonging to a community today is more defined by personal projects and individual values and interests rather than by space (the local community), work and family. [...] the more digital and high-tech the world becomes, the greater the need to still feel the human touch, nurtured by close relationships and social connections. There are growing concerns that, as the fourth industrial revolution deepens our individual and collective relationships with technology, it may negatively affect our social skills and ability to empathize. (SCHWAB, 2016, p.88, 95)

Regarding historically-rooted nation states and their public sectors (traditional interlocutors in the area of institutional cultural heritage management, yet increasingly losing their relevance *vis a vis* emerging non-state global actors), Schwab proclaims:

Ultimately, it is the ability of governments to adapt that will determine their survival. If they embrace a world of exponentially disruptive change, and if they subject their structures to the levels of transparency and efficiency that can help them maintain their competitive edge, they will endure. In doing so, however, they will be completely transformed into much leaner and more efficient power cells, all within an environment of new and competing power structures. (SCHWAB, 2016, p.67)

We have just examined diverse contemporary authors' positions on, and historical examples of, elite repression and cooptation of popular culture, planned macroeconomic and geostrategic transitions imposed by ruling regimes, and imposition of technology and technocracy. These factors - exogenous to local communities - have exerted huge force on the survival of communities' festive ritual traditions that foster social cohesion, and have provided the socioeconomic, and geopolitical context in which these traditions have either fallen into oblivion,



have been adapted and transformed, or have proven to be resilient in maintaining continuity of intergenerational transmission.

Though faced with such monumental challenges, as previously described, in a tumultuous, radically transformative 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and now confronted with an extremely complex global crisis (involving drastic, lasting geopolitical, economic, and technological paradigm shifts) in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the festive ritual traditions examined in this thesis have, nonetheless, been successfully transmitted intergenerationally by their practitioners up to the current day. This process of transmission has taken the form of the practice of traditions, present in the collective memories of communities, and processes of retraditionalization of cultural expressions to remain resilient given adverse situations and disruptive societal changes.

Finally, in this section, in light of the preceding description of societal disruption mediated by technological innovation, we will problematize the concepts of tradition, memory, and cultural heritage, drawing from the works of Machuca (2015) and Lenclud (2013). Lenclud (2013, p.150) conceives of a tradition to be a remnant of the past, orally transmitted throughout time to the present, and notes that the concept of tradition is different in societies that have linear conceptions of time versus cyclical conceptions of time. To him, any given tradition passes through a selection process by their communities of origin to form part of their cultural repertoire, necessarily transmitted orally from generation to generation. (Ibid., p.151)

Far from being static, and unchanging, traditions constantly undergo transformations according to each generation's circumstances, per Lenclud (Ibid., p153), "the essence of conservation of traditions is not found in the text (or in its literal sense) but in its spirit, that is, in the underlying content in the manifestations of the tradition". He sustains that traditions are not simply "recreations" of the past based off of canonical sources, but rather "traditions are that which, in a society, is reproduced from one generation to the next, solely by way of oral memory" via "social and psychological mechanisms of cultural transmission". (Ibid., p.155-156)

Lenclud also sustains that traditions, inherited from the past, are however conditioned by concerns and circumstances of the immediate present, and are the cultural references of a community for its moral codes, cultural heritage, etc. (Ibid., p.157-158) Traditions root communities psycho-socially in a conceived memory of a collective past, yet simultaneously show malleability and great capacity for innovation and transformation.

Machuca (2015, p.11) noting that traditions are rooted in memory and its transmission, admits that "memory is a kind of selective interpretation and subjective version regarding the past that actually occurred" and obliges us to mentally retrace the paths of life from whence we came. He also explores the dichotomy of memory-oblivion in contemporaneity, in which increasing initiatives of cultural heritage management ("*patrimonialización*") to protect traditions from oblivion are provoked by "anguish about the speed of changes that are brought about by new technologies in modern society [...] a sense of loss from the velocity of technological change".(Ibid., p.7)

Sustaining that contemporary postmodernism presents strong tendencies for the oblivion of traditions and memory of the past and for fomenting living in an "eternal present", Machuca notes that subterranean cultural memories can remain (Ibid., p.7, 14, 15, 17) According to him:

A function of tradition, so criticized in modernity, has been precisely to preserve and maintain the relevance of memory through social and mental habits [...] This phenomenon on the social plane appeared to modernity as atavisms that hindered the promising advances of progress. [...] (modernity) has a compulsive faith in the future and (an) anacrophobic terror of the past as if it were a taboo. (MACHUCA, 2015, p.15)

Noting the ultimate fragility of digital formats for memory preservation, Machuca (Ibid., p.17) emphasizes the practice of immaterial traditions as key to cultural and memorial transmission and the "mnemonic function, and cohesive role, of certain rituals":

[...] living culture appears as an alternative to the crisis of databanks. In this context, the transmission, more than physical conservation, acquires particular relevance, in as much as memory appears as a privileged aspect of immaterial cultural heritage. In effect, it is to be noted that performative expressions (that are dynamic, ephemeral, and evanescent) acquire a special importance as means of transmission. The role of ritual, in this sense, as a means of preservation, however

leads to disappearance, due to its ephemeral nature. This does not hinder that ritual, and performance in general, constitute themselves as effective means for memory preservation, as well as societies' intangible cultural heritage. (MACHUCA, 2015, p.16)

Machuca also notes the incidence of a community's social imaginary in the conformation of its collective memory, forged among an amalgam of intersecting individual memories, and gives examples of processes of "retraditionalization" of certain practices that formed part of a community's inherited cultural ethos. According to Machuca:

It often occurs that what is considered memory is in reality the retention of models, symbols, structuring principles, for example, in stories. Assimilated and transmitted by subjects in the heart of a determined milieu or sociocultural group. In this way there is a kind of learned memory, of "it is said or it is known that it had occurred", and is preserved in a shared manner. The fact that it is not mediated by direct experience, permits a certain laxity in regards to the demands to prove its veracity. This memory can be a collection of social representations or what society processes in its imagination. It is not based on references of time and place. It is a memory that cannot be confirmed and can be confused with fiction. In this sense, what appears to be an ethnic memory is really the persistence of representations in the social imaginary of a cultural group. [...] In effect: how many times what is held to be memory, is rather the reproduction of a model, a discursive *habitus* and acquired narrative that is combined with lived experiences? (MACHUCA; 2015, p. 21-22)

Reviewing and juxtaposing the above authors' positions, an inherent base conflict can be observed between, on one hand, the millenias-old processes of oral intergenerational cultural transmission, tradition, and organic collective memory, and on the other hand, increasing pervasive technocracy, ubiquitous digitality, social distancing, generational divide, and the societal "disruption and innovation" as conceived in the phenomena such as WEF's "Fourth Industrial Revolution". These competing dynamics, which shape communities, families and communities, are made evident in analysis of festive ritual traditions, collective events which are epicenters of the expression and revindication of a community's core values and cosmovision at a given moment in time. Hence, festive rituals – much like frogs in the river in analyzing effects of industrial radioactive pollution, or canaries in the mineshaft –, though seemingly innocuous, are eloquent objects of research to reveal larger socioeconomic and geopolitical trends at play. Their study during the 2020-2022 Pandemic/Global Crisis is particularly revealing.

We will now identify, analyze and contrast factors that have led to the oblivion, transformation and adaptation, or resilience of the festive ritual traditions examined in this thesis: *chacarrá*, *charolas* of Bordeira and chromatic accordion of the Algarve, and traditional ritual festivities, such as *kermesses*, animated by free-reed instruments in rural northern Uruguay. At the end of this chapter, these factors will be analyzed and synthesized.

### 6.3 Chacarrá

To begin, in analyzing *chacarrá* of the extreme south of the Province of Cádiz in Andalucía, the juxtaposition and comparison of the two cases examined: the Heredia family in Zahara de los Atunes, and the *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* of Tarifa, reveals much telling information from which to draw insights. Previously already outlining each group's unique formation, composition, and cultural transmission processes, we will now contrast and analyze each group's strategies to resiliently perpetuate the festive ritual tradition of *chacarrá* into the future - with varying degrees of success. The COVID-19 pandemic – erupting in early 2020 – proved to be a "trial by fire" experience for these strategies, which revealed both their fortitude and their weaknesses.

As previously established, the Heredias emphasize the essentiality of in-person collective practice and oral transmission of festive rituals – such as *chacarrá* – within an exuberant multigenerational extended family environment. (HEREDIA ET AL., 2020) This habitual collective participation and musicking is compounded by the ethnic values and identity as *romaní* – as opposed to *payo* values and identity – and is central to group social cohesion and social reproduction. This dynamic was witnessed several times by the author of this thesis in his fieldwork in the small communities of La Janda and Campo de Gibraltar.

Interviewing Juan Heredia and cousins again in December 2021 at a beach-side festival in Zahara de los Atunes, they described the unique cultural and social resiliency practices of their family and community during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting government-decreed (and enforced) lock-downs and limits to group cultural activities, such as festive ritual traditions, in Spain.

According to Juan's cousin, "(these festive traditions of Andalucía) are in our DNA". (HEREDIA ET AL., 2021) (Figure 130) <sup>297</sup>



Figure 130 – Juan Heredia and cousins (Zahara de los Atunes, Cádiz, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

According to Juan:

They can restrict you and fine you [...] but people have to live their lives and move forward. [...] The local family musical culture will come back stronger (after the pandemic) like after the Spanish Civil War, people did it with more enthusiasm. [...] Everything that they try to prohibit comes back stronger.<sup>298</sup>

Clarifying that their livelihoods don't depend on music, Juan and his cousins revealed the continuity of collective family musicking and festive rituals among their extended family in Zahara de los Atunes all during the pandemic.

Per Juan:

We (play music) for tradition, for our parents and grandparents. [...] (During the pandemic) we have continued playing music among friends and family [...] on the roof or at home [...] Even when the pandemic was at its worst, I went everyday to my mom's house [...] I had to go.<sup>299</sup>

Likewise, Juan's cousin recalls:

A strategy was, for example, last year, when there were more limitations, on the street at the front door of Juan's dad's house, we had sessions of *cante*. The grandparents in the doorway and the children.

<sup>297</sup> A video of this session can be found here: <https://youtu.be/prS23hfx5dQ>

<sup>298</sup> Heredia Et. Al., Interview, 2021, Zahara de los Atunes

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

(It was) a strategy, out in the street in open air, so that Christmas Eve wouldn't be ruined.<sup>300</sup>

Accentuating that the best method to perpetuate *chacarrá* is to practice it in festive atmospheres with the presence and participation of various generations of extended family, Juan acknowledges that "we are blessed to live here (in Zahara de los Atunes) [...] we live differently, with another mentality". He and his cousins observe that *chacarrá* is alive and well among local young people – with many that perform and dance, a fact observed by the author in his 2021 fieldwork.<sup>301</sup>

In regards to the mass efforts, during the pandemic, to replace live cultural interaction with digitally-mediated means, Juan and his cousins are adamant in their belief that nothing can replace in-person festive ritual musicking and conviviality. Juan clarifies:

Here in our small-town context [...] we use technology very little. [...] Even less when we practice our culture and have festivities. [...] We might put on some recorded music, but we always end up saying '*vamos a sacar los chismes*' and we get out the guitar, bottle and tambourine, and we go back to what we always do, the most primitive, playing music: guitar, bottle, tambourine and *cante*. [...] We can listen to recorded music, but after twenty minutes we go back to what we always do – what's normal.<sup>302</sup>

In the case of the *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* of Tarifa, in regards to the tactics to maintain resilience of *chacarrá*, the group has employed greater formal organization and a certain institutionality in its efforts to maintain tradition and retraditionalize *chacarrá* among descendants of rural *tarifeño* migrants in the immediate region and in diaspora. Founded by Antonio Triviño (as previously mentioned), the group from Tarifa obtained brief national exposure, performing in 1976 on the program "*La Banda de Merlítón*" on *Televisión Española* (TVE). (VICENTE LARA, 1982, p.36)

In 1988, Alfonso Alba Escribano assumed the leadership of *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz*. He emphasizes a common theme in the *tarifeño* participants of the group: being of rural origins or children of rural

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

migrants. Acknowledging that he has known many of the group members from his rural upbringing, Alba Escribano explains, "The majority of them, their parents sang or danced. So, they say, 'my dad was here, this is getting lost, let's continue what they used to do'".<sup>303</sup>

Currently rehearsing regularly in the *Casino Tarifeño*, the group has organized to perform for major events such as the *Feria de Tarifa*, and the festive rituals surrounding the presence of the image of *Nuestra Señora de la Luz* in the city of Tarifa, arriving via procession from her sanctuary eight kilometers away. They have also performed at festivities in nearby communities, such as Algeciras. (Figure 131)



Figure 131 – Ensayo de *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* (Tarifa, Cádiz, 2019)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Forming part of the leadership of the *Asociación de Pensionistas "La Unión"* in the *El Cobre* neighborhood of Algeciras (as mentioned, a neighborhood full of rural *tarifeño* migrants), Andrés Caballero has presented *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* at musical events that he has organized (with crowds full of *tarifeño* migrants), primarily with *flamenco* artists. (Figure 132) Caballero admits:

<sup>303</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

Thanks to Alfonso Alba, who is making a great effort with the youth and the older people. I participate as well, the little that we (older people) know how to do: play music, dance, or sing.<sup>304</sup>



Figure 132 - Asociación de Pensionistas "La Unión" (Algeciras, Cádiz, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

In comparison with the case of the Heredia family, the personal stories of current members of *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* are intersected by the larger socioeconomic dynamics endemic of the interior of the Iberian Peninsula: rural exodus, migration, displacement, family dispersion, urbanization, trend towards an aging populace, and processes of disruption in intergenerational cultural transmission from ruralites to their urban-born children and grandchildren. These dynamics directly affect the processes of adaptation and resilience of festive ritual traditions, and are forces that trend towards their oblivion.

The insights of José García are revealing. Born and raised on a small property in rural Tarifa lacking formal schooling, as a youth, García embarked on the much-travelled paths of rural exodus, moving to the city of Tarifa, joining the military, working civil construction in Madrid, and eventually settling in the peripheral *El Cobre* neighborhood of Algeciras with his family, continuing to work in the construction field until his retirement due to arthritis in 2010. Posteriorly, as

<sup>304</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras



a hobby conjuring his rural roots, he has dedicated much time in hand-made artisan creation of implements for traditional *tarifeño* rural work.<sup>305</sup>

García danced and played *chacarrá* in a rural setting since being a child, and occasionally participates in *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz*. According to him:

(I only participate) occasionally, very seldom. Back then, yes, but what happened was that later I had pains, I was in a bad state and I had a heart attack as well. I just can't – maybe I can do three or four *mudanzas*<sup>306</sup> – but I can't force myself (physically).<sup>307</sup>

His oldest son being born in Madrid in 1978, García observes a cultural change in the children of ruralite migrants, who have been born in industrial, urban areas of Spain. According to him, this change began in the 1970's (a transformative period for Spain as it transitioned from Francoism to democracy). García laments, "Youth today are not like they were back then. [...] They have other pastimes [...] sometimes I make a big meal and my kids don't even show up to eat. [...]"<sup>308</sup>

Regarding the possibility of orally transmitting traditional cultural elements such as artisanry and *chacarrá* to his three grandchildren, García bemoans, "those little kids are in school (and have not developed interest in artisanry or music) This has to do with having grown up with it, your life experiences, that you have had actually lived those experiences".<sup>309</sup>

Rural migrant Andrés Caballero, also settled in *El Cobre*, comments on the effects of increasing age on *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz's* participants:

Isabel Román Triviño plays the tambourine very well and she dances very well. It's now harder for her, she is an older woman and she dances because you never forget what you have learned, but the body doesn't move in the same way. I have also danced a lot, well or not so well - but I have danced. Now it's harder, after three or four *coplas*<sup>310</sup> I (have to stop).<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> José García, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

<sup>306</sup> Dance steps in *chacarrá*

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Sung verses in *chacarrá*

<sup>311</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

Isabel Román Triviño herself observes on the intergenerational transmission of *chacarrá* within the context of *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* in the area of Tarifa:

The youth, no. Have seen all of us here? We are all older people, very few young people. Young people don't want this, they don't like it, I don't know. Us older people will have to see if all of this is going to be lost.<sup>312</sup>

Leader of the group, Alba Escribano admits:

(In the *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño*) I have a group of participants who are senior citizens, and if young people don't join, all this is going to be lost. If the young people don't come, this is going to be lost. And how do we attract the youth when we have to compete with the tablet and the cell phone? [...] Nowadays in the schools, they are fomenting another type of dance, other types of traditions. And they are leaving our traditions to be forgotten. They don't foment *our* (local) traditions".<sup>313</sup>

Emphasizing the longstanding practice of the *Caseta del Fandango* at the annual *Feria de Tarifa* as providing an ebullient, contagious environment for transmission of *chacarrá* to younger generations – as was the case with his children – Caballero echoes Román Triviño's and Alba Escribano's preoccupations:

What happens? In *chacarrá*, the few people that we know how to perform it, we're all older [...] and the young people, most of them when they are fifteen, sixteen years old and they get boyfriends and girlfriends, they don't want *chacarrá* anymore. [...] *Cante*, if no one learns, they are going to have to end up learning from a tape recording or something. There's nobody to sing *chacarrá*. There are less and less of us, and also you lose our singing voice (with age). Your voice isn't always going to be beautiful, just like everything.<sup>314</sup>

As mentioned, the bulk of the author's fieldwork in the province of Cádiz regarding *chacarrá* was carried out during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and implementation of restrictive Spanish government measures regarding public events and group gatherings, measures that were acutely felt in that nation's rich festive ritual traditions, central to sustenance of unique regional

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<sup>312</sup> Isabel Román Triviño, Interview, 2019, Tarifa

<sup>313</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2022, Dehesa de los Zorrillos

<sup>314</sup> Andrés Caballero Cruz, Interview, 2020, Algeciras

and local cultural identities – especially in Andalucía. Being an atypical situation to carry out ethnographic field work of festive rituals (which inherently necessitates in-person interviews and elbow-to-elbow participant observation), the author was able to document mitigation strategies by informants as well as capture senses of loss and privation from centuries-old ritual festivities so important to *gaditano*<sup>315</sup> local communities' social cohesion, maintenance of identity, cultivation of memory, intergenerational cultural transmission, and sense of cyclical passing of time.

Whereas the Heredia family was able to informally circumvent government restrictions to continue their festive rituals in family, for the *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz*, primarily composed of senior citizens, the advent of the pandemic proved to be severely disruptive to their activities.

