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Singing Huasos: Politics, Chilenidad, and Music from 1910-1950

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Introduction

Prior to independence, the colonial elite of Spanish America faced difficult decisions regarding the images and practices by which they defined themselves. Traditionally, this group had looked to European society as a source of social, cultural, and intellectual influence. But as much as the creole elite modeled its identity as distinctly European, it could not ignore the reality that, as historian Elinor Melville has noted, “the center of gravity of their world was located in America. America was where their wealth was generated, and where their families—often drawn from local populations—were located. *America* was home.”¹

This reality became even more evident after independence, and both conservatives and liberals among the upper classes recognized that the construction of new and lasting nations hinged on their capacity to

¹ Elinor G. K. Melville, “Land Use and the Transformation of the Environment,” in Víctor Bulmer-Thomas, John H. Coatsworth, and Roberto Cortés Conde (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Latin America, Volume I*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 111.

establish a sense of common history, identity, and way of life among creole, Indian, and African members of society. While creole liberals came to embrace more thoroughly the integration of rural, Indian, and African customs into their own predominantly European-influenced customs by the late nineteenth century, creole conservatives were slower to accept even refined forms of non-European practices. More so than their liberal counterparts, conservative creole elites desired the preservation of the traditional socioeconomic order and clung dearly to those elements of their cultural lives that they believed too fundamental to compromise, particularly Christianity, European cosmopolitanism, and the nuclear family structure. Thus, while the combination of European and local came to forge a new, distinctive identity for liberal members of the creole elite and their developing nations, conservatives generally remained resistant to such changes.²

By the twentieth century, as liberal creoles considered their own well-being and that of their young republics, many decided that improving the plight of the lower classes and better incorporating those populations into the nation would provide social stability, reduce class tensions, and fuel economic development. This underlying belief not only applied to issues of economic and political inequity, but it also appeared in expressions of identity and nationalism. Reflecting the positivist notion that social engineering could eliminate undesirable characteristics from a population, intellectuals and artists drew upon folk customs by adopting specific elements of those practices and recasting them in a more “refined” form that met the elite’s cosmopolitan standards. For example, European composers such as Mikhail Glinka, Mily Balakirev, Antonín Dvořák, and subsequently Béla Bartók were integrating folk rhythms and melodies into salon and symphonic compositions as expressions of nationalism. Composers in the Americas such as Ignacio Cervantes (Cuba), Francisco Hargreaves (Argentina), and subsequently Heitor Villa-Lobos (Brazil) and Pedro Humberto-Allende (Chile) followed this orientation to fuse elements

² Leslie Bethell, ed., *A Cultural History of Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Also see: Julio Pinto Vallejos and Verónica Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, *¿Chilenos todos?: la construcción social de la nación (1810-1840)* (Santiago: LOM 2009).

of their own folk traditions into “high” art in order to convey a new sense of their respective national identities.³

During the first half of the twentieth century in Latin America, the stylized integration of certain folk practices and imagery gradually became part of the national identities that both liberals and conservatives across the region would come to accept. However, the integration of such practices and imagery occurred most strongly and most rapidly in locations where a significant middle class developed. The middle classes were intermediary sectors whose contact with both the elite and the lower classes directly exposed them to traditions, practices, and beliefs held by those at the top and bottom of society. Additionally, the middle classes embraced more strongly the belief that limited and symbolic concessions to the socio-economic and political integration of the underclasses were the best means by which both to dismantle traditional socioeconomic structures that impeded their own economic growth and to avoid class warfare and social upheaval from below. As the twentieth century progressed, the concept of socioeconomic and political reform, both structurally symbolically, would increasingly divide national populations.

This article examines through the lens of Chilean folk-based music how in the second quarter of the twentieth century, conservative and middle class liberal ideas about *chilenidad* (chileanness) and *criollismo* (creolism) shifted alongside changing social and political perspectives. It begins with an overview of Chilean political developments in the early twentieth century and proceeds to illustrate how against this backdrop the conservative elite ultimately adopted a *huaso* (Chilean cowboy) based conception of *chilenidad*. The elite worked to instill this notion of identity throughout the country as part of their efforts to quell working-class radicalism. This article also examines the shifting perspectives of a middle-class intelligentsia, which, in addition to advocating for more inclusive

³ For example, see: Gerard Béhague, *The Beginnings of Musical Nationalism in Brazil* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1971); Gerard Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos: the Search for Brazil's Musical Soul* (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1994); Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba, 1523-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947); Carol E. Robertson, *Musical Repercussions of 1492: Encounters in Text and Performance* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

social and political reforms, began to separate itself from other members of the middle and upper classes by adopting a wider notion of Chilean identity that extended beyond *huaso* imagery and the creole music of *huaso* groups. This wider notion of Chilean identity was rooted in the conception of folklore as an unfettered, un-stylized expression of popular life throughout Chile. This conception of folklore eventually would influence the philosophical orientation of the *nueva canción* (new song) movement during the politically polarized late 1960s and early 1970s.