Although admitting that no group member actually contracted COVID-19, Alba Escribano states, "the people that participate, normally, we are high-risk, we are older people. One outbreak could send us into the next world", reflecting the paranoia, caution, and fear that the Spanish government and mass media instilled in the populace during the outbreak.<sup>316</sup> He goes on to describe:

We have had to obey (government restrictions) to avoid (problems), because I am directly responsible, I direct the group [...] We have had to obey all the restrictions of the authorities. [...] We haven't had any public performances. [...] This year we have only performed privately. [...] A lot of inactivity, which we are not used to, we would always get together frequently and perform a lot. [...] They have clipped our wings, from being a group that got together all the time to not even being able to hug one another. [...] This has been catastrophic. [...] I don't know if we'll have batteries left (after the pandemic).<sup>317</sup>

Requiring a great degree of organizational activity (as well as in-kind and financial resources) to coordinate regular cycles of rehearsals and performances within and outside the province of Cádiz, Alba Escribano – contrasting with his perception of circumstances in other municipalities, such as Málaga and its *panda*<sup>318</sup> tradition – laments a perceived lack of public sector support in Tarifa for

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<sup>315</sup> Person from the province of Cádiz.

<sup>316</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2022, Dehesa de los Zorrillos

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Musical group of regional variant of *fandango: verdiales*.

the efforts of *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* to maintain the flame of *fandango tarifeño* alive locally.<sup>319</sup>

We hope that people see this (*fandango tarifeño*) as cultural heritage [...] and say "we're going to support this". If this isn't supported from above, here below we don't grow. [...] Here, people only want tourism, they don't think about traditional culture. For example, I have healthy envy of Málaga, with the *verdiales*, whenever a cruise ship docks in Málaga, a *panda* plays on the ship and has a party, here (in Tarifa) whenever they have an international event, they never invite us. Our municipal government, when they organize something, they don't even consider our own traditions. They have forgotten us. That is a topic that makes me angry.<sup>320</sup>

Alba Escribano's personal perspectives on the role of technology in the simultaneous transmission and oblivion of *fandango tarifeño* are revealing. Commenting primarily on digital technology's ever-increasing embedment in contemporary social interaction of human groups, both on a local scale and in diaspora (again Appadurai's (2003) *ethnoscape*), he observes:

I always try foment conviviality among parents, children, grandparents, and grandchildren, we have some new girls (in the group), we'll see if they continue. So, there you go, the dad, the mom, their child, the grandchild, the grandparents (together), that's beautiful. Young people have their environment, and the coexistence among family is not the same as when I was raised. [...] The cell phone and the tablet and all this detracts from conversations among family members. [...] You can be communicating even with people in a foreign country, but family interaction is dead.<sup>321</sup>

In contrast to the experience of the Heredia family in Zahara de los Atunes who described the minimal interfamily usage of digital technology in their small community, Alba Escribano attests to the exacerbation of the alienating manifestation of personal digital technology in social interaction during the COVID-19 pandemic:

The main problem now is that you can't get together with many people. Now, children don't even visit their parents, nor the grandchildren. They have waved to each other from the balcony. There has not been contact, that social coexistence of the family, or among friends. [...] Each person is independent. (Contact has been) only through the cell

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<sup>319</sup> A 2015 video documentary about *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz*, supported by Tarifa municipal government can be found here: <https://youtu.be/9VdhYu52dvE>

<sup>320</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2022, Dehesa de los Zorrillos

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

phone, or video conference. (Now) people speak with each other more via video conference than in person. That is the reality.<sup>322</sup>

However, simultaneously, Alba Escribano admits the integrating power of digital social media platforms such as *Facebook*®<sup>323</sup>, both pre-pandemic and posteriorly: (Figure 133)

(People from) fifteen or sixteen countries follow (our *Facebook* page). There are many Spanish emigrants. They follow us and they encourage us. They encourage us even more than local people here. [...] (Many emigrants) come in summer for *Virgen de la Luz*, because they are devotees. [...] Digital social media augments everything. [...] Ever topic has its followers, and on social media people follow, give their opinions and motivate you.<sup>324</sup>

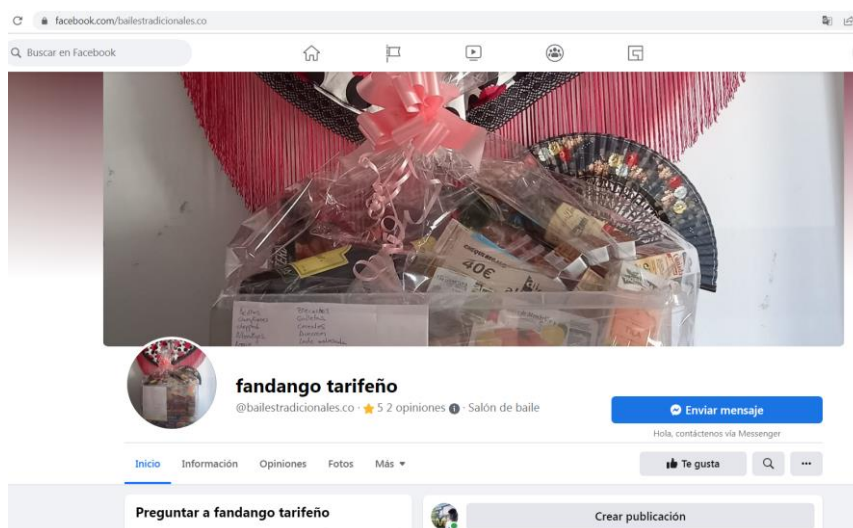


Figure 133 - *Facebook*® page of the *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz*

To conclude the case of *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz*, Alba Escribano, interviewed in January of 2022 at his boyhood home in Dehesa de los Zorrillos (surrounded by livestock), ruminates on the long-term future of the group that he leads and the continuity of the cultural phenomenon of *chacarrá* in Tarifa – intimately intertwined with the continuity and adaptation of *tarifeño* rural culture and agropastoral family production traditions (Figure 134):

This seems to be entering into decadence, ever more so. The future of this is very bleak. I don't want to brag, but there's not always going to be people (like me) motivating others to make stuff happen. You have

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> The Facebook page of *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* is: <https://www.facebook.com/bailestradicionales.co>

<sup>324</sup> Alfonso Alba Escribano, Interview, 2022, Dehesa de los Zorrillos

to move people, motivate people, if not, everything goes away, which very easily happens. It's hard to be in the middle and not get burnt out.<sup>325</sup>



Figure 134 – Alfano Alba Escribano en su propiedad (Dehesa de los Zorrillos, Cádiz, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Returning to his boyhood rural property after retirement, where he raises cattle and other livestock, Alba Escribano equates the decline of *chacarrá* in Tarifa with the twilight of traditional family agropastoral activity in the region (the traditional context of that festive ritual tradition) - a region that decades ago has shifted decidedly to international "sun and sand" tourism as its primary cash cow. He remembers when the property was surrounded by plowed wheat fields, which is now covered by invasive underbrush. (Figure 135) According to him:

Everything is in decline. The countryside and livestock production are also in decline. Fodder has gone up in price and the price of cattle has gone down. It's incompatible. [...] Government subsidies are constantly being reduced. The countryside here, at the rate it's going, will end up uninhabited. [...] I don't make a living from this [...] I have my pension. [...] The tendency is that all this will disappear, sadly.<sup>326</sup>

To conclude, whereas the Heredia family has shown to be able to maintain alive the organic intergenerational cultural transmission of *chacarrá* (among other music/dance genres in their repertoire) within an extended family community context, essentially giving continuity to a regional tradition, the case of the long-standing *Grupo de Fandango Tarifeño Nuestra Señora de la Luz* shows civil

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

society-organized redtraditionalization of *chacarrá* outside of its natural habitat of rural Tarifa. Alba Escribano's group lacks public sector support in the form of an institution of memory, for example, and its consistent efforts in engaging the *tarifeño* diaspora (via Facebook, *Caseta del Fandango*, etc.) nonetheless confront challenges in intergenerational transmission and in the increasing age of its members.



Figure 135 – View of Dehesa de los Zorrillos from the house of Alfonso Alba Escribano's daughter. In the horizon the Strait of Gibraltar is visible. (Dehesa de los Zorrillos, Cádiz, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

#### 6.4 *Charolas* and Accordions

Now, we turn our attention to the case of the festive ritual traditions examined in the *Sotavento Algarvio* in Portugal: the chromatic accordion tradition and *charolas* of Bordeira. In Chapter Four, we descriptively outlined the historical trajectory and evolution of the chromatic accordion tradition in the Algarve, described its primary transmission methods, and explored the global and national socioeconomic and geopolitical dynamics behind phenomena leading to its popularization, decline, and adaptation. As in the case of *chacarrá*, the societal disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, as experienced in the Algarve, has proven to be a poignant, revealing opportunity to identify and examine the factors that have lead simultaneously to the oblivion, adaptation, and resilience of the Algarve's chromatic accordion tradition in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century and in to the 21<sup>st</sup>.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the chromatic accordion tradition of the Algarve, though stemming from popular, family-based oral traditions, has been able to formalize and institutionalize its education and intergenerational transmission effectively, through the great efforts, not only of renowned soloists, but also of talented educators. Professional initiatives in the Algarve such as *Mito Algarvio*<sup>327</sup> and the academies of artist-educators such as Nelson Conceição<sup>328</sup> continue to produce a steady stream of scores of budding, young accordionists each year, a phenomenon documented by the author in his fieldwork at a number of pre-pandemic accordion gala events where students were showcased publicly on stage to large crowds of beaming parents and family members, neighbors, etc.

Not solely dedicated to instruction, but also to presenting touring and regional professional accordionists and producing publications, films, and research, *Mito Algarvio* prepares and foments the students taken under its wing to participate in international competitive circuits. According to João Pereira:

We have presented more than ninety percent of the accordionists from the region. [...] We've supported the publication of books, which before, there were very few, of composers from the Algarve, also (we've supported) films. [...] What we have concentrated on most recently has been supporting young accordionists who want to participate in the big international accordion competitions and have no financial support (from the Government) Oftentimes professors have paid those expenses out-of-pocket.<sup>329</sup>

Proudly boasting that accordion students from the Algarve have conquered first prizes in varying categories at the annual *Coupe Mondiale* of the *Confederation Internationale des Accodeonistes (CIA) IMC – UNESCO*,<sup>330</sup> Pereira explains that since its entry into the CIA, *Mito Algarvio* is responsible for carrying out the Portuguese national-level competition, whose victors move on to the *Coupe Mondiale*. *Mito Algarvio* was able to secure the hosting of the 2020 *Coupe Mondiale*, which would have been the first one in Portugal had it not been for the advent of the global COVID-19 crisis. (Figure 136)

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<sup>327</sup> Mito Algarvio's Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/associacaodeacordeonistasdoalgarve/>

<sup>328</sup> Nelson Conceição's Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/nelsonconceicaoacordeao/>

<sup>329</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2020, Castro Marim

<sup>330</sup> CIA's website is: <https://www.coupemondiale.org/>



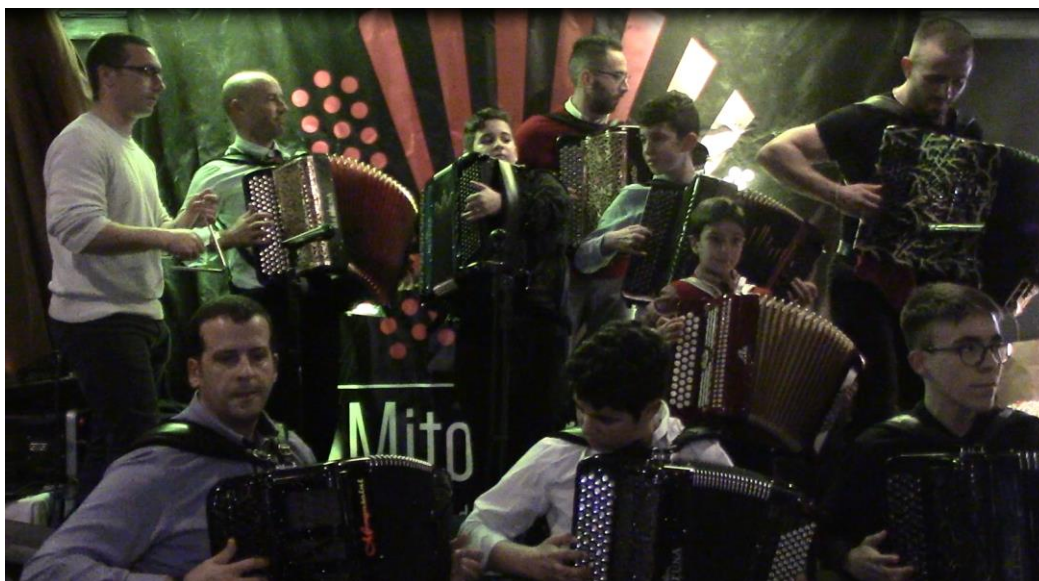


Figure 136 – Accordion gala of *Mito Algarvio* in preparation for the *Coupe Mondiale* (Altura, Castro Marim, 2020)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Much more than simply being formally organized institutions to churn out prize-winning young accordionists (although the author observed the existence of a healthy rivalry between different accordion professors), both Pereira and Conceição emphasize the wholistic formative process that occurs in young accordionists as they are imparted instruction face-to-face with a professor, perform in public, and participate in competitions over the development of their musical formation in an institutional setting together with other young peers. According to Conceição:

The role of a teacher is not only to pass along information and teach music, no, there is an emotional role, that ends up exhausting the teacher a lot. Each student is unique, and for each one we have to have discernment and capacity to motivate them. [...].<sup>331</sup>

Pereira goes on to state:

Music has a fundamental role at the psychological level. [...] It develops the brain. With the accordion, as we know, the right hand is one part of the brain, the left hand, another. (the process of preparing a student to perform in public) is very interesting and plays a fundamental role [...] so that the student sees that what they are learning is so that they can evolve and have presence on stage. For me it's very important, not just with music, but in confronting any situation. The younger, the better. [...] When they start young, they start breaking these barriers [...] so

<sup>331</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

that from a young age, they learn how to face others, perform alone on stage and gain maturity [...].<sup>332</sup>

He also describes how important life lessons are learned in accordion instruction and performance:

That is what I always transmit (to my students): everybody makes mistakes. You can't beat yourself up over an error you make on stage. Everybody makes mistakes, in music and in professional life [...] you have to be committed to whatever you do, like what you do, and do things with spirit.<sup>333</sup>

Other factors leading to the resilience of the Algarve's chromatic accordion tradition can be viewed as being inherent to idiosyncrasies of popular culture of the interior of Portugal. Tendencies towards valorization of expressions of regional culture, a degree of cultural conservatism, and proclivity to local socio-cultural associativism in the form of *ranchos folclóricos*, etc. (perhaps due to legacies of *Estado Novo* popular culture policies, and nostalgia produced from collective experiences of emigration), have helped to cement the chromatic accordion in popular culture in the Algarve, whereas in other regions of the world, accordions have progressively fallen out of favor. (JACOBSON, 2007)

Several of the Portuguese accordionists interviewed for this thesis testify to their formation and participation in regional *ranchos folclóricos* at some point in their trajectory as musicians. Chromatic accordion manufacturer José Domingos Horta, who had played accordion in seven *ranchos folclóricos* of Tavira, describes the important and unique commercial niche that he developed by manufacturing lightweight accordions for *rancho folclórico* participants (especially women), who generally perform standing, requiring levity and volume.<sup>334</sup>

A unique feature of Portugal's accordion traditions, which are intimately linked to the nation's history of emigration, is the protagonism of self-taught artisan entrepreneurs who build, tune and repair accordions for the national market (as well as internationally, due to the Portuguese migratory diaspora).

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<sup>332</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2020, Castro Marim

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

<sup>334</sup> José Domingos Horta, Interview, 2020, Tavira

Products of the country's decades-long material poverty and an indomitable entrepreneurial spirit, these artisans have supplemented the supply of free-reed instruments to Portuguese musicians for decades, reducing dependence on foreign-manufactured imported instruments, and maintaining Portuguese "in-house" repair know-how specialized in the culturally-specific tastes and needs of Portuguese accordionists. The artisans interviewed as part of this thesis include Rocha<sup>335</sup>, Nogueira<sup>336</sup>, Pedrosa<sup>337</sup>, and Horta<sup>338</sup>.

The principal challenge expressed by these informants is the difficulty (if not impossibility) of transmitting artisanal knowledge and practice of free-reed instrument construction, tuning and repair to younger generations. Whereas in playing accordion or *concertina*, oral transmission can occur audibly, the transmission of the fabrication, repair and tuning of the instruments (which necessitates constructing customized tools and machinery and comprehensive technical experience) requires lengthy apprentice-like experiences with self-taught (at times cantankerous) masters of their craft (not necessarily adept at teaching), a commitment few young people currently are willing to make, according to the artisans.

Portugal's sole *concertina*-maker (and prolific inventor) Joaquim Nogueira (b.1943) in Matosinhos, explains (Figure 137):

This job is intricate, young people don't want to do it. Even in machine shops they can't find workers. Young people don't want to learn. [...] I can't teach this, I don't know how to teach, I know how to make things [...] They are my inventions, I can't transmit, via my ideas, that ability, to another person [...] Ability is something that is not taught nor learned. [...] Here in Portugal we lack certain things [...] I make everything.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Leonel Rocha, Interview, 2020, Ferreira do Zêzere

<sup>336</sup> Joaquim Nogueira, Interview, 2021, Porto

<sup>337</sup> Carlos Pedrosa, Interview, 2020, Valença do Minho

<sup>338</sup> José Domingos Horta, Interview, 2020, Tavira

<sup>339</sup> Joaquim Nogueira, Interview, 2021, Porto



Figure 137 - Joaquim Nogueira (Matosinhos, Porto, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

José Domingos Horta (1941-2022), whose recent passing calls more urgent attention to the challenges faced in intergenerational transmission of artisanal knowledge of free-reed instrument fabrication and repair in Portugal, described:

I made everything, the box, mechanics, I would buy the reeds and accessories like pins and straps [...] Everything was invented by me (such as tools and machines to make accordion parts) [...] I had everything here to make accordions without having to buy anything from abroad. [...] Now there is no one who wants to learn, the older ones have died, and the young ones don't (want to learn) This is very complicated, I had various students who wanted to learn (without success).<sup>340</sup>

Domingos Horta jokingly portrayed the situation of the rupture of transmission of artisanal accordion technical knowledge in Portugal with an analogy to a barbershop (perhaps portending his own passing), "There was a barber, who was sixty years old. A customer of his showed up, who was eighty years old, and wondered, «When you die where are we going to go to get a shave?»".<sup>341</sup>

Another factor in the resilience of intergenerational transmission of the chromatic accordion in the Algarve, and elsewhere in Portugal, emphasized by various accordion teachers is the maintenance of the centrality of the nuclear and

<sup>340</sup> José Domingos Horta, Interview, 2021, Tavira

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

extended family as a context for the study and performance of accordion music, and the role of accordion music in everyday intergenerational family member social interaction.<sup>342</sup> <sup>343</sup>This can potentially be considered as being a product of a degree of cultural conservatism in the interior of Portugal.