Chilean Politics Through Mid-Century

With Chile's nitrate industry in the far north weakening and its urban industrial sector expanding, the country's principal cities experienced widespread immigration by the 1920s. Between 1930 and 1952, 54,000 northerners migrated to Santiago, contributing to a transition in which the majority of Chileans resided in cities of more than 200,000 by the late 1930s.⁴ Santiago itself expanded from 500,000 people in the 1920s to over two million people by the early 1960s.⁵ Growing migration into the principal cities expanded the urban working class and facilitated increased contact among urban and rural Chileans.⁶ Although most middle class reformists continued to reject the ideologies of the conservative elite and those of radical revolutionaries, some began to argue that more radical social reforms were needed to reduce Chile's social problems and impede class conflict. Many of these more radical reformers assumed leadership positions among working-class constituencies, gaining traction in the late 1910s and becoming a political force by the early 1930s.⁷ Their calls for the state to increase its social and economic intervention on behalf of the middle and working classes set them at odds with conservatives and middle class liberals, as would their new notion of Chilean identity, which

⁴ Simon Collier and William F. Sater, *A History of Chile, 1808-2002* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 292.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁶ Richard J. Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago, Chile, 1891-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

⁷ Jaime Massardo, *La formación del imaginario político de Luis Emilio Recabarren: contribución al estudio crítico de la cultural política de las clases subalternas de la sociedad chilena* (Santiago: LOM, 2008).

correspondingly drew more heavily on working class traditions than the notion of identity embraced by conservatives and middle class liberals.⁸

In 1927, General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo forced his way into the presidency. Responding to the increased organization of the working classes, Ibáñez implemented a system of populist authoritarianism that sought to modernize Chile, while simultaneously eliminating radicalism and forcing working class interests under the umbrella of the state. Drawing heavily upon the state's increased revenue from a booming nitrate sector in the late 1920s, Ibáñez initially oversaw a national economic resurgence, a massive public works campaign, and an expansion of Chilean industry. At the same time, he attempted to quell working class radicalism by combining heavy-handed repression of labor organizations and political opponents with a re-organization of labor into state-sponsored syndicates, along with the passing a Labor Code and other social reforms that the earlier "populist" administration of Arturo Alessandri had failed to enact. Indeed, Ibáñez sought to address Chile's social question and prevent class warfare by acknowledging the state's role in mediating conflict between labor and capitalists, making limited concessions to a working class that he attempted to incorporate under the umbrella of the state, and repressing any who did not accept his approach or authority. However, Ibáñez' ability to expand the public sector and promote Chilean business interests with protective tariffs, two actions that generated significant middle class support, ultimately collapsed with a decline in nitrate profits, the government's unsustainable foreign borrowing, and the onset of the Depression. In response, the middle class turned against Ibáñez, joining the elite and driving him from power in 1931.⁹

A period of political tumult followed the fall of Ibáñez. At the apex of this politically chaotic phase, six separate governments held power

⁸ Jedrek Mularski, *Music, Politics, and Nationalism in Latin America: Chile During the Cold War Era* (Amherst: Cambria Press, forthcoming 2015).

⁹ George Strawbridge, *Ibáñez and Alessandri: The Authoritarian Right and Democratic Left in Twentieth-Century Chile* (Buffalo: Council on International Studies: 1971). Also see: Michael Monteón, *Chile and the Great Depression* (Tampa: Center for Latin American Studies Press, 1998); Paul W. Drake, *Socialism and Populism in Chile, 1932-1952*; Julio Vallejos Pinto and Verónica Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, *Revolución proletaria o querida chusma?: socialismo y Alessandrismo en la pugna por la politización pampina (1911-1932)*.

within one, one-hundred-and-one day span. This turmoil ultimately fostered a strong, overarching desire among both the elite and the reformist middle class for a return to political normalcy. The elite, which had now experienced an extended period of political instability and fearfully perceived a rise in working class radicalism, no longer viewed issues of religion and executive power as among their upmost concerns. The middle class, similarly, had become most concerned with maintaining its current socioeconomic position in the face of economic hardships and their perception of increased working class radicalism. Accordingly, the middle class turned its attention away from its previous fixation on breaking down the political power of the elite. In late 1932, Chile elected Arturo Alessandri for a second time. Although the Socialist Party claimed what it viewed as a moral victory in 1932, when its candidate, Marmaduke Grove, finished second with 18 percent of the vote, 54 percent of Chileans cast their vote for Alessandri and his campaign platform of moderate, populist reform.¹⁰ These results marked two important trends in Chilean politics: the continued consolidation of the labor movement behind progressive, middle class reformers, and a general leftward shift in political orientations.