According to João Pereira:

Since a child I have had contact with [...] the accordion. My grandpa and dad played accordion [...] and naturally I became interested in the instrument which was always in my parents' home. [...] Music was the connection that united the family. Any family gathering began with music and ended with music. [...] (My students) may not have musicians in the family, but they have family members that like music, and they (the students) since a young age are involved with tradition and a musical instrument.<sup>344</sup>

Similarly, Nelson Conceição observes:

We live in modern times, where people have less time for their children [...] In the family context, if people can't get together, if there is no family dinner or lunch with grandparents, aunts and uncles, there is a great lack of motivation.<sup>345</sup>

Another relevant factor in the resilience of the Algarve's chromatic accordion tradition has been academic and musicological research and publications regarding the region's famed composers and accordion soloists. The *Terra do Acordeão* series of books of biographical information and sheet music of selected, renowned accordionists from the Algarve, have been written and edited by Hermenegildo Guerreiro and Nelson Conceição, with various local, national, and international public funding sources. (Figure 138) Each edition features an accordionist/composer (Zé Ferreiro Pai, Daniel Rato, João Barra Bexiga, etc.) and sheet music of a selection of their compositions in regional genres such as: *corridinho*, *marcha*, *mazurka*, etc. with the goal of transmitting this cultural production to other musicians, especially accordionists. Initiatives such as these, faced with increasing globalization and mass culture homogenization, have served to valorize and revendicate the Algarve's regional

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<sup>342</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2021, Castro Marim

<sup>343</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

<sup>344</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2021, Castro Marim

<sup>345</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

popular music identity, allowing it to be perpetuated into the future within the bellows of emerging chromatic accordionists.

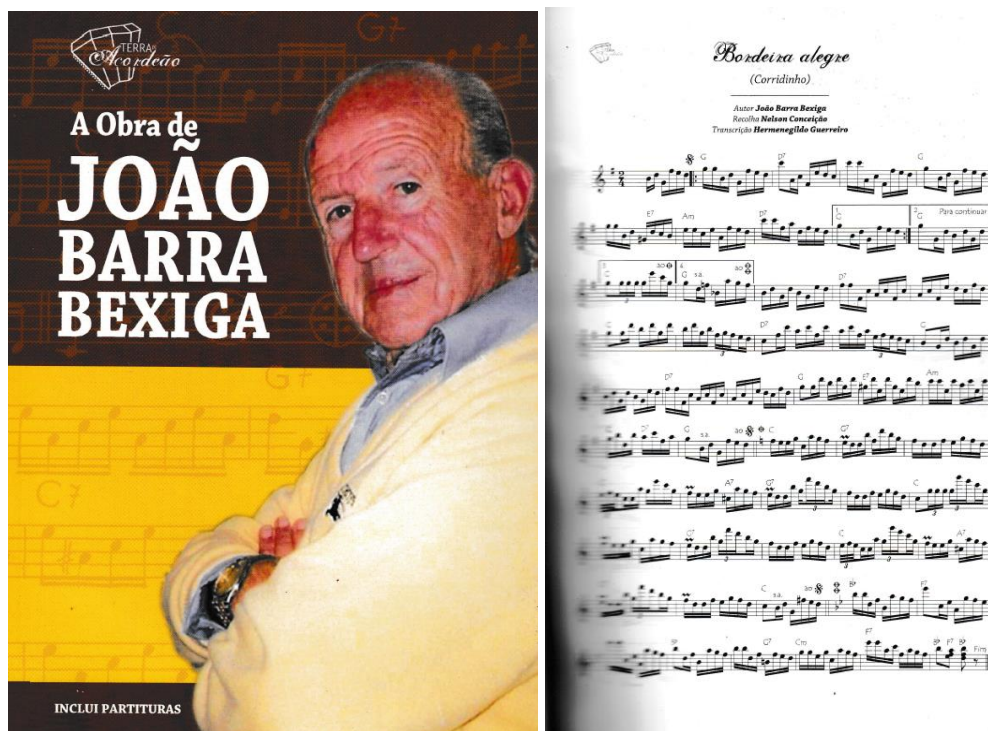


Figure 138 – The book "A Obra de João Barra Bexiga" from the *Terra do Acordeão* series

On this topic, João Pereira explains:

Here in the Algarve we have great composers that created authentic masterpieces related with the *corridinho*. It is very important, beyond all the music that they (accordion students) will learn, that there be a connection with our ancestors that created (our music). That is what will create our identity. [...] A student can learn with music of other countries, but the *corridinho* is always present. (The *corridinho*) is the identity of the people. [...] We should never undervalue our own roots, our culture, because that is our identity, (and we should also never) blindly copy what other countries do.<sup>346</sup>

In relation to this dynamic, another factor that has allowed the Algarve's chromatic accordion tradition to adapt and show resilience throughout time, have been young innovators of the instrument that have been featured on national and international stages, such as artists: Nelson Conceição, João Frade, etc. Artists such as these have expanded the boundaries of the chromatic accordion and the Algarvian regional repertoire as well as seamlessly incorporated the instrument

<sup>346</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2021, Castro Marim

into diverse international contemporary and classical musical genres.<sup>347</sup> According to Silvia Silva, "from twenty years ago to now, the accordion evolved a lot, before it was just for folklore and local dances [...] the accordion is no longer seen as an instrument solely for folklore, its gained respect [...] (young) musicians brought new blood and a new vision".<sup>348</sup>

Regarding the important ripple effects that publicly-visible, innovative young accordion artists create in inspiring their peers to learn the instrument, João Pereira explains:

Here there as an inversion (of the tendency to underestimate Algarvian accordion repertoire) and the first one to do that was João Frade.<sup>349</sup> He took traditional pieces from our country, transformed them, and took them to (international) competitions [...] and won. On achieving that, all the other young people began to see "that is my path, and it makes sense".<sup>350</sup>

As alluded to previously, the role of electronic and digital technology and communications (i.e. internet) has proven to be a double-edged sword in the transmission and continuity of the Algarve's chromatic accordion tradition. As mentioned, the pandemic and global crisis of 2020-2022 presented grave challenges, but also offered revealing opportunities to analyze the dynamics of oblivion, transformation and resilience of this tradition.

Firstly, regarding the advent of the internet as a vector of cultural transmission and as network for digital commerce, accordion artisan Leonel Rocha and merchant Francisco Moreira, both born in the 1940's and possessing several decades in their lines of work, have insightful observations of the impacts this transformational period has had on chromatic accordion instrument and repertoire acquisition. Moreira comments:

Many musicians, when they perform, [...] they use what's called a Midi file, the "*playbacks*"<sup>351</sup>. Anybody has those karaoke machines, and they can get the "playbacks" of any music off the internet [...] All this began

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<sup>347</sup> Adélia Botelho, Interview, 2021, Grândola

<sup>348</sup> Silvia Silva, Interview, 2020, Olhão

<sup>349</sup> João Frade (b.1983) is a contemporary Portuguese chromatic accordionist. Website: <https://joaofrademusic.com/>

<sup>350</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2020, Castro Marim

<sup>351</sup> English language neologism utilized in Spanish and Portuguese referring to the practice of mimicking a live musical performance to recorded music.

with the internet, before, a twelve-year-old child would buy a keyboard to study, now they buy an iPad and forget about playing music.<sup>352</sup>

Moreira also laments the drop in instrument sales at his establishment, now closed, in Faro, noting the growing tendency for customers to purchase instruments online. Leonel Rocha<sup>353</sup> echoes his sentiments, "The internet ruined everything. [...] On the internet people sell a pig in a poke (*vender gato por lebre*). [...] the internet has been our enemy".

Secondly, in regards to one-on-one accordion instruction and repertoire acquisition by students, various chromatic accordion professors have mixed insights. Adélia Botelho (2020) acknowledges that technology has altered interpersonal interaction, and widened the scope of genres of music consumed by the public, however she views limits to the beneficial effects of technology, according to her (Figure 139):

Nowadays kids have everything, for better or worse, because it detracts from the free time they need to receive musical instruction [...] I believe the parents need to know how to conciliate the internet, so that it is useful, without spending all waking moments on the internet, so that there is free time to play, do a sport, play an instrument and to be a kid, to be young.<sup>354</sup>



Figure 139 – Adélia Botelho (Grândola, Setúbal, 2021)

<sup>352</sup> Francisco Moreira, Interview, 2019, Faro

<sup>353</sup> Leonel Rocha, Interview, 2020, Ferreira do Zêzere

<sup>354</sup> Adélia Botelho, Interview, 2021, Grândola



Photo: José A. Curbelo

Similarly, Nelson Conceição cautiously admits the positive effects of connected digital technology in cultural transmission:

During the pandemic there are many advantages (of technology), technology is beneficial in that aspect. The problem is knowing how to filter and to create times to stop using technology. We are connected to technology from when we wake up to when we go to sleep, this ends up automatizing and mechanizing people, and we become technology's slaves.<sup>355</sup>

João Pereira analyzes:

I think digitality has two facets: we are closer to each other, and closer to knowledge [...] With classes, we don't need to be in the same place, that is what digital means provide, but in my view, nothing substitutes face-to-face human relations. The classes I give via computer are not the same as in-person classes. There is a human factor that digitality will never be capable of substituting. That human factor is essential, because we can transmit in another fashion that (is impossible) digitally, the emotions are different [...] In terms of transmitting affections, emotions, what music needs to convey (it is impossible digitally) and physical presence will never be substituted.<sup>356</sup>

Accordion professors Adélia Botelho and Nelson Conceição concur with Pereira. Botelho (2021) views negatively accordion instruction via internet, and qualifies the results of her colleagues attempts at online instruction during the pandemic, as being bad. Conceição, possessing a great number of young accordion students, muses:

In normal times, it was already complicated to motivate young people, there is a psychological task that occurs that attempts to motivate, keep the flame burning, and stimulate study. The pandemic exacerbated this even more, even though we give online classes, it's not the same. The exchange of emotions, information, and state of spirit, becomes distanced and demotivation has been worse.<sup>357</sup>

Moving on, the dynamics of the phenomena of oblivion, transformation and resilience in the case of the festive ritual of *charolas* of Bordeira are particularly fascinating. *Charolas'* historical roots, characteristics and transmission methods were described in length in Chapter Four, where the tradition was identified as being a product of Bordeira's unique social collective

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<sup>355</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

<sup>356</sup> João Pereira, Interview, 2020, Castro Marim

<sup>357</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

culture of endogamous solidarity and associativism (both at home and in migratory diaspora) as well as simultaneously being a traditional festive ritual "sociotransmitter" that seasonally and cyclically reinforces every year this local collective culture and identity, produces intergenerational cultural transmission, serves as a vector of Collective Memory, and strengthens social cohesion as Bordeira enters a new year. (CANDAU, 2012; PEREIRA, 2005)

As in the case of *chacarrá* in nearby Cádiz, the annual festive ritual of *charolas* in Bordeira, a centuries-old expression that local collective memory holds to have been retraditionalized with a secular character in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and public authority restriction measures, for two long years (the first time in over one hundred years of continuous observance of the modern tradition). The author of this thesis carried out field work in Bordeira both pre-pandemic and during the throes of the Portuguese government contention measures. As in the case of the other festive rituals dealt with in this thesis, this disruptive, transformative period provided visceral insight into the dynamics of oblivion, transformation and resilience in Bordeira's burgeoning *charola* tradition.

What follows is a brief description of the author's most recent fieldwork in Bordeira in October and December of 2021, and January 2022. We will then proceed to analyze factors, revealed in this new fieldwork, that have led to oblivion, transformation and resilience of Bordeira's *charolas*, from the perspective of *bordeirenses* themselves.

With the COVID emergency declared in Portugal on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the author – residing in Spain - was not able to return to the Algarve to carry out field work until October 2020, prior returning to Brazil. One year later, still during the COVID pandemic and period of government restrictions, the author returned to Portugal and was able to attend a community meeting of *charoleiros* at the *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense*, where potential strategies for giving continuity to *charolas* in the coming year were debated. Later during a month span during December 2021 and January 2022, the author resided in Bordeira to document potential expressions of *charolas* in that period. In this new field work, the author was able to document several oral histories of *charoleiros*, now colored by the ongoing pandemic, that provided bittersweet insight into the organic

workings, local meanings, and future projection of *charolas*, with a new sense of urgency, deeply-felt loss and uncertainty.

The author participated as a mere observer at the meeting of members of the *Comissão Bordeirense de Charolas*,<sup>358</sup> umbrella organization for all of Bordeira's *charolas*, on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at the *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense*, where he was requested not to film or record. The content and structure of the meeting was richly revealing of the inner workings of *bordeirense* social culture and the dynamics of transmission and cultural resilience of the local *charola* festive ritual phenomenon.

That night, over thirty people of differing ages, surrounded by decades-old black and white photographs of *charolas* and accordionists of yesteryear plastering the walls of the small social hall, sat in a circle at the *Sociedade* to democratically debate and discuss collective plans for next year's *charolas* (in 2020 *charolas* did not occur in Bordeira). More than half of those gathered were women, with a good presence of children and young people, and all participated in the conversation, including the youth. As opposed to a government affair, there were no partisan "officials", political figures, or rigid hierarchy in the meeting.

The principal topic of debate were the methods of evolution of young *charoleiros* from youth *charolas* (*Juvenil*) to participate in *charolas* for teenagers or even adults. With several families being present, it was interesting to see how participation in *charolas* is perceived as "rite of passage" into *bordeirense* society, and that sociocultural formation of young people seems to be taken seriously by families in Bordeira. With the massive success of the pre-pandemic *Centenário* fresh in peoples' minds, ideas were floated to annually maintain certain novel elements of that year, such as the parade, and also there was lively debate on the memorial dimension of *charolas* – the selection of which illustrious *bordeirenses* to pay homage to and why, etc.

Above all, however, there was great uncertainty in the air about if *charolas* would be even possible to do in January 2022, due to the ever-changing government mandates affecting movement and public gatherings. Possibilities of

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<sup>358</sup> The Facebook page of the *Comissão Bordeirense de Charolas* is: <https://www.facebook.com/ComissaoBordeirenseDeCharolas/>

requiring vaccination, mask-usage, social distancing, and less publicity were considered. It was emphasized that, though the near future was uncertain for *charolas*, each *charola* still needed to get together and rehearse.

This initial small flame of enthusiasm and glimmer of hope was extinguished when in December 2021, as Omicron came on the stage, the Portuguese government mandated a period of national "*contenção de contactos*" (contact containment) precisely in the holiday period of Christmas, New Year's, and Epiphany involving measures such as mandatory telework, closure of dance and music venues, limits to number of people at domestic family gatherings, etc. *Bordeirenses* were faced with the unthinkable: yet another year that would begin without *charolas*.

It is in this period precisely when the author arrives again to Bordeira, this time spending a month in the village's symbolic sociocultural epicenter, renting a room at the residence of Tô Pinto on the second floor of his establishment *Café Pinto*. (Figure 140) Originally arriving with the intention to audiovisually and ethnographically document "post-pandemic" *charolas* with the support of the *Universidade de Aveiro*, the sweeping government measures caught the author off guard, and that month of field work took on vastly different characteristics, however very fruitful in their own right.



Figure 140 – View of Bordeira from the second story above Café Pinto on a foggy winter day (Bordeira, Faro, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

The everyday, ethnographic and festive ritual experiences and oral histories documented by the author in this month-long period will prove to speak volumes about Bordeira, a small community the author had previously only researched in on daytrips, being based out of Faro – given Bordeira’s notoriously poor public transportation frequency and connectedness. The simple fact of dwelling directly above *Café Pinto* proved crucial in obtaining access and permission to more fully engage *bordeirenses*, a welcoming yet tight-knight group.

The key to achieving this was communally sharing in a quintessentially *bordeirense* social characteristic: conviviality. (PEREIRA, 2005) Social relationships, insightful conversations, improvised popular poetry, off-color jokes, shoptalk, emigration stories, double entendres, soccer debates, frustrated political venting, etc. were all carried out over a cup of strong coffee, a shot of *medronho*, glass of wine, or a *Sagres Mini*<sup>359</sup>, with people customarily buying drinks for others and vice versa. As previously noted by Pereira (2005), *Café Pinto*, and the other cafés in Bordeira are not necessarily male bastions, and there is great comingling of the sexes as well as different generations. (Figure 141)



Figure 141 – Exterior of Café Pinto on a winter evening (Bordeira, Faro, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

With the working-class regulars of Café Pinto by and large employed in civil construction and other similar trades, with work trucks commonly parked in

<sup>359</sup> A 250ml bottled beer commercialized by the ubiquitous Portuguese beer megabrand *Sagres*.

the lot in morning, early evening, and even mid-day, Bordeira still maintains the characteristics described previously in this thesis by Aniceto:

In the past, people worked hard, stone quarrying was a hard job [...] People would work eight hours and then they had a need for conviviality. That was the role of the *Cocheira* [...] people would come down from work, go to the *Cocheira*, have a drink and maintain conviviality.<sup>360</sup>

Frequenting the *Cooperativa*, Bordeira's sole grocery store (which also functions as a bar) and *Café Pinto*, contexts *par excellence* for Bordeira's conviviality and *charolas*, the author was able to engage in conversations with *bordeirenses* and observe *in situ* affirmations made by Pereira (2005) twenty years prior. The author was able to experience firsthand the continued robust effervescence of improvised popular poetry in Bordeira (most often in the traditional quatrain form) with picaresque and profound improvised poetry forming part and parcel of everyday conviviality with young and old partaking in the practice (some more habile than others). It is evident that Bordeira's well-earned reputation as a hotbed of poets is alive and well.

Though the lack of January 2022 *charolas* in Bordeira ended on a bittersweet note, the future of the 2023 edition remained undefined, and Europe soon after entered into war accompanied by global economic crisis, the experiences documented by the author, and the oral histories gathered, in December 2021 and January 2022 were particularly insightful in examining the dynamics of oblivion, transformation and resilience at play in Bordeira's vibrant contemporary *charola* tradition, a tradition born in crisis (World War One) that has weathered numerous adverse periods (Salazar dictatorship, Colonial War, etc.), has served as a source of strength and union for *bordeirenses* during those challenges, and was by no means going to throw in the towel now.

Out of the various festive ritual traditions examined in this thesis, Bordeira's contemporary *charolas* are the one that exhibits most vitality, organic transmission, and potential for continuity into the future. Taking into account the recent field work description above and the content of Chapter Four, what follows is a description of factors that have worked towards the *charola* tradition's

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<sup>360</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

resilience, transformation (without disfigurement), and against forces leading to oblivion – forces that traditional cultural expressions face in this current period of global abrupt, violent cultural-economic reconfiguration.

As described above, and analyzed by Pereira (2005) the basis of the resiliency of Bordeira's life-affirming festive ritual *charolas* are the natural characteristics of the community's social culture which greatly values solidarity, conviviality, cooperation and collective decision making, even in diaspora. In this respect, it is important to have in mind Pereira's decades-old succinct analysis of the distinguishing characteristics of *bordeirense* culture:

It is a synthesis between a specific work culture allying industrial work with the permanence of small farms, articulated with a unique strategy of social organization, supported in an extremely developed network of family relations, that constitutes the base and particularity of social relations in Bordeira, that is not encountered in neighboring communities and is found in the origin of various forms of community expression and identification in everyday life and in diverse festive manifestations, which can be generically considered as the MODEL of Bordeira. (PEREIRA, 2005, p.44)

With various informants noting the socially therapeutic qualities of participation in *charolas*, Aniceto echoes:

That conviviality is maintained (in *charolas*). One of the functions of *charolas* is precisely that, because the need to sing for food has disappeared [...] (rather) people sing for conviviality, with friends from the past, younger people, grandkids and kids. There is an approximation of people and the family. Nowadays, *charolas* are that: conviviality and friendship among people [...] and above all, with this pandemic, that's what people are seeking.<sup>361</sup>

Another distinguishing factor of resiliency exhibited by *charolas*, as previously mentioned, is the tradition's family participation, with various generations of a *bordeirense* family performing together in a *charola*. The great emphasis on the organic incorporation and formation of youth in *charolas* since an early age – lacking canonical institutional teaching mechanisms – bestow the tradition with the veritable role of "rite of passage" into adult *bordeirense* society (based on author's observations, it would not be a far stretch to instead employ the term "tribe").

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<sup>361</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

A prime example of this inherent characteristic of Bordeira's *charolas* is the *começadora* and poet Clara Grou (b.2003). (Figure 142) She explains this formation process, from a young *charoleiro*'s perspective:

My paternal grandfather was a *charoleiro*, and my father ended up joining the *charolas* to keep his father's memory alive. [...] He acquired love for this tradition and the euphoria of the *charolas*, he loves to improvise verses and the conviviality, principally - everybody in Bordeira loves conviviality. He passed all that on to me, and he incentivized me to participate in the *charolas*. At first, I went out of tradition, because my dad went, but I ended up genuinely liking this tradition, this beautiful place, and it came to be part of me. [...] Us, from an early age, have a commitment to *charolas*, we know the meaning and we like to come and sing. It is something that is cultivated from a young age.<sup>362</sup>



Figure 142 – Clara Grou (Bordeira, Faro, Portugal, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

A quatrain of hers, referring to the popularly-held WWI-era origins of Bordeira's contemporary *charolas*, is as follows:

<p><b>A cultura da nossa terra</b>  <b>Cresce de forma constante</b>  <b>Usou os despojos da guerra</b>  <b>Como seu fertilizante</b></p>	<p>The culture of our land  Grows in a constant fashion  It used the wastes of war  As its fertilizer</p>
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<sup>362</sup> Clara Grou, Interview, 2022, Bordeira



(GROU, 2022) Translation: José A. Curbelo

In a related vein, according to Aniceto (2020), in contrast to the case of Tarifa in Spain, tight-knight Bordeira has managed to stave off the general tendency in the Iberian Peninsula of rural exodus, and flight of young people from the interior to large, industrialized coastal cities. He cites the role of *bordeirense* festive ritual culture, particularly *charolas*, in this collective act of resistance. In his words:

Bordeira has different characteristics, whereas other villages become deserted, not in Bordeira. [...] Bordeira has grown in population, and has even more young people. You can see it in the primary school, in the *charolas*. People like living there, there is quality of life, because there is happiness [...] Bordeira is an example to be followed by others, in the policies to prevent young people leaving and incentivize permanence in the village, taking advantage of what is here [...] In other towns people have left, torn down their houses or sold to foreigners [...] Here in Bordeira, people still know each other, peoples' roots, the families and they have been able to maintain the traditions, people have defended their traditions, they have given life to their traditions [...] Because they know the tradition and transmitted it, it has blossomed. In the movement of *charolas* [...] there is life in that locality, in those festivities, because people are from there and know (their traditions) [...] Its not be chance that Nelson (Conceição) is an accordionist and others as well, because they lived (their cultural traditions).<sup>363</sup>

As clearly expressed in the 2020 *Centenário*, numerous informants attest that Bordeira's *charolas* are currently experiencing a "boom" with ever increasing participation among *bordeirenses*, and even among residents of other communities such as Estói where *charolas* in the secular Bordeira "style" have been founded over recent years.<sup>364 365 366 367</sup> As described in Chapter Four, numerous informants confirm that throughout recent decades, nostalgic returning *bordeirense* emigrants infused invigorating new life in to the village's *charolas* through their enthusiastic participation and financial sponsorship, redtraditionalizing the expression after the dire period of the 1960's and 1970's.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> José Aniceto, Interview, 2020, Santa Bárbara de Nexe

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>366</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

<sup>367</sup> Nuno Grou, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

Another factor related to oblivion, transformation and resiliency of Bordeira's *charolas* is the tradition's reinvention as a secular festive community ritual in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as explained in Chapter Four. Decidedly casting off *charolas'* traditional association to itinerant singing for donations of food, the Christmas story, and ages-old popular Catholicism (characteristics maintained in *charolas* of other communities in the Algarve), *bordeirenses* infused the festive ritual with humanist modernity, redtraditionalizing it, and adapting ancient practices to an increasingly secular modern age in Western Europe. This has had its detractors, being classified as "*janeiras*", however over the past decades Bordeira's *charola* model has proven attractive to non-*bordeirenses* and has expanded beyond the community's borders and incorporated many outsiders, gaining increased notoriety for the village. (CUNHA DUARTE, 2000)

According to *charoleiro* and popular poet Nuno Grou, (Figure 143) father of Clara Grou:

There are children and adults from outside Bordeira that come to form part of the *charolas*, and they are influenced by what they find here, and they behave like us, and respect the rules. It is something natural, it's a pagan inspiration, our *charolas* are distanced from religious song. What we do has to do with people, the human being is at the center. The human being and sentiments are at the center of this festivity.<sup>369</sup>



Figure 143 – Nuno Grou (Bordeira, Sta, Bárbara de Nexe, Faro, Portugal, 2022)

<sup>369</sup> Nuno Grou, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Emphasizing the secular humanist, community-oriented, human-centered nature of Bordeira's festive ritual *charolas*, we now turn once more to examine the double-edged sword of technology. Again, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven eloquently revealing in identifying technology's role within *charolas*. Though connected on digital social platforms, all the *charoleiros* interviewed for this thesis were unanimously adamant in their affirmation that *charolas* conducted via digitally connected technology are definitely not *charolas*, and that (despite massive media propaganda harkening a new virtual, connected socio-cultural world during the pandemic – the "new normal") technology will never have any role as replacement for the live festive ritual of *charolas* as has been practiced (unbroken, except during for the pandemic) for over one hundred years. This stubborn defiance is characteristic of the history of Bordeira's independent, "Do-It-Yourself" culture that brought material, intellectual and political progress to a poor, isolated hamlet, developing it into a tightknit, enlightened, vibrant small community with an indomitable local identity throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>370</sup>

Vargues explains:

With these government (COVID) measures, trying to do (*charolas* another way) they cease to be *charolas*. We talked about doing something online, but the essence of *charolas* would be lost [...] The essence of *charolas* is out on the street, at people's homes, at the cafés. The essence of *charolas* is the agglomeration of people [...] We cannot adapt to something that removes the essence of *charolas* [...] We cannot do *charolas* diverging from how they have been done for a century. The essence is [...] improvising verses to people, eating, drinking. When it stops being that, i.e. performing on a stage, broadcasting, ninety percent of *charoleiros* don't accept that, [...] they say "I am not going to sing with a mask on my face, that's not *charolas*" [...] The world can innovate lots of technology but *charolas* are out on the street with groups of people.<sup>371</sup>

Ramos Domingos' (Figure 144) perspective resonates with that of Vargues:

We talked about the possibility of doing (*charolas*) online for those who are not in Portugal, emigrants, etc. but *charolas* are not that. *Charolas* are live with the people [...] *Charolas* as a "Live" on Facebook® doesn't mean a thing, via social networks with no in-person audience. We work with the people, such as in the *Valsa das Vivas*, anybody in the crowd can say a verse. (On the internet) there isn't that interaction, and that

<sup>370</sup> Testimonies of *charoleiros* from January 2022 can be found on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/XiYYBxlVRO8>

<sup>371</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

interaction is fundamental to the *charolas*, reaching people's emotions. Doing something on TV, etc. has absolutely nothing to do with *charolas*.<sup>372</sup>



Figure 144 – Lino Ramos Domingos (Bordeira, Sta. Bárbara de Nexe, Faro, Portugal, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Likewise, Nuno Grou observes:

What is satisfying to is to be together in conviviality, embraced and (say verses to each other). Anything that isn't that, is not tradition. We could do stuff online or on stage, but that's not tradition, we're not made for that, and that's not the way we will maintain our tradition. A tradition is kept alive by doing it the way our ancestors did [...] that's how we feed our soul [...] (*Charolas*) are a ritual, and like all rituals, you have to follow its rules.<sup>373</sup>

Again, Nuno Grou (who is a management software consultant) states, "*Charolas* are the antidote to isolation. [...] Naturally, technology distances people from one another within society, that is a fact. [...] The impact of new technologies on the gathering power of *charolas* is null".<sup>374</sup>

Nelson Conceição acknowledges connected digital technology's usefulness while emphasizing that nothing can replace the energy and vibrations of presential human interactions, such as in festive rituals like *charolas*.

There is something that technology will never be able to solve. *Charolas* are a moment of contact, harmony among people. The main purpose of the *charolas* are to wish a happy New Year [...] childhood friends getting together, conviviality. [...] Since I was born, I have been involved

<sup>372</sup> Lino Ramos Domingos, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>373</sup> Nuno Grou, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

in *charolas*. [...] The absence of *charolas* has various consequences. For not being able to get together, people become depressed.<sup>375</sup>

The accordionist expresses the sentiments of all the *charoleiro* informants for this thesis that not being able to do festive ritual *charolas* for two years in a row (with the possibility of 2023 still up in the air) has taken a staggering emotional blow to *bordeirenses* in general. It could be posited that at the same time a cyclical localized festival ritual, such as *charolas*, can be a source of sociocultural and emotional strength to a small, tightknit community like Bordeira, the community's socio-emotional dependence on that festive ritual can reveal itself as an Achille's Heel in the absence of that festive ritual and create outsized negative externalities – as opposed to as in a large urban, more anonymous,, flexible, loosely-knit community. In this current global state of affairs of break-neck pace of change, can a community be "overdependent" on their traditional festive rituals? Is the stubborn maintenance of tradition, when faced within changing circumstances, a sign of resilience or of inadaptability? What follows are perspective of *charoleiros* regarding the impact of the pandemic and their personal visions of the continuity of their tradition in the near future.

Clara Grou notes, "People (in Bordeira) became sad. They have felt impotent [...] In January normally Bordeira is full of music, full of life, and with the pandemic it became way more silent".<sup>376</sup> Similarly, Lino Ramos Domingos echoes:

The pandemic affected the *charoleiros* a lot, there are a lot of people that suffer because of this, they can't go out on the street, they even cry, they send *vivas* (improvised quatrains) via social media [...] The impact (of the pandemic) has been profound sadness.<sup>377</sup>

Nuno Grou laments, "when January 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> come around, we feel immense satisfaction of carrying out our duty of maintaining this tradition alive. So, when we don't carry out this duty, that satisfaction is replaced by sadness, a sensation of impotence. We feel an immense emptiness inside".<sup>378</sup> Vargues

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<sup>375</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

<sup>376</sup> Clara Grou, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>377</sup> Lino Ramos Domingos, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>378</sup> Nuno Grou, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>379</sup>adds that compounding that collective sadness of *bordeirenses*, is the looming sense of uncertainty as to if there can be *charolas* in the following year, a possibility that could be unlikely given Summer 2022 increase in European COVID-19 infection rates (accompanied by other extraneous factors such as war in Europe, rampant inflation, and the emerging "monkeypox" infection).

However, the *charoleiros* interviewed for this thesis demonstrate defiant optimism about the near future regarding their tradition, perhaps as a result of culturally-embedded, non-fatalistic *bordeirenses* attitudes towards the recurrent hope of building a better future in solidarity as a group. Ramos Domingos affirms with confidence:

I don't think the pandemic will affect (the intergenerational transmission of *charolas*) because it is passed from parents to children. That's our tradition. [...] When the pandemic ends, (*charolas*) will come back stronger than ever [...] the public who likes *charolas* and the *charoleiros* will come back stronger.<sup>380</sup>

Citing the long history of resilience of Bordeira's *charolas* in past periods of collective crisis (emigration, Colonial War, etc.), Nuno Grou (as does his daughter Clara) opines:

The future (of *charolas*) is guaranteed [...] because this spirit lives inside us, when the season comes, we are fired up to do (*charolas*). So, a hiatus of only two years will not extinguish our enthusiasm. Three years from now, we will be stronger, because there is that longing (*saudade*), that pent-up emotion that will lead to an explosion (and *charolas*) will be bigger than ever. The impact of the pandemic in *charolas* moving in to the future is very little.<sup>381</sup>

Nelson Conceição is more reserved in his outlook, reminding that several people lost loved ones to COVID-19 and the full impact of the pandemic on Bordeira's *charola* tradition will only be able to be gauged when *charolas* occur next. However, he sees a silver lining to the two years spent socially-distanced and in isolation. Based on his past experience with the *Terra do Acordeão* project, in this recent period of musical inactivity Conceição commenced a ground-breaking historical documentation initiative regarding Bordeira's *charola* tradition:

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<sup>379</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>380</sup> Lino Ramos Domingos, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>381</sup> Nuno Grou, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

*Antologia das Charolas* (Charola Anthology).<sup>382</sup> The impetus for this initiative is described by Conceição:

*Charolas* are an encounter with the past. [...] No matter how much we want to remember the past, we can't remember the past alone by ourselves. Now, when we remember together, in a harmonious form, it's completely different. [...] I have tried to develop the work of the Anthology to sort of forget the absence of *charolas*. I am able to *matar saudades* (cure longingness) in my own way.<sup>383</sup>

Starting with his vast personal collection of videos, audio recordings, sheet music, etc. accumulated in the decades that he has participated in *charolas* since his youth, in the creation of the Anthology, Conceição has solicited the participation of local *bordeirenses* and those in diaspora to voluntarily contribute materials from their personal and family archives about *charolas* of yesteryear.<sup>384</sup> <sup>385</sup> Being a respected, well-known *bordeirense* native accordionist, Conceição has been successful in gaining people's confidence in entrusting personal memories to him. Those documented memories have taken the form of a myriad of formats, product of technological evolution in the past decades: photographs, manuscripts, posters, sheet music, VHS recordings, audio cassettes, reel-to-reel recordings, digital video tapes, Super 8, etc. (Figure 145) (Figure 146) However, Vargues admits:

A lot of stuff will never be recuperated, because they got lost with time. Nobody saved what they wrote forty years ago, the march of a certain year, that was sung at that time was never written down, and if it was, it wasn't saved when that person died and their children kept it.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> Elements of *Antologia das Charolas* can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCA6BxzY-BYMDdR8T0Ve-arA>

<sup>383</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

<sup>385</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.



Figure 145 – Materials in the *Antologia das Charolas* (Loulé, Faro, Portugal, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 146 – VHS tapes in the *Antologia das Charolas* (Loulé, Faro, Portugal, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

The contributed materials entrusted to Conceição are digitalized and generally returned back to their original owners and their families. (Figure 147) He estimates that from six hundred to seven hundred original compositions have been created in the century-long tradition of Bordeira's *charolas*, many by renowned accordionists such as Zé Ferreiro Pai, Daniel Rato, João Barra Bexiga and others. Also, hundreds of iconic poetic lyrics accompany these compositions, and part of the work of the Anthology is to transcribe *charola* compositions, document their lyrics and attempt to identify the authors.