Similar to Chilean governments of the past, Alessandri's government repressed militant, politically radical, and non-sanctioned labor activism as it saw fit; however, it also provided political space for the institutionalized Socialist, Communist, and Radical parties to operate within the political system. Alessandri and many of those who supported him tolerated the electoral left as a means to stave-off the rise of a more radical, revolutionary left that might choose to operate outside the constrained order of the Chilean political arena and fuel violent class warfare. One immediate product of this policy was the ascension of the Popular Front, an alliance of the Communist, Socialist, and Radical parties, in the aftermath of Alessandri's second presidency. The Popular Front set aside political differences among its allied parties in an effort to overcome the electoral power of the Liberal and the Conservative Parties. Drawing support from segments of the middle and urban working class, each of whom viewed cooperation within the coalition as an avenue to address

¹⁰ Simon Collier and William F. Sater, *A History of Chile, 1808-2002*, 226.

their own Depression era objectives, this progressive coalition achieved a substantial Popular Front bloc in Congress, and Popular Front presidential candidate, Pedro Aguirre Cerda, won the 1938 election by a slim margin. Once in power, however, the Popular Front fractured due to internal divisions among and within its parties over ideology, policy, and tactics.¹¹ Despite the shortcomings of the Popular Front, its electoral success initiated a political era in which the Left, consisting of the Socialist and Communist Parties, became a part of political coalitions.

While Marmaduke Grove's second place finish in 1932 reinforced the fact that the Socialists had become a significant party in Chilean politics, the extensive support for Alessandri demonstrated that a majority of Chileans were now opening to the idea of reformism. Although Alessandri garnered significant support from urban labor and nitrate and copper miners for his second candidacy, he was no longer the rhetorical firebrand he had been in 1920. His rhetoric shifted away from aggressive attacks on the elite and towards an emphasis on national unity, and his actions as president emphasized political stability, constitutionalism, and fiscal conservatism. Under Alessandri's policies, landowners and industrialists increased their wealth, while working-class complaints met the strong hand of government repression. Nonetheless, Alessandri still aspired to implement the 1925 Constitution and remained a proponent of moderate, populist reformism, traits that had contributed to conservatives' distaste for him only a decade earlier. However, by 1932, the conservative elites who had detested Alessandri in 1920 now found reason, at the very least, to accept him as a president whose overarching priorities did not necessarily conflict with their own. While Alessandri's own shift towards more elite-friendly policies contributed to this change, so too did shifting political orientations among the elite. As political scientist Paul Drake has explained, "The upper classes and the Right, out of necessity and choice, became more adaptable from World War I to 1932."¹² Many elites started

¹¹ Herring, Hubert Clinton, *Chile en la presidencia de Don Pedro Aguirre Cerda* (Buenos Aires: Editorial F. de Aguirre, 1971). Also see: Tomás Moulian, *Fracturas: de Pedro Aguirre Cerda a Salvador Allende (1938-1973)* (Santiago: LOM 2006).

¹² Paul W. Drake, *Socialism and Populism in Chile: 1932-52* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 114.

to adopt the strategy of accepting limited economic, political, and social reforms as a means of averting calls for more radical transformations. As part of this effort to preserve their power through less direct methods, elites increasingly assimilated a *criollista*-based conception of Chilean identity, thereby associating themselves with the middle class' reformist rhetoric and stressing national unity, social stability, and their own nostalgia for the Chile of the past.

Conservatism and Chilenidad

The traveler...hears the stories the owner of the [country] house tells in his warm and exalted voice. He speaks of mountain souls, of the passions that illuminate the unlimited spirits, of the avaricious land; of the fear and pain of the earth. In the orchard, an unseen owl sings to the moon. But his song is not like the owl of the city, ominous and sneaky. Smoking cigarettes, the traveler drinks the mild breeze of his last night in the country, and with emotion he contemplates the stupendous sky that is unknown to the cosmopolitan man.¹³

—Published in the conservative newspaper *El Diario Ilustrado*, 1931

Through the late eighteenth century and into the early years of the nineteenth century, conservatives remained fixated on Europe as a source of national development and identity. However, by the second quarter of the twentieth century, the elite had started to accept the limited reformism that was altering Chile's political environment. Paralleling these developments, the influence of *criollismo* slowly spread, and conservatives began to adopt some rural images and traditions as part of their changing notion of *chilenidad*.

The start of the twentieth century was an era in which middle class liberal *criollistas* solidified and embraced a more inclusive, rural-based sense of nationalism and identity, while conservatives remained predominantly attached to their European-based sense