Figure 147 – Nelson Conceição at work on the *Antologia das Charolas* (Loulé, Faro, Portugal, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

According to the *Antologia das Charolas*' creator its objective is to simultaneously preserve collective memory and individual memories of this local cultural expression, and to make these archive materials available to researchers as well as future generations of *charoleiros*. He explains:

The history of *charolas* has so much creativity, feeling, emotion, history. It is mixed, because there are stories of war, hunger, stories of emigration, stories of wishing a happy New Year [...] and now it is a festivity to remember the past".<sup>387</sup>

Young *charoleira*, "digital native" Clara Grou gives her perspective on the value of be able to access an archive such as *Antologia das Charolas* (Figure 148):

(Digital) technology is a good form of communication, it's also a good form of documentation. It's much easier for us to document something if we have it on video, or in a photograph, for example. I think that technology is good in that aspect. I have videos of the first year I participated. There are videos from the 1980's and it's always good to revisit those memories [...] Videos, photos, all that help to preserve and maintain, and revisit certain memories: marches, sounds, song, music can only be interacted with via an audiovisual recording. In that respect technology is beneficial.<sup>388</sup>

<sup>387</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

<sup>388</sup> Clara Grou, Interview, 2022, Bordeira



Figure 148 – Clip from VHS tape from 1998 in the *Antologia das Charolas*

Source: *Antologia das Charolas*

Conceição highlights that the oldest live audio recording of *charolas* in Bordeira in the Anthology dates from 1967, in which accordionist Zé Ferreiro Pai performs. He also emphasizes the key role that *bordeirense* emigrants have played in documenting *charolas* in recent history. Citing the cases of emigrant *charoleiros* Zé das Neves and Valêncio Sousa, he describes how emigrants in France in the 1970's would come to their hometown in January and record *charolas* on reel-to-reel machines. These recordings were played to the *bordeirense* emigrant diaspora in France, self-exiled due to the political and economy conditions back home during the *Estado Novo*. Knowing that their loved ones would be hearing these recordings, *charoleiros* in Bordeira would improvise poetry greeting and saluting their emigrated family members and friends in the live performances recorded on reel-to-reel. (Figure 149)



Figure 149 – Reel-to-reel recorder used by emigrants to record *charolas* in the 1970's (Loulé, Faro, Portugal, 2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

On documenting and interacting with this audio content from that period and understanding the historical and social context of its creation (as well as that of his own family), Conceição was moved and became more convinced of the long-term value of the *Antologia das Charolas* initiative, a powerful vector of Memory and Identity. He describes:

The emotion is palpably felt in the voices of the people that sing (in those recordings from the 1970s) It gives you goosebumps. You can sense that there is something special. No matter how we can try to imitate them [...] we are not able. If we have never fought in a war, we have no way of knowing what war is like [...] we can imagine, but we can't cry like those men cried. We are not able to cry like the emigrant cried. When we hear those very people sing, no matter how we try, we cannot have their feelings. [...] It is moving to listen to those recordings. It is moving to hear a son to sing a verse to his father who is in France. Through music, song, poetry, *charolas*, they found a way to greet and salute family members and friends thousands of kilometers away.<sup>389</sup>

He adds:

(The emotion in those recordings) is perceived in the lyrics, the improvised verses, and the way of singing, with special force and enthusiasm, and strong feeling and belief in what they are doing. An effusive style, you sense the emotion in people's voices. Its magic, and hard to explain.<sup>390</sup>

<sup>389</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

In conjunction with the advent of the *Antologia das Charolas*, in 2022 Bordeira is receiving yet another local institution and community gathering space, the newest in an illustrious history throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: *Sociedade Recreativa, Cooperativa*, etc. According to Conceição<sup>391</sup>, since the initiation of the *Terra do Acordeão* project, an initiative of revindication and defense of local *bordeirense* culture, within the local government of the *Freguesia de Santa Bárbara de Nexe* a project was discussed of creating a civic cultural space including a museum of stoneworking and quarrying and an accordion museum, both phenomena deeply representative of the sociocultural trajectory of Bordeira.

The project has finally come to fruition through the *Câmara Municipal de Faro*, with the participation of local civil society and the collaboration of the *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense* whose traditional space has proven too small. The *Centro Cultural e de Inovação de Bordeira* is set to inaugurated in 2022. (Figure 150) It includes an event space to conduct community affairs such as celebrations of May Day and April 25<sup>th</sup>, as well as a *Museu da Pedra* and *Museu do Acordeão*.<sup>392 393</sup>



Figure 150 - *Centro Cultural e de Inovação de Bordeira* (2022)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

The intention of Conceição is that the archive materials of the *Antologia das Charolas* find its institutional home within the publicly-funded *Centro Cultural*

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<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> Rui Vargues, Interview, 2022, Bordeira

*e de Inovação de Bordeira*, where it can be enshrined within the cultural preservation mission of the institution for generations to come. According to him:

I want that this archive be in the museum space (of the *Centro Cultural*), because this isn't mine, nor of accordionist X or poet X, not of any singer or *começador*, it is the people's. It's the history and identity of Bordeira, and this should be in the *Centro* of Bordeira, in the soil of Bordeira, and in the *Centro Cultural* it should be able to be consulted by everyone from Bordeira, those who are here, and those who are yet to come to know about their history and identity of their ancestors and families. Here they can find (recordings) of their grandparents singing, with the emotion they had in the 1970's, for example. We can't sing with that same emotion, but we can listen to the emotion of those people at that time, who lived that era. I think that is very important to hear the voice of our grandparents, friends and parents as they sing, feel that specialness, to give continuity to (*charolas*) in the future.<sup>394</sup>

## 6.5 Ritual festivities in northern Uruguay

In this section of the last chapter, we focus on the factors of oblivion, transformation and resilience in diverse rural festive ritual traditions in multicultural northern Uruguay, running the gamut from informal house parties, to ethno-religious celebrations of life events, to secular civic society festive rituals carried out in a context of hybridity between the public sector and popular society - "*kermesses*" at rural public schools. Extensive details and nuances about the festive rituals examined and their diverse cultural-historical contexts were previously included in Chapter Four.

In contrast to the "Old World" cases of *chacarrá* in rural Cádiz, *charolas* and rural social dances in the Algarve (where the foundational mixture and fusion of distinct civilizations and cultures occurred much earlier), rural festive rituals in northern Uruguay are product of a historically-recent unique amalgam of diverse cultures from indigenous America, the Iberian Peninsula, Atlantic Islands, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern and Eastern Europe, Luso-Brazil, the *creolized* River Plate region, etc. formed in an American, Western Hemisphere context globally connected via maritime transportation through both colonialism and, later, the consolidation and development of the independent Uruguayan republic seeking to modernize and integrate within global commerce structures.

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<sup>394</sup> Nelson Conceição, Interview, 2022, Loulé

Referring back to the base concepts of analysis employed in this thesis outlined in the beginning of this text, the festive rituals examined in rural northern Uruguay that developed in pre-electric agropastoral environments during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries are intimately linked to specific territories of physical-human geography. Though the interior of Uruguay's traditional equestrian culture afforded certain geographic mobility, the collective participation in festive rituals – due to difficulties of transportation and nature of socio-productive structures (family farming colonies, ranches, etc.) – were conditioned by geographic conditions and distance.

This characteristic led to a fusion of collective memory and rural-social geography, where these cyclical, reoccurring festival rituals – far from being carried out in "non-places", as conceived by Augé (1995) – have been held in private family residences, small town social clubs, storage barns, church halls, rural public schools, etc. in small, dispersed communities in northern Uruguay. These "places of memory", being the settings of local festive ritual traditions, have formed part of the "social frameworks" of the creation of the Collective Memory, and strengthening of Identity, for generations of northern Uruguayan ruralites, and the festive rituals themselves have served as "sociotransmitters" of this collective memory and vectors of oral, intergenerational cultural transmission. (CANDAU, 2010, 2012; HALBWACHS, 2004) A trans-Atlantic parallel can be drawn to Bordeira's almost century-old *Sociedade Recreativa Bordeirense*, a key place of memory for the *charola* tradition. (PEREIRA, 2005)

As described by Gau de Mello (2015) in rural Rivera department, with the endemic processes of rural exodus and desertification, the collective memory of these elements of cultural territory, steeped in memorial and sensorial meaning for those who possess lived memories in those places, has been weakened, and upon the passing of the last people to bear those memories and the gradual abandonment, degradation or destruction of those locations, passes into oblivion. A similar situation was communicated by Juan Heredia<sup>395</sup> in El Almarchal, Cádiz, Spain regarding a legendary nearby mountain village La Canchorrera, in between coastal Bolonia and rural Tahivilla, that was regionally renowned for its epic

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<sup>395</sup> Heredia Et. Al., Interview, 2020, El Almarchal

*fandango* parties, and proliferation of bars, which served, for generations, as a social-ludic meeting grounds for ruralites and fisherfolk in a festive ritual context, a fertile ground for gestation of popular *chacarrá* musicians, singers and dancers. La Canchorrera, as are many old rural hamlets in the interior of Spain, now is abandoned, surrounded by ranchland and livestock.

As Collins (2004), McNeil (1994), and Fischler (2011) sustain, collective multigenerational participation in festive ritual traditions involving social dance, musicking, commensality, conviviality, etc. are crucial in cultivating social cohesion and integration, and cultural transmission within a group. This social cohesion increases mutual trust and facilitates relations and practices of solidarity among group members beyond the social-ludic sphere, taking the form of collaborative work tasks, etc. This was clearly represented in the egalitarian examples of *chacarrá* and Bordeira's *charolas*.

In the case of rural dances (including *kermesses*) in relatively sparsely-populated agropastoral northern Uruguay, the transformation and resiliency produced by social cohesion promoted by participation in festive rituals are colored by the region's cultural diversity. As attested to by many informants, rural social dances (most often animated by free-reed instruments) have served as agglomerating and integrating factors for rural northern Uruguay's multiethnic and multiracial popular classes (as evidenced in the eclectic regional musical genres and styles) – with important regional exceptions such as accounts of the period bearing the legacy of racially-segregated dances in formally-Brazilian dominated areas, a vestige of slavery. (CHAGAS, STALLA, 2009; GAU, 2015) These festive ritual traditions fulfilled needs for social-ludic interaction for small, dispersed agropastoral communities leading to cultural hybridity, social reproduction and creation of a regional, rural multicultural identity – a fluid, organic, uniquely American dynamic, in contrast to the often rigid, chauvinist regionalisms often found in the rural interior of the Iberian Peninsula. (CANCLINI, 1989)

As evidenced in Chapter Four, migration - and its subsequent processes of acculturation or transculturation, according to Ortiz (1978) - has been a key factor that contributes to explaining the trajectory of certain festive rituals and the free-reed instrument tradition in northern Uruguay. Migration has proven to be

both a factor for resiliency and oblivion. The trans-Atlantic migrant collectivities that settled in northern Uruguay – in particular the accordion-loving Volga Germans and Russians examined in this text – *vis á vis* larger Uruguayan *criollo* society, possessed strongly-engrained social values and group survival tactics that promoted endogamy, ethnoreligious identity reinforced by festive rituals, practice of family agriculture, group solidarity, and cultural and linguistic transmission within the nuclear and extended family. These factors led to the continuity of certain immigrant festive traditions and the usage of free-reed instruments, and also led to exerting a certain degree of local cultural influence on rural, more individualistic Uruguayan *criollo* society in the regions these collectivities settled.

As just mentioned, migration has also led to the oblivion of festive ritual traditions in rural northern Uruguay. Just as in the case of the interior of the Algarve and the province of Cádiz, rural exodus has proven to be a consistent threat to the maintenance of traditional festive rituals in northern Uruguay. The mass movement of young people to urban, industrial, administrative centers – particularly Montevideo and certain departmental capitals – has exacerbated rural desertification and ruptured traditional processes of intergenerational cultural transmission.

The example of the accordion-playing European immigrant groups in northern Uruguay are illustrative of larger dynamics that can explain the continuity of rural festive ritual traditions in the region: subject to processes of transformation as well as exhibiting resiliency, even into the "post-modern" 21<sup>st</sup> Century. As evidenced by testimonies of accordionists and bandoneonists of diverse ethnic, national and racial backgrounds in northern Uruguay, festive ritual is fundamental to the strength, health and unity of families and communities – whether those communities are delimited according to ethnicity, family relations, language, religion, geography, profession, etc. Family, both nuclear and extended, as well as close community (which, depending on specific intergroup dynamics, could be even classified as a "tribe", i.e. Bordeira) are the pillars of a small community and are the natural millennias-old contexts for festive rituals and their transmission.



In these settings, full of meaning for their participants, festive rituals involving collective musicking, commensality and social dance mark important life events and rites of passage (births, birthdays, baptisms, graduations, weddings, etc.), and are the social frameworks for the collective memory of these groups, as repeatedly mentioned in this thesis. Rural northern Uruguay has been no exception, where – as in the testimonies of Perg (2002), etc. – festive ritual has fomented reciprocity in necessary rural work tasks among family and community members for harmonious collective cultural and material survival and prosperity.

As described in Chapter Four, festive ritual can also come in the crosshairs of the State as a phenomenon to be controlled and repressed, as shown in the debacle of suppression of Russian cultural expressions during Uruguay's right-wing civic-military dictatorship, acutely felt in the small town ethnic enclave of San Javier, Rio Negro. This is also shown in the restrictions, administrative hurdles and taxes placed on festive rituals involving informal gatherings of citizens in private residences and properties during the 1960's and 1970's, which – coupled with technological changes – began to bring about the demise of such "DIY" independent, popular expressions, according to informants.

In light of such State measures – eerily mirrored in contemporary COVID-era lockdowns and restrictions – traditional festive rituals – carried out in a grassroots fashion independent of public authority permission or funding - can be viewed as statements of resistance to State repression and control, and a revindication of a community's independent rights to carry out its own cultural traditions, unhindered by a State that may view any deviance from its dictates, however benign, by civil society as a threat to its hegemony.

A quintessential element of State hegemony, irrespective of political ideology, has been mandatory public education of popular classes, as previously outlined. With international examples discussed earlier in this chapter and the Uruguayan case outlined in Chapter Two, public schooling can be viewed as scenario for molding subaltern young people's minds (future citizens, voters, laborers, middle managers, public servants, etc.) to norms and ideals determined by a regime in accordance with geopolitical-economic conventions of the day.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, reforms of Varela in Uruguay (a small American country who has always been in an incessant process of "catching up" to the social-political-economic transformations in Western Europe, illuded by a sense of belonging to the "First World"), whose effects are still widely felt today in Uruguayan public education, basic education was democratized to a degree, contributing to the ethos of the "Switzerland of America", an ethos long-since debunked. However, the general quality of public basic secondary and tertiary education in Uruguay, through somewhat degraded currently, has historically distinguished Uruguay from its other peers in Latin America.

As posited in this chapter, the extension of the Uruguayan public school system into remote rural northern Uruguayan was a tactic to reduce rural rebelliousness, control thought, and increase effective governability (ruled from cosmopolitan, "Europeanized" Montevideo) of a vast multicultural, multilingual, multiracial geography forming part of a rural macro-border region with two powerful neighbors. Hence, the Uruguayan public school in the rural north can be conceived as a double-edged sword. At the same time that it imposed an incipient single national identity on a diverse populace, and mandated secular Spanish-language education, it also provided an important institutional context to channel and direct cultural and social energies, integrate rural populace into larger educated Uruguayan society and also, due to the remoteness of many schools, allowed for a certain degree of cultural independence and autonomy. This is where the secular festival tradition of the rural school *kermesse* comes in.

Taking the place of popular religious (i.e. Catholic) local festive rituals with influence from the Church in a progressive, decidedly secular, modern Uruguay, the rural school *kermesse* can be viewed as secular collaborative festive ritual for the perceived collective good of a community, without dependence on a central authority (a certain parallel can be drawn to Bordeira's *charolas*) In it, diverse civil society and private protagonists worked in collaboration with material and immaterial contributions, benefiting the larger local community and simultaneously filling a social need for ludic interaction among neighbors and families, hence leading to social reproduction in remote, rural border areas in northern Uruguay, considered since the colonial times as a "desert".

What follows is a description of fieldwork carried out in December of 2021 at rural schools in the department of Tacuarembó where accordionist Walter Roldán performed at *kermesses* many decades prior. The fieldwork formed part of a project funded by the Uruguayan Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC): "*El acordeón diatónico en las escuelas*" (The diatonic accordion in the schools) which involved engagement through MEC's *Plan Ceibal* (the Uruguayan implementation of the One Laptop Per Child project) in its "*Artistas en el Aula*" (Artists in the Classroom) series.<sup>396</sup>

However, before we delve into a detailed description of the fieldwork, we will first briefly provide background and problematize the One Laptop Per Child initiative, the theory and rationales behind it, and Uruguay's *Plan Ceibal*<sup>397</sup> in relation to being vectors of cultural transmission of festive ritual traditions – in this case, rural social dances animated by free-reed instruments in the interior of northern Uruguay. Also, we will examine the socialization of ethnomusicological and oral history sound archives in the process of mediatized intergenerational cultural transmission of festive ritual traditions. The effects of disruptive technological transformation on the continuity and transmission of festive ritual traditions were described earlier in this chapter.

The techno-educational program *Plan Ceibal (Conectividad Educativa de Informática Básica para el Aprendizaje en Línea)* (Basic Information Technology Educational Connectivity for Online Learning) implemented since 2007 by the Uruguayan government, forms part of the "*One Laptop per Child*" (OLPC) initiative developed by U.S. researcher Nicholas Negroponte of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and was presented in the 2005 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland with the eventual collaboration of the multinational corporation Microsoft®. Implemented in Uruguay under the leftist government of President Tabaré Vázquez (1940-2020), *Plan Ceibal* provides XO laptops to all elementary school students of the country and utilizes pedagogical methods based on digital technology connected to the internet. (Figure 151)

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<sup>396</sup> The 2021 *Artistas en el Aula* program can be found here: <https://www.ceibal.edu.uy/en/articulo/artistas-en-el-aula-2021>

<sup>397</sup> *Plan Ceibal*'s website is: <https://www.ceibal.edu.uy/en/institucional>



Figure 151 – Students working on XO's - "ceibalitas"

Source: *Ceibal*

*Plan Ceibal* is considered to be the best and most extensive national implementation of OLPC in the world (BEITLER, 2013, p. 27; KWESKIN, 2018, p. 203). However, OLPC has received strong international criticism for various reasons: emphasis on sale of laptops as opposed to education, global imposition of North American techno-cultural hegemony, insensitivity to local cultures in the design of hardware and software of the XO laptops, among others.<sup>398</sup> (KWESKIN, 2018; MCARTHUR, 2009, p. 910; SHAH, 2010, p. 89). Regarding the impact of OLPC in Uruguay, the director of *Información para la Gestión y la Comunicación* (Information for Management and Communication) sector of the *Administración Nacional de Educación Pública* (ANEP) (National Public Education Administration), Mauro D. Ríos, sustains:

Equity of access to technologies was not the same as improvement in learning processes or educational improvement in general. The availability of access to the network does not change social problems as quickly or as much as was intended. (RÍOS, 2018, p. 2)

<sup>398</sup> In their fieldwork during the pilot project of *Plan Ceibal* in 2007, carried out in the rural interior of Uruguay, Hourcade Et. Al. (2009, p. 234) observed that the characteristics of the application for composing music on the XO was not liked by Uruguayan students because it did not give them the possibility to emulate regional popular music genres that they listened to on local radio. Regarding this phenomenon, MacArthur (2009, p. 913) recommended the following: "*Designers [...] must be committed to providing technologies that take as much of the culture into account as possible, including the rhythmic and melodic aspects of a culture's music. [...] one could easily remedy this issue by bringing an ethnomusicologist on board*". (bold type is the author's)

Beyond numerous platforms, educational applications, and videogames (designed by a diversity of firms, among them foreign companies such as New Pedagogies for Deep Learning,<sup>399</sup> Power School, etc.) accessed by students via their XO through *Plan Ceibal*, interactive educational content regarding diverse areas of scientific and artistic knowledge, in the form of *Recursos Educativos Abiertos* (REA) (Open Educational Resources) is available on line. Aligned with Open Educational Resources recommended by UNESCO (2019), REAs are made by *Plan Ceibal* content creators (with the digital tool *eXeLearning*) and utilized by teachers and students both inside and outside of the classroom. Sometimes REAs are related to live interactive sessions with Uruguayan scientists and artists transmitted as part of special programs such as *Plan Ceibal: Científicos en el Aula* (Scientists in the Classroom), and *Artistas en el Aula* (Artists in the Classroom). Several Uruguayan public schools simultaneously participate in these sessions and the students ask questions to the invited presenters based on education content previously covered on the CREA platform.<sup>400</sup>

Although *Plan Ceibal*'s archives of educational content (*Biblioteca País*, *Repositorio de Recursos Abiertos* (National Library, Repository of Open Resources), and the CREA platform) possess a true dynamic wealth of interactive activities, resources, audiovisual content and texts, there is a considerable lack of content regarding ethnomusicology, ethnomusicological practice, sound archives, and also autochthonous traditional Uruguayan accordion and bandoneon music – an over a century-old cultural expression -that is beginning to be considered as national cultural heritage,<sup>401</sup> as well as its formal instruction being incentivized by the recently-created State organization *Instituto Nacional de*

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<sup>399</sup> New Pedagogies for Deep Learning: A Global Partnership: <https://deep-learning.global/> Their site describes the origins of the organization: "In 2012, thought leaders Michael Fullan, Greg Butler, Joanne Quinn and representatives from Intel, Microsoft, OECD and Promethean convened in Toronto and laid out a vision for a Global Partnership that would seek to collaboratively build knowledge and practice in new pedagogies for deep learning and support whole system transformation". Canadians Fullan and Quinn (2020) tout Uruguay as an example to be followed in the implementation of their "disruptive" and "innovative" technocentric learning models.

<sup>400</sup> Plan Ceibal's CREA platform: <https://www.ceibal.edu.uy/crea>

<sup>401</sup> Internet links to a selection of such initiatives can be found here: <https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-educacion-cultura/comunicacion/noticias/proyecto-bandoneon-sonido-del-tango>  
<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-educacion-cultura/comunicacion/noticias/primer-curso-lutheria-bandoneon-uruguay> <https://www.cienarte.org/bandoneon/>

*Música* (National Music Institute), and has been documented by important Uruguayan musicologists such as Lauro Ayestarán and Marita Fornaro, as well as newer researchers such as José A. Curbelo, Fabián Arocena, Ana Rodríguez, among others.

All of these researchers have produced a wealth of ethnomusicological audiovisual documentation of this tradition and a portion of this material is stored in the form of sound archives, the most important being the *Centro Nacional de Documentación Musical Lauro Ayestarán* (CDM) (Lauro Ayestarán National Musical Documentation Center), but also in online sound archives such as *Mapa Sonoro de Uruguay* and *Archivo 8 Bajos* (CURBELO, 2019; CURBELO, FORNARO, 2019). This material can be utilized in REAs and content on *Plan Ceibal's* CREA platform. The "pandemic" situation has obstructed budding ethnomusicologists from carrying out fieldwork and the use of these sound archives proves key in the study and transmission of Uruguayan festive ritual traditions involving free-reed instruments.

Oral history and music sound archives can serve as resources for academic research just as much as strictly documentary archives, and they are even able to capture and represent phenomena difficult to portray solely through the written word. According to Portelli (1991), "[...] written and oral sources are not mutually exclusive – they have characteristics in common as well as autonomous characteristics and specific functions that only each one can carry out" (PORTELLI, 1991, p. 37, author's translation).

As in the case of Bordeira's *Antologia das Charolas*, each sound archive is composed of a *corpus* of inter-related documents regarding a certain theme, historical period, geographic region, etc. Regarding ethnomusicological sound archives, Bauer (2003) writes:

The attempts to consider music and noise as social data should presuppose a systematic relation between sounds and the social context that produces and receives them [...] A particular structure of sounds is associated with a social group that produces it, to which it is exposed and is listened to. (BAUER, 2003, p. 366, author's translation)

Among the public that should have full access to a sound archive, firstly, are the members of the communities where the field recordings were carried out,

so that they themselves can utilize these materials for their own purposes – as in reconstructing, reinterpreting and projecting the cultural expressions that are registered in the archive. It was in this spirit that U.S. researcher Alan Lomax (1915-2002), in his ethnomusicological work, incorporated the act of "repatriating" copies of his field recordings in institutions in the communities where they were carried out as a key element of his research methodology. Denominated by him as "*Cultural Feedback*", it held the principle that "primary documentation of culture should be put into the hands of the original cultural creators. rather than remain the sole province of scholars. archivists. and entertainment giants". (LYONS; SANDS, 2009, p. 29).

Seeger (2018, p. 2) prefers to reserve the term "repatriation" to the return of recordings to their communities of origin that were realized in contexts of power inequalities – i.e. a researcher from a foreign academic institution returns recordings to a community of compromised socioeconomic conditions in another country, etc. Above all, he emphasizes the importance of "recirculation" of recordings, whether within the communities of origin or on a global scale. In this moment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, recirculation means, among other things, making content available in digital format accessible via international communication networks, enabling global public access to archival materials.

When a sound archive is finally accessible to a public, the process of observing exactly how different segments of the public interact with the materials begins, as well as discerning the diverse social/academic uses and sentiments of identity that the public gives to the archive. Seeger (1986) explains that:

Scholars are not the only people who use archives. They are also used by musicians, students, members of the public interested in a certain part of the world or learning a language, members of the society recorded [...]. (SEEGER, 1986, p. 264)

A part of being a mediator of recordings of sonic phenomena and oral history stored in sound archives is granting access to the public that originated that material so that they can interpret and interact with the material in their own way, according to their own criteria, perhaps vastly different from those of the researcher, Lyons (2011) admits that:

Part of the act of repatriation is the willingness to let others determine the meaning and the interpretation of the materials themselves.

Recipients may want to provide new life to these collections, new lenses for interpretation. This is a good thing. (LYONS, 2011, p.18)

Regarding the usage of ethnomusicological materials in imparting instruction to Uruguayan public-school students through *Plan Ceibal*, piano accordionist and educator Beatríz González (2021) – a creator of educational content for ANEP's *Uruguay Educa*<sup>402</sup> and *Plan Ceibal's Repositorio de Recursos Abiertos* platforms<sup>403</sup> - sustains that she attempts to employ academic rigor in creating REAs for students on the topic of Uruguayan traditional music and dance, inspired by the work of Lauro Ayestarán. Making up a small group of only three content creators nation-wide, between ANEP and *Ceibal*, on arts-related topics, González (the only musical content creator in the entire program) recalls that at the initiation of the digital technology-focused *Plan Ceibal* there was no arts-related educational content, nor a methodology to teaching the arts, and music continues to be "complementary" to curriculum as opposed to be viewed as a core subject.

Lamenting a perceived long-standing tendency in Uruguayan education to devalue national popular and traditional music, especially free-reed instruments (diatonic accordion, bandoneon, etc.), González (2021) notes that few Uruguayan teachers have musical preparation, which proves a challenge when they work music-related REAs with their students on the XO. Limited by the online musical and audiovisual content that can be employed in REAs due to licensing issues,<sup>404</sup> she cautions against teachers lacking preparation in arts and culture obtaining low-quality, inaccurate content regarding Uruguayan traditional music and dance from the Web for inclusion in lessons for their students. However, she admits that the ethnomusicological content presented in *Plan Ceibal* REAs would not reach numerous schools were it not for the techno-educational initiative and its ubiquitous XO:

With *Plan Ceibal* a number of schools have been able to access this content (about Uruguayan traditional music) because they are placed online as REAs, otherwise they don't have access. What happens a lot is that students don't have a way to access materials about folkloric dance, about the Ayestarán Archive, about recordings [...] When you

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<sup>402</sup> Uruguay Educa: <https://uruguayeduca.anep.edu.uy/>

<sup>403</sup> Repositorio de Recursos Abiertos: <https://rea.ceibal.edu.uy/>

<sup>404</sup> *Plan Ceibal* requires online content included in REAs to be Public Domain or licensed through Creative Commons: <https://creativecommons.org/>



work in those rural schools, there is a bunch of rural schools that can't access these materials (ethnomusicological archival materials such as housed at the CDM in Montevideo). The fact that content is available on educational platforms permits the children and teachers to access those materials (GONZÁLEZ, 2021)

González<sup>405</sup> sustains that arts content creation for Ceibal must possess a clear vision of what is to be transmitted through a REA and be designed according to the target age group. The REA can be worked individually by a student or together with a teacher. To her, though presented in digital technology format, an arts-related REA can't be solely technology-centric, it must engage students in the "analog world" and possess academic rigor. She notes that it was precisely *Ceibal* artistic educational content that was most preferred by students and teachers during the massive social experiment of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She goes on to call attention to the technical limitations of the technology utilized (exeLearning<sup>406</sup>) to create REAs, and explains that little technological preparation was given to educational content creators in the roll-out of *Plan Ceibal* in 2008. The technology-centric nature of *Ceibal* was put to the test during the "disruptive" ("innovative"?) 2020-2022 pandemic. (FULLAN, QUINN, 2020, p.17) According to González:

With the pandemic, the virtual mode has been predominant, but it has been employed so much that it ended up as a hybrid mode. Going completely virtual is not going to happen, students need to be in a classroom [...] The hybrid mode of physical presence and virtuality will continue. [...] (However, virtuality can never replace physical presence).<sup>407</sup>

Public school Physical Education teacher and piano accordionist Julián Ríos at *Escuela 25 Quiebra Yugos* in Tacuarembó, one of the multi-grade rural schools where fieldwork for this thesis was carried out, resonates with González's affirmation, based on his own recent, lived experiences (Figure 152):

The truth is that internet in Quiebra Yugos isn't very good. It sometimes drops and there are days that it functions worse than others. [...] When they shut down schools for quarantine, there isn't a good response from

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<sup>405</sup> Beatriz González, Interview, 2021, Montevideo

<sup>406</sup> exeLearning is an open source educational software originally developed in New Zealand and continued in Spain: <https://exelearning.net/en/>

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

the children regarding virtual classes. [...] The element of socialization (of children) is very difficult via internet. [...] Virtuality has a benefit in that it allows you to contact people that otherwise would be impossible (because of distance). The totally virtual classes have not gone well. [...] (In teaching music online) whenever you make a sound, it reaches the other person with a delay. [...] Teaching accordion to a child via internet would be very difficult for me.<sup>408</sup>



Figure 152 – Julián Ríos at *Escuela 25 Quiebra Yugos* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: Fabián Arocena

The glowing affirmations of Fullan and Quinn (2020) diverge from Ríos's account:

Uruguay's investment in capacity building focused on Deep Learning and system changes at all levels, has continued during the COVID-19 pandemic. As COVID-19 hit, the Core Deep Learning Team was able to leverage the strong communication links and digital infrastructure already established with teachers, to continue communicating, teaching, and learning with agility. Low bandwidth was combatted by using phones and WhatsApp. [...] (FULLAN, QUINN, 2020, p.17)

So, with the techno-centric learning model of *Plan Ceibal*, a nationally-adapted program of the Negroponte's World Economic Forum-debuted One Laptop Per Child initiative in collaboration with Bill Gate's Microsoft®, working with anglophone Western education and tech companies, aimed at Uruguay's youngest future citizens to churn out English-speaking "digital natives" (PRENSKY, 2001), how does the oral transmission of festive ritual traditions of rural, multicultural northern Uruguay involving free-reed instruments fit in to this

<sup>408</sup> Julián Ríos, Interview, 2021, Tacuarembó

context? The tech-based education model of *Plan Ceibal* was shifted into turbo mode during the social experiment of remote education in the COVID-19 pandemic, following patterns occurring globally in elementary, secondary and college education. The ultra-local project "*El acordeón diatónico en las escuelas*" (The diatonic accordion in the schools), funded by Uruguay's Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and carried out in the second half of 2021, proved to be particularly revealing of insights regarding the role of technology and the State in the transmission of festive ritual traditions within this current disruptive, transformational period in which public education is a battleground for heated Culture Wars and where certain interests are actively working to re-shape society and the human conscious on a global scale, with digital technology as their lifeblood and *modus operandi*.

The initial impetus behind the project "*El acordeón diatónico en las escuelas*" was to have button accordionist Walter Roldán perform at a selection of rural schools in the department of Tacuarembó, schools where he habitually performed at benefit *kermesses* decades ago. Enabling Roldán to come full-circle back to his origins, it was an extension of a project in 2019 that retraced Roldán's incipient musical career as a teenager performing at social dances in rural, Eastern European (Ukrainian, Russian, etc.) immigrant communities in the interior of Chaco, Argentina as part of the Duo *El Viejito del Acordeón*, made regionally famous via the far-reaching Uruguayan radio station *Radio Zorrilla de San Martín*. (CURBELO, FERREIRA, 2020) Roldán also gained regional fame in Tacuarembó through his radio-broadcasted participation in the Duo, which served as a marketing tool for bookings at local dances, *kermesses*, etc. (Figure 153)



Figure 153 – The *Duo El Viejito del Acordeón* (Dante Techera Márques, Walter Roldán) (Tres Isletas, Chaco, Argentina, 1959)

Source: Private collection of Walter Roldán

The project "*El acordeón diatónico en las escuelas*", funded by the *Fondo Regional para la Cultura* (Regional Culture Fund) of the Uruguayan Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), grew to form part of *Plan Ceibal's Artistas en el Aula* (Artists in the Classroom) program for 2021. *Artistas en el Aula* is a yearly cycle of Uruguayan artists that give live presentations about their work and trajectory for public school students that is also broadcast via video conferencing to several other Uruguayan public schools across the country. A few weeks prior to the presentation, students engage in interactive educational content designed for the occasion, preparing them to interpret what they experience and allowing them to formulate questions for the guest artists.

The implementation of the project "*El acordeón diatónico en las escuelas*" was invariably conditioned by the COVID pandemic and accompanying Uruguayan government restrictions on social agglomeration. The education content regarding Walter Roldán, oral transmission and diatonic accordions generated by the author of this thesis for *Plan Ceibal's* CREA platform was worked by students and teachers in a socially-distanced, masked context within the classroom. The selection process for participating rural schools for live musical presentations was affected by occasional mandatory quarantining in

cases of COVID-positive students or staff. Eventually, the schools in areas surrounding the city of Tacuarembó were confirmed: *Escuela 94 Barrio Godoy*, *Escuela 71 de Chacras*, and *Escuela 25 Quiebra Yugos*. The session of *Artistas en el Aula* occurred at *Escuela 71*.

Prior to creating the educational content, in the form of a Schoology®<sup>409</sup> course on *Ceibal's* CREA platform, the author consulted with *Ceibal* content creators, such as Beatriz González and other *Ceibal* officials at the program's Montevideo headquarters within the *Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay* (LATU) (Technological Laboratory of Uruguay). Based on their recommendations, the author created interactive educational content surrounding the diatonic accordion in Uruguay, directed at preparing students for Roldán's transmitted live *Artistas en el Aula* performance.

Structured into a selection of "challenges" (*desafíos*) for students, the content concentrated on a few themes, always incentivizing students to look for information beyond the electronic content and within their "analog" surroundings: i.e. their home and families. Students were invited to research information about diatonic free-reed instruments, as well as interact with ethnomusicological archives such as *Archivo 8 Bajos*,<sup>410</sup> and the catalog of *Smithsonian Folkways Recordings*. An exercise in oral and auditory transmission of melodies via whistling – a traditional empirical musical learning method attested to by numerous Uruguayan informants – was also given to the students to illustrate traditional processes of oral transmission not mediated by digital technology, they were also tasked with identifying a cultural element they learned via oral transmission within their families or communities. Lastly, students were asked to

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<sup>409</sup> According to the California-based company Power School, its owner, Schoology® is, " Part of the PowerSchool Unified Classroom® Solution. The leading K-12 learning management system with over 20M users and 7M students globally in over 60,000 schools". Source: <https://www.powerschool.com/solutions/unified-classroom/schoology-learning/> Power School total revenue was USD 149,000,000 in Q1 2022, up by 26.6% from last year. (Source: <https://investors.powerschool.com/news/news-details/2022/PowerSchool-Announces-First-Quarter-2022-Financial-Results/>)

<sup>410</sup> *Archivo 8 Bajos* (CURBELO, FORNARO, 2018) is an online ethnomusicological and oral history archive about traditional free-reed music from Uruguay, including elements of field work carried out by the author in 2001-2003 and 2015-2018 The creation of *Archivo 8 Bajos* was funded by the *Fondo Concursable para la Cultura* of MEC – Uruguay. Site: <https://archivo.8bajos.org/> This field work formed the basis of the author's Master's dissertation: [https://wp.ufpel.edu.br/ppgmp/files/2016/11/DISSERTA%C3%87%C3%83O\\_CURBELO\\_2017\\_21\\_09.pdf](https://wp.ufpel.edu.br/ppgmp/files/2016/11/DISSERTA%C3%87%C3%83O_CURBELO_2017_21_09.pdf)

formulate questions regarding the biographies and musical trajectories of the participating artists: accordionist Walter Roldán and guitarist Joaquín Rodríguez.

After each challenge, students – coached by teachers – participated in online forums, within the CREA platform to share what they had learned, had difficulty with, disagreed with, etc. The results were surprising. The over two hundred Uruguayan public-school students – of varying ages – that interacted with the content were insightful and exhibited genuine curiosity. Based on what these "digital natives" in Uruguay's interior researched, they were able to explain the difference between a diatonic accordion and a bandoneon, define oral transmission, expressed difficulty in whistling (a basic, kinetic "analog" human ability), identified cultural elements that were transmitted orally within their family, and formulate engaging questions for Roldán and Rodríguez. In the weeks prior to the live presentation, the artists and the author were able to respond to a selection of student's questions within CREA and create *YouTube* videos preparing students and building their enthusiasm for the *Artistas en el Aula* session. (Figure 154)

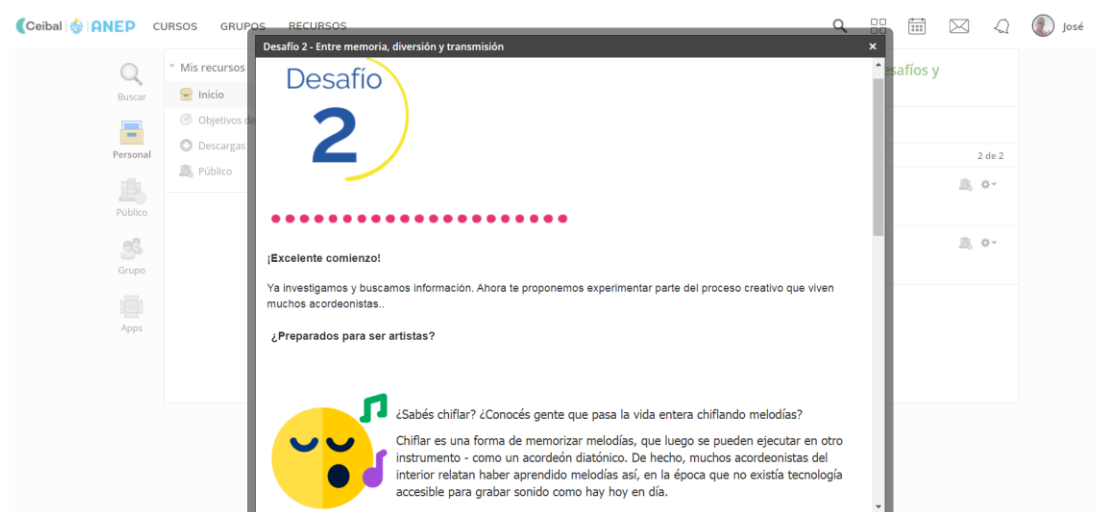


Figure 154 – Screen shot of an element of the created educational resource on *Ceibal's* CREA platform

Source: José A. Curbelo/*Ceibal*

In the first week of December 2021 three consecutive days were blocked off to carry out the presentations in the selected schools. The process was documented audiovisually by the author of this thesis and Uruguayan filmmaker

and free-reed instrument researcher Fabián Arocena.<sup>411</sup> In each presentation Roldán performed on three different diatonic button accordions to show the organological and historical evolution of the instrument in the Uruguayan context: one row, two row, and three row instruments. The presentations consisted of performance of instrumental and sung musical pieces from northern Uruguayan folklore, many from the rich local Tacuarembó repertoire of *polcas*, *mazurcas*, *shotés*, etc. by known and anonymous authors. The performances were accompanied by narrative of Roldán, and were interspersed by student's questions. It must be emphasized that in this project this music was performed in its "natural habitat": rural Tacuarembó, where this music was forged from the unique cultural mixture of the region (evidenced in the physiognomy of the numerous young people in the audience and those of their parents) and where the students and teachers have living memories of accordionists in their families and of social dances animated by free-reed instruments.<sup>412</sup>

According to Julián Ríos, who explains that the majority of the students at the rural *Esc.25 Quiebra Yugos* come from local working-class families employed in the ranching sector and a nearby military base:

The accordion is an instrument that, though it's very traditional here, not all the little kids had seen one. In the region, in Quiebra Yugos for example, their parents have all participated in dances and events with accordion, but not the little kids. There were a bunch of little kids who had never seen an accordion.<sup>413</sup>

Similarly, Tabaré de Mello, director of *Esc.71 Chacras* acknowledges that many of the teachers at the school have lived memories of the radio program *El Viejito del Acordeón* which was transmitted at 7pm each day, with parents and grandparents pausing their activities to listen - especially out in the rural areas -

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<sup>411</sup> Arocena's 2018 Master's dissertation at the *Universidade Federal de Pernambuco "Trilha típica e folclórica: Panorama da música de bandoneón e acordeón do nordeste uruguaio"* (Typical and folkloric paths: Panorama of the bandoneon and accordion music of northeastern Uruguay) can be found here: <https://repositorio.ufpe.br/bitstream/123456789/36794/1/DISSERTA%C3%87%C3%83O%20Fabian%20Arocena%20Narbondo.pdf>

<sup>412</sup> Audiovisual documentation of the performances can be found on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/lj3o5ueqEbA> <https://youtu.be/3SdFsL94-ag>

<sup>413</sup> Julián Ríos, Interview, 2021, Tacuarembó

to a few pieces of instrumental music played on accordion and guitar.<sup>414</sup>(Figure 155)



Figure 155 - Tabaré de Mello at Escuela 71 de Chacras (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: Fabián Arocena

Among the diverse students in attendance at the live events, when asked, many attested to having a family member (grandmother, uncle, parent, etc.) that played accordion, played guitar or frequented rural social dances animated by those traditional instruments. In a sense, Roldán, as opposed to showing something "new" to these young students, was in fact calling attention and reminding them of their own cultural heritage, transmitted orally throughout the generations of their respective families. The subconscious resonance of the music among the students was evidenced in their positive response to the live performances of traditional northern Uruguayan button accordion dance music – a cultural expression that had promoted social-ludic interaction and social reproduction for generations, perhaps providing the soundtrack to the meeting of their grandparents or parents, and perhaps occurring on the dance floors of the very same schools where Roldán performed at a benefit *kermesse* of yesteryear.

The first live performance was at the *Escuela 94 Barrio Godoy*, five kilometers from Tacuarembó's city center – a school where Walter Roldán had played accordion at *kermesses* forty years prior. With the looming Cerro

<sup>414</sup> Tabaré de Mello, Interview, 2021, Tacuarembó



Santander, train tracks and plantations of eucalyptus in the background, the school is located in a peripheral rural neighborhood full of humble homes, small shops, and little children. (Figure 156) (Figure 157) A teacher conveyed that many of the children at the school come from at-risk home environments.



Figure 156 – Rural environment of *Esc.94 Barrio Godoy* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 157– *Esc.94 Barrio Godoy* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

As the morning students streamed out of the school, uniformed in the mandatory, distinctive white tunic and blue bow characteristic of Uruguayan public education since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the afternoon students – who would participate in the presentation – began trickling in. Accompanied by their mothers and some fathers, on foot, motorcycle and bicycle, the very young students

ambled towards the school along a well-travelled gravel road, with the ubiquitous presence of stray dogs, endemic to rural Uruguay. It soon became clear that the majority of the students were dressed as a *gaucho* or *china*.<sup>415</sup> Later it was revealed that this was encouraged by the teachers. (Figure 158)



Figure 158 – Students arriving to *Esc.94 Barrio Godoy* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Seated on the ground of the school's large outdoor patio, under the watchful eye of the masked teachers (all women, as is common in rural Uruguayan public schools), the little students, in *bombachas*<sup>416</sup> and colorful skirts, prepared to experience the live performance of Roldán and Rodríguez, while curious neighbors – perhaps vicariously reliving their past frequenting *kermesse* dances at the school – observed from behind the perimeter fence. As Roldán removed his instruments from their cases, some students exclaimed excitedly, "An accordion!".

To the musicians' surprise, prior to their performance, the students performed a choreographed dance, sung in chorus by the kids, to the rendition of the traditional *polca* from Tacuarembó "*La Flor del Bañado*" as recorded on the 2012 Smithsonian Folkways release "Button Accordion and Bandoneón Music from Northern Uruguay: Los Gauchos de Roldán" (SFW40561).<sup>417</sup> This had been

<sup>415</sup> Traditional regionalism referring to a woman.

<sup>416</sup> A form of pants, traditional indumentary of rural workers in the River Plate region.

<sup>417</sup> The album can be found here: <https://folkways.si.edu/los-gauchos-de-roldan/button-accordion-and-bandoneon-music-from-northern-uruguay/latin-world/music/album/smithsonian>

an idea of the teachers and the performance was collectively rehearsed specifically for the occasion, several days prior.

The performance of Roldán and Rodríguez consisted of a repertoire of a variety of traditional regional rhythms such as *polca*, *shote*, *mazurca*, *maxixa*, etc. highlighting the evolution of the button accordion from the primitive one-row to three rows. Roldán interspersed the melodies with information from his lived memory about his family's musical history, rural dances of yesteryear, etc. - a sort of oral transmission of collective memory. Occasionally a student would fire off a question, attentively responded to by the musicians. Though the youngest students were visibly becoming restless after about twenty minutes, at different moments all students were ecstatic when they were invited to dance to the songs, filling up the patio with stomping feet and swirling skirts. (Figure 159)



Figure 159 – Students dancing at Esc.94 Barrio Godoy (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

At the end, students mobbed Roldán to get a closer look at his accordions and try and see how its mysterious sounds were made. When asked about their reactions to the performance by the author, a group of young boys and girls enthusiastically showed their approval, described the process of learning "*La Flor del Bañado*", and told of numerous family members who play guitar, accordion, piano, etc. – evidencing the continued practice of traditional musicking in Tacuarembó. The event ended in an act of commensality: home-made

*pastafrola*<sup>418</sup> and glasses of *Fanta*® soft drink being offered to the guests by the school staff, as the students politely said goodbye, and said "¡buen provecho!"<sup>419</sup> as the musicians ate.

The following day, the performances were at the *Escuela 71 de Chacras*, on the urban periphery of the city of Tacuarembó. Most of the students that attend the over a century old school come from the *San Gabriel* neighborhood and belong to families with socioeconomic difficulties, according to school staff. (DE MELLO, 2021) (Figure 160) Prior to that day, the teachers had researched information about the accordion via internet, worked the themes of accordions and Uruguayan traditional music with their students, and had even created accordion-themed decorations for the classroom where the performances were to occur.



Figure 160 – *Escuela 71 de Chacras* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

A medium-sized classroom was the setting for the transmission of the performances as part of the *Artistas en el Aula* session. A *Plan Ceibal* staff member from Montevideo was present to facilitate the technical and institutional aspects of the session. As the very young kids started streaming in the classroom escorted by their teachers, it was evident that, again, the teachers had incentivized the students to attend the performances traditionally uniformed as

<sup>418</sup> Traditional regional sweet cake made with quince paste (*dulce de mebrillo*)

<sup>419</sup> *Bon appétit*

*gaucho* or *china*. In the two sessions: one in the morning and one in the afternoon, Roldán and Rodríguez gave the same performance that had been done the day prior, in the same format with the difference that now the public school audience was greatly expanded with several schools connected virtually through *Ceibal's* videoconferencing system as part of *Artistas en el Aula*. Schools from the departments of Canelones, Rivera, Salto, and others participated, visible on a large screen. (Figure 161) (Figure 162).



Figure 161 – Classroom of the session of *Artistas en el Aula* at *Esc.71* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: Fabián Arocena



Figure 162 – Screenshot of the session of *Artistas en el Aula* at *Esc.71* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

Other groups of students of *Esc.71* participated virtually as well, due to efforts to not crowd the classroom due to COVID concerns. The questions asked by the students from other departments were formulated from their previous participation in the online educational content on CREA. At several moments, students and staff could not contain themselves and they burst into spontaneous dance (including in the hallways). (Figure 163) (Figure 164) According to school director Tabaré de Mello (who showed all in attendance how he can cut a rug – in this case with the school’s dance teacher):

Dance is something natural [...] it’s something spontaneous. [...] Many kids were outside the doorway complaining that they couldn’t be inside (the classroom where the performance occurred) [...] I can’t have too many kids in a classroom because of the pandemic, but it’s hard to tell them they can’t come in. They were outside complaining to the teacher that they couldn’t come in. You hear music and it changes your orientation; you want to come in.<sup>420</sup>



<sup>420</sup> Tabaré de Mello, Interview, 2021, Tacuarembó

Figure 163 – Kids dancing in the hallways at Esc.71 (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo



Figure 164 – Little kids and staff dancing in the classroom at Esc.71 (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

The general euphoric atmosphere at the school continued into the afternoon, with a pause at mid-day where the musicians and film crew were invited to a home-made lunch with the teachers in the school's cafeteria (institutional commensality is a key component of the Uruguayan public-school experience). Regarding the digital technology-mediated interaction with students in the *Artistas en el Aula* sessions, Rodríguez (2021) observed, "there were students in the room, and the others participating via videoconference, you could feel the warmth, even though it was via internet".

The energetic session of *Artistas en el Aula* at *Esc.71*, animated by guitar and accordion, proved to be a symbolic event. It was the last festive cultural event at the over 100-year-old building before its planned demolition, to then move the school into a modern building at that point still under construction. The planned demolition provoked melancholy in local neighbors and school staff because of their and their families' lived memories associated with the building. De Mello views the musical event as part of a symbolic closure of a cycle (yet also the beginning of a new one):

Tacuarembó is known nationally and internationally for being a cultural space that maintains tradition. [...] I believe that transmitting that to the children that will be in the future is fundamental, in order to not lose a culture. Cultures change, they're dynamic, but there are things that are good to maintain. On one hand you have to understand that cultures are dynamic, they change [...] on the other hand is to not lose your roots. We live in times where the only permanent thing is change, look at what's going on with our school building. With all this change, you have to valorize the things that are the roots of our culture. (DE MELLO, 2021)

The final day of the project "*El acordeón diatónico en las escuelas*" was at the *Escuela 25 Quiebra Yugos* about 14 kilometers from the city of Tacuarembó, near the *Cerro del Pastoreo* (Pasture Mountain), a rural area with a geographic accident of a large mesa sufficiently large to allow livestock to graze there. *Cerro del Pastoreo* was the setting for a yearly gathering for Uruguayan traditional music where the button accordion and bandoneon were the key protagonists. The 2001 edition of this event was the author's very first field work expedition, recording on audio cassette. The ideologue of the event was the deceased legendary *tacuarembense* guitarist, composer and bar owner Toto Latorre, who also was the author of a widely-known *polca* composed in homage to the local community: "*Rumbeando pa' Quiebra Yugos*" (On the way to *Quiebra Yugos*).<sup>421</sup>

At the picturesque rural *Esc.25* surrounded by ranchland, pine trees, and a large garden, whose epicenter is a colorfully-painted outdoor patio given shade by century-old grape vines, Walter Roldán reminisced (Figure 165) (Figure 166):

Under these grape vines I played at dances here, and many musicians from Tacuarembó would play here because every month there was a dance here [...] and it's a very big patio. People would even arrive on foot, because it is a place that is very close to Tacuarembó. They came and left on foot, in one hour you can get to Tacuarembó.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>421</sup> Walter Roldán, Interview, 2021, Tacuarembó

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.





Figure 165 – *Escuela 25 Quiebra Yugos* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: Fabián Arocena



Figure 166 – Garden of *Escuela 25 Quiebra Yugos* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: Fabián Arocena

It was a hot summer day with a typically strong sun, when the musicians and film crew arrived, several students in the mixed-grade school were relaxing in the shade in the field behind the school. After setting up the film equipment and instruments under the roofed outdoor corridor along the patio, the musicians and film crew were yet again warmly invited to partake in institutional commensality, with a hearty lunch of *tallarines con tuco* (noodles with meat sauce) served up from big saucepans in the school cafeteria surrounded by teachers and hordes

of little kids uniformed in white tunics. Again, all students – a practice engrained in the culture of the interior of Uruguay, and cultivated within families – one by one as they left the cafeteria, said "*buen provecho*" to the invitees.

Prior to the performance, the students collaborated collectively to bring large, heavy wooden benches and place them under the shade to watch the performance. The performance followed the same model as the previous two, with the students – baking under the hot sun – peppering the musicians with questions. Though the oppressive heat didn't allow for dancing, numerous students shared that their family members play accordion or other instruments and that their grandparents used to frequent *kermesse* dances at *Esc.25* in the past. The duo performed "*Rumbeando pa' Quiebra Yugos*" and spoke of Toto Latorre to the kids. Also, they invited the teacher Julián Ríos to accompany them on piano accordion on a few songs. (Figure 167)



Figure 167 – Walter Roldán, Joaquín Rodríguez and Julián Ríos at *Esc.25* (Tacuarembó, Uruguay, 2021)

Photo: Fabián Arocena

Again, the students had a surprise for the musicians. They had rehearsed a song of the popular music artists Fito Paez and Ruben Rada sung in chorus and accompanied by Julián Ríos on piano accordion. The enthusiasm and inquisitiveness of the kids were contagious, though the littlest ones, towards the end, became a little restless...In the case of *Esc.25* the performance and

interaction with students lacked any mediation by digital technology, everything was *au naturel*, including the incessant birdsongs in the background.

Parallely, Walter Roldán is involved in an incipient project born of the collaboration of the Uruguayan Ministry of Education and Culture's *Instituto Nacional de Música* (National Music Institute), the famed Brazilian accordionist Renato Borghetti's socio-educational project *Fábrica de Gaiteros* (Accordionist Factory),<sup>423</sup> and the departmental governments of Tacuarembó and Treinta y Tres. In 2022 Roldán has begun giving diatonic button accordion classes to a select group of students at the *Casa de la Cultura* in Tacuarembó through the Tacuarembó departmental government's newly minted *Academia de la Tradición* (Tradition Academy), that facilitates education on traditional music, popular improvised poetry, leatherworking, weaving, and other traditional crafts. Similar activities will also occur in Treinta y Tres, whose own *Casa de la Cultura* already possesses a historic accordion exhibition, managed by button accordionist Víctor Hugo.

The ten button accordions made specifically for this project were constructed by the technicians of the *Fábrica de Gaiteros* in Barra do Ribeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The common Brazilian "*gaita-ponto*"<sup>424</sup> tuning of these 21 key, 8 bass accordions is not traditional to northern Uruguay, and the ten accordions destined for Uruguay were specifically tuned according to a technical layout provided by the author of this thesis, based on ethnographic observation of button accordion organology in northern Uruguay in his years of field work. Though the curriculum and methodology of the accordion instruction courses imparted in Uruguay through this project are still in development, it is the opinion of several traditional *tacuarembense* accordionists that it should not be a cookie cutter copy of the Brazilian *Fábrica de Gaiteros* repertoire and styles, but rather an adaption to the unique, local tradition and aesthetic sensibilities inherited through the long process of intergenerational oral transmission, in Tacuarembó.

It is important to have a general idea of what the *Fábrica de Gaiteros* entails, to be able to anticipate how its novel application in the interior of Uruguay

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<sup>423</sup> *Fábrica de Gaiteros* website: <https://www.fabricadegaiteiros.com.br/>

<sup>424</sup> *Gaita-ponto* refers to a unique tuning system of diatonic accordions where there is a middle button that is unisonor irrespective if the musician is pushing or pulling the bellows.

could play out (a historic first for formal instruction of diatonic button accordions in Uruguay). Founded by commercially-successful *gaúcho* accordionist Renato Borghetti to rescue the long tradition of free-reed instrument manufacturing in Rio Grande do Sul, a deep legacy from waves of German and Italian immigration, *Fábrica de Gaiteiros* is funded by corporate sponsors through Brazilian government tax-exemption mechanisms. The project, working with 5-15 year-olds, aims to produce new generations of button accordionists and accordion technicians.

Headquartered in an old, modified factory outside of Porto Alegre on the banks of the Guaíba river, *Fábrica de Gaiteiros* has over a dozen affiliates in a variety of towns and cities in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina. Each affiliate is presided by a button accordion teacher, and has a locally-determined institutional home. The professors, students and large amounts of students' nuclear and extended family descend *en masse* on the project's headquarters, via car, van, and bus, each year for a large gathering where each affiliate performs, culminating in hundreds of young button accordionist playing the common *Fábrica de Gaiteiros* repertoire simultaneously: *Merceditas*, *Missioneiro*, *Milonga para as Missões*, etc.<sup>425</sup> (Figure 168)



Figure 168 – Walter Roldán performing at *V Encontro Fábrica de Gaiteiros* (Barra do Ribeiro – RS, Brasil, 2018)

Photo: José A. Curbelo

<sup>425</sup> A YouTube video of the *V Encontro Anual Fábrica de Gaiteiros* in Barra do Ribeiro – RS can be found here: <https://youtu.be/bxJlq5j1D8E>

Researcher and button accordionist Ferreira (2019) describes the heterogenous character and formation of the project's numerous professors. He notes that the factors in common among all professors are that they independently learned button accordion within a family context with oral transmission from family members, they have regularly participated in public accordion festivals and gatherings – building an artistic community, and they teach their students with varying methods but always with emphasis on traditional oral transmission, as opposed to sight reading – battling against negative stigmas held by other musicians and academia about the instrument and oral transmission. As in the testimonies of chromatic accordion teachers in the Algarve, Portugal, Ferreira sustains:

Being a button accordion teacher in the *Fábrica de Gaiteiros* project means being in tune with the community. This aspect is evidenced in the close social relations developed between professor and student in this project. The button accordion teachers' preoccupation to meet the students' needs goes beyond the sphere of a music class. The professors interviewed establish relations of trust and friendship and are available to help their students in situations that emerge outside of the classroom. (FERREIRA, 2019)

In this section we have shown how intergenerational cultural transmission of festive rituals involving free reed instruments has developed in contemporary northern Uruguay. Whereas, oral transmission in a family environment within a community is the traditional and quintessential method (which will never lose its relevance), technologically-mediated transmission within a public school setting has proven itself effective as a complement (rather than a replacement) to traditional oral transmission. However, the creation and management of the educational content needs to be carried out by knowledgeable culture-bearers, and view digital technology as a double-edged sword: benefitting from its advantages (remote access to sound archives, enabling online interaction, etc.) while countering its noxious effects and overuse. Finally, based on this fieldwork and interviews, the prolonged, in-person student-teacher relationship is essential in cultural transmission, emerging initiatives of institutionalized learning of free reed instruments in Uruguay's interior, that will cultivate these relationships, show promise.

## 6.6 Conclusion

In synthesis, in the diverse empirical evidence presented in this chapter, based on analysis of various trans-Atlantic case studies of trajectories of festive ritual traditions within a theoretical framework constructed by referencing a plethora of diverse authors on various themes, we have been able to identify forces that lead to the gradual or abrupt extinction of communities' festive ritual traditions and, conversely, also have been able to identify forces that lead to their continuity, adaptation, and intergenerational perpetuation. We have been able to establish the centrality of the symbolism of festive rituals to communities. This powerful centrality is precisely what makes festive rituals vulnerable and strategic targets for repression, but also as potent sources for communal spiritual and socioemotional strength.

We have been able to demonstrate how physical territory is imbued with intangible meanings in relation to memory and group and individual identity, especially when in relation to recurring, cyclical multi-sensorial collective ritual festivities. We have shown - referencing numerous authors and case studies - how such ritual festive traditions cultivate and strengthen social cohesion and integration among groups, fomenting social reproduction, and reciprocal solidarity in non-festive productive activities. Nothing new, anthropologists have been dealing with these topics for generations.

We have also shown how these diverse ritual festivities, *sociotransmitters* of culture, form one of the contexts within which a group's collective memory is forged and perpetuated throughout time. These festivities take the form of traditions, consciously selected by communities in the present as practices, originated in the past, to be perpetuated in the future, albeit in a malleable fashion that allows for adaptation and innovation amid changing circumstances and sensibilities, such as in the secularization of *charolas* in Bordeira, and the acquired national civic character of public school *kermesses* in rural northern Uruguay.

The collective intergenerational participation in these ritual festivities ensures oral transmission of these traditions to younger generations, while simultaneously remembering and honoring ancestors – as exemplified in

Bordeira's contemporary *charola* tradition. Such festive ritual traditions, while reaffirming a specific (potentially endogamous) group identity, can simultaneously be able to include "the other", hence giving room for transculturation and hybridization over time, such as the cases illustrated in the Russia-originating immigrant groups in northern Uruguay, etc., gradually bringing about the genesis of new group identities.

We have also shown the role of ritual festive traditions in the dynamics of migration and migratory diaspora, a key undercurrent to all the case studies tackled by this thesis. While serving as powerful tools of group identity in another land where a migratory group must conjure up and "recreate" their place and society of origin as a sociocultural survival tactic (i.e. Volga Germans, Russians, etc.), these ritual festive traditions can also be forces that recurrently motivate the emotionally-charged return of migrants to their places of origin – often vastly changed since their departure – and foment migrants' demographic, sociocultural, and material investment in those places of origin – as demonstrated in the case migrants' revival of *charolas* of Bordeira and *chacarrá* in certain small rural communities in La Janda/Campo de Gibraltar, Cádiz. As shown in this thesis, migration can also lead to the oblivion of festive ritual traditions, as evidenced in the massive rural exodus in the interiors of Uruguay, Spain and Portugal.

As well, we were able to demonstrate how festive ritual traditions - their practice, documentation, and transmission - can also be viewed within the perspective of cultural heritage ("*patrimonio cultural*"). As discussed, an element of cultural heritage can be "activated" independently by civil society or in conjunction with the public sector, and can take innumerable forms in its process of documentation, pedagogy, and musealization in accordance to the specific contemporary circumstances and needs of its community of origin. This dynamic is demonstrated in the examples of the *Centro Cultural e de Inovação de Bordeira*, and the cultural/techno-educational initiative to teach about Uruguayan accordion and bandoneon music through *Ceibal*, as well as novel initiatives in Uruguay to teach free-reed instruments from a cultural heritage perspective, promoted by different public sector entities.

Finally, we have shown the simultaneously constructive, disruptive, transformative, subversive, empowering and destructive aspects of technology in relation to festive ritual traditions throughout time. Acknowledging that all technological inventions and systems have their benefitting owners and proponents, and all technological revolutions and transformations have their "winners" and "losers" - in economic terms, communities' collective festive ritual traditions, due to their inherent organic, multisensorial, socioemotional, spiritual nature (not obeying a commercial profit-seeking logic of the market, nor a logic of partisan political domination), must carefully and consciously select how technology is to be incorporated (or not) in their practice and transmission, as to not deform, coopt, or denature their intended purpose and content. The examples of the Algarve's acoustic chromatic accordion tradition, Bordeira's *charolas*, and *chacarrá* as practiced by the Heredia family all eschew digital technology in their practice. However, the *Antologia das Charolas* and the Uruguayan accordion and bandoneon initiatives through *Ceibal* both strategically employ digital technology in the documentation and transmission of festive ritual traditions as a complement to traditional intergenerational oral transmission, while not viewing technology as its replacement.<sup>426</sup>

Again, against the contemporary global backdrop of pandemic, complex global war, economic crisis, and disruptive technological transformation, a comprehensive diachronic analysis of our subject of research cannot help to be colored somewhat by current events. As Halbwachs (2014) sustained, memorial processes are always affected by the present moment in which they occur. Some of the observations from this chapter, based on historical examples, may seem eerily familiar to readers. However, this crisis situation during the research and elaboration of this thesis, as previously mentioned, has proven a unique and privileged opportunity to more deeply examine the inner workings of the festive rituals studied and the communities to which they belong.

As shown in this thesis, among the forces that can menace and lead to the gradual or abrupt extinction of communities' festive ritual traditions, as evidenced in the case studies, include: elite repression and cooptation of festive ritual

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<sup>426</sup> One might wonder how a robot could teach a child to play accordion, and how Artificial Intelligence could learn to be a virtuoso of the bandoneon...



traditions, authoritarianism oppressive of popular culture, societal mistrust stemming from a repressive surveillance state, macroeconomic shocks and transitions brought about by technocratic regimes, violent and traumatizing civil and foreign wars, community disintegration and atomization brought about by rural exodus or forced migration accompanied by prolonged disruption in intergenerational oral transmission of festive ritual traditions, disruptive technological changes imposed on popular classes, mandatory public education that doesn't reflect or transmit a community's own values or teaches its own traditions, and finally public health pandemics and technocratic measures controlling social activity. Sound familiar?

These negative factors, however, are not the end of the story in this thesis. At the risk of sounding simplistic, Humanity has shown resiliency time and time again throughout history to roll with the punches and, utilizing adaptation, creativity, resistance and solidarity, overcome massive challenges, and the case studies covered in this thesis are no exception. Forces and tactics that lead to the continuity, adaptation, and intergenerational perpetuation of festive ritual traditions, as evidenced in our analysis, include: conscious and careful use of novel technology without depending on it as a mediator between members of a community, fomenting research and documentation of festive rituals for creation of memory archives and inclusion in education of younger generations, cultural transmission within nuclear and extended families with preoccupation for the socio-cultural formation of youth involving certain rites of passage, decentralized practices of solidarity and associativism within a group (similar to a clan or tribe), organic grassroots civil society organization without dependence on a public authority or commercial enterprise, cyclical yearly festive ritual practices, intergenerational collective participation in festive rituals, in-person student-teacher cultural transmission, cyclical return of migratory diasporas to participate in festive rituals, a spirit of resistance and stubbornness when faced with externally-imposed restrictions, and finally, allowance for malleable tradition with innovation.

In our case studies we have examined both the power of ethnoreligious factors and secular humanist factors as potent contributors to continuity and transmission of festive ritual traditions. We have also shown that the festive rituals

studied in this thesis have withstood numerous crises throughout their history: mass emigration, rural exodus, economic crisis, the first two World Wars, etc. and have, at times, come back even stronger after each crisis. The current global crisis is yet one more challenge of many. In sum, as evidenced in this chapter, the key factors for the continuity of festive ritual traditions are: family, community, cultural transmission, in-person collective intergenerational participation, resistance to oppressive technocracy, and mindful use of technology. Human history is cyclical, we must apply lessons from our past to engage with the present and construct the future.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

To conclude, in this thesis titled "*Festive Ritual Traditions as Objects of Cultural Transmission, Social Integration and Social Control: Challenges and Transformation*" we clearly defined our object of investigation, explained the justification for carrying out this international research, and defined our methodology – carried out on both sides of the Atlantic throughout several years. In Chapter One we laid out some of the basic themes of analysis and a bibliographic review of authors dealing with those themes in relation to festive ritual: territory, social cohesion and integration, migration, and collective memory.

In Chapter Two the similarities, differences and connections of the historical geographic and social contexts of the geographic areas examined were outlined: La Janda/Campo de Gibraltar, Cádiz, Spain, Sotavento Algarvio, Portugal, and northern Uruguay. In Chapters Three, Four and Five extensive descriptive, analytical and comparative information was shared about the case studies of festival ritual traditions chosen for this thesis: *chacarrá* (*fandango tarifeño*) in southern Cádiz, chromatic accordion and rural dance traditions of the Algarve and *charolas* of Bordeira, rural dances, school *kermesses*, and weddings and other ethnoreligious-associated events in northern Uruguay. The expressions examined were from three different temporal and geographic universes. This information was based on the author's own documentary research, oral history collection, and ethnographic audiovisual field work.

In Chapter Six analysis and synthesis of the examined case studies were carried out focusing on the dynamics of oblivion, transformation and resilience as they affect festive ritual traditions and their transmission. Drawing from a wealth of authors on the themes of: elite repression, technocracy, technological development and disruption, public education, tradition, etc., recent fieldwork from late 2021-2022 - shedding revealing new light - regarding the effects of the pandemic and global crisis on each of the case studies was presented and analyzed. Finally, a synthesis was made of the forces that lead to the gradual or abrupt extinction of communities' festive ritual traditions, and forces that lead to their continuity, adaptation, and intergenerational perpetuation, as observed by the author in his thesis research.

The difficulties that the thesis faced have been outlined in its body of text, however it merits mentioning them again here. One of the first challenges – in the beginning of CAPES PrInt-funded fieldwork in Europe – was that of a degree of "culture shock" in that the author – much more acclimated to the culture and idiosyncrasies of the interior of Uruguay, a region where he has family roots, and where he had researched for decades, acquiring cultural familiarity – encountered a certain degree of perceived initial mistrust from potential interviewees in the interior of Portugal and Spain. This dynamic slowed the process of starting fieldwork, however, was gradually overcome as the author gained informants' trust and word got around about the seriousness of his work and benign moral character. This was particularly evident in the interior of Portugal (especially the Algarve), but as interviewees in their 60s, 70s, and 80s eventually shared their stories, and in several informal conversations with locals, it became clear that this mistrust and reluctance to speak are, in part, repercussions of the decades-long repression of the *Estado Novo*.

Once his fieldwork finally began to go in full swing in the beginning of 2020, the author encountered perhaps the greatest difficulty, the COVID-19 pandemic and related government lockdowns and restrictions on movement and social events. As previously mentioned, though this hindered his access to memory archives and ability to carry out ethnographic oral history field research for several months, the crisis did provide unique opportunities for research on festive ritual traditions that eventually proved to be crucial to the content and purpose of this thesis. COVID-19 lockdowns however proved to be a limiting factor again in early 2022, again hampering the author's ethnographic audiovisual fieldwork in Portugal, due to government prohibition of social gatherings.

In this work we have shown how a selection of rich, multifaceted festival ritual traditions (involving commensality, collective musicking, social dance, etc.) from small, rural communities on both sides of the Atlantic, have originated over centuries of cultural hybridization and transculturation, and have arrived into the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century via successive processes of intergenerational oral transmission within families and communities. The centrality of cyclical festive rituals for small communities as *sociotransmitters* of Collective Memory,

promoters of social cohesion and integration, constructors of cultural Identity, and essential contexts for social reproduction was demonstrated.

We also outlined the great challenges that the festive ritual traditions examined have faced throughout their history, especially in the tumultuous 20<sup>th</sup> Century: war, diasporas via emigration and rural exodus, poverty, disease, economic crisis, technological disruption, political repression and censorship, etc. Faced with these challenges, these festive rituals have perennially proven to be sources of spiritual and material strength for their communities, perpetuated through processes of intergenerational oral cultural transmission.

However, the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century presents global challenges of a new and urgent character that threaten to radically reshape society, and this is impacted locally in the heart of small communities and their migratory diasporas. As demonstrated in the fieldwork descriptions of Chapter Six, this thesis simultaneously ends on a note of uncertainty, foreboding, and promise. Ever increasing authoritarian technocratic control, surveillance and repression and the induced societal dependence on connected digital technology (and accompanying constrictions to in-person interactions) by global interests, and its subsequent weaponizing to sow and exploit societal and political divisions and exert economic and ideological control and manipulation are provoking the purposeful atomization of families and communities. As demonstrated earlier, this atomization is the antithesis of the goals and desired effects of the centuries-old community festival ritual traditions, with collective intergenerational participation, examined in this thesis.

However, as we saw in Chapter Six, with the examples of *Antología das Charolas* and *El acordeón diatónico en las escuelas*, digital technology presents powerful tools to document, project, archive, and teach festive ritual traditions to others, especially and most fundamentally to a community's young people. This technology, however, should never be a replacement for in-person intergenerational oral cultural transmission, but rather a supplement. Sweeping initiatives that seek to artificially and permanently inject technology into the synapses of natural oral cultural transmission that has occurred within nuclear and extended families for generations should be seen as suspect.

The practice of festive ritual traditions (expressions of core values, identities and beliefs) and their intergenerational transmission are basic rights of communities and families. Nor the State, nor non-governmental organizations, nor private firms should consider that they have the right to coopt and take over that role. In the end, the battle is for our children's minds.

The research of the festive rituals examined in this thesis reveals that there is a subconscious internal (perhaps ancestral) desire of young and old to participate in their community's festive ritual traditions. This was evidenced in several generations of the Heredia family continuing their collective musicking in spite of lock-down, the great many children and teenagers that participate in Bordeira's *charolas*, and the Uruguayan public-school students' euphoria and spontaneous dancing in Tacuarembó when accordionist Walter Roldán and guitarist Joaquín Rodríguez performed (none of which were mediated by the "new normal" of ubiquitous connected digital technology). These autonomous festive rituals have never depended on a political party or ideology, corporation, or branch of government to be carried out. This could be precisely why autonomous community festive rituals have been targets for control, restriction and cooptation by different regimes throughout history. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century seems to be no different.

The future prospects for research and its socialization, suggested by this thesis, are a few. Firstly, is to more thoroughly examine and problematize the increasing role of digital technology – and the “innovative and disruptive” transformations of “The Fourth Industrial Revolution” – in intergenerational cultural oral transmission of festive ritual traditions (which inherently encapsulate numerous intersecting dynamics: families, social reproduction, community social cohesion, solidarity practices, commensality, psycho-social well-being, etc.) and debate the harnessing and adaptation of the potentially positive aspects of this “revolution” in long-term benefit of families, communities, and cultures. With total certainty, this is a topic being tackled by thinkers and doers across the world currently.

Secondly, the role of ritual festive traditions as intergenerational *sociotransmitters* of collective memory within migratory diasporas merits further examination, as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is seeing increasing movement of human groups

in the form of labor migrants, refugees, etc. where communities are drastically uprooted and atomized yet at the same time constantly connected via ubiquitous digital communications technologies and remittances (in a myriad of electronically-mediated currencies). Festive ritual traditions serve as spiritual and moral strength for migrants and as cultural grounding for their children, born and raised in foreign lands. The role of migrant festive ritual tradition in transculturation, cultural mixing and hybridization, and fomentation of diverse social cohesion is a topic ripe for further exploration.

Finally, the weaponization and cooptation of festive ritual traditions for purposes of geostrategic, political, and socioeconomic domination, must be more directly observed and analyzed. The control and/or prohibition of independent festive ritual traditions – which generally are powerful central symbols of communities' identity and memory and necessary to community members' psycho-cultural well-being – as strategically-chosen and astutely-crafted tactics of cultural terrorism by certain interests should be analyzed in the light of contemporary multi-dimensional warfare between powers which, in addition to novel cyber-attacks and autonomous destruction, also employs cultural expressions and narratives, and memorial (or anti-memorial) initiatives, in its arsenal. Klaus Schwab (2016, p.83) quotes the foresight of a U.S. neuroscientist in his 2016 WEF publication, "The brain is the next battlespace...".<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> James Giordano quoted in Tom Requarth, "This is Your Brain. This is Your Brain as a Weapon", *Foreign Policy*, 14 September 2015. p.161  
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/14/this-is-your-brain-this-is-your-brain-as-a-weapon-darpa-dual-useneuroscience/>

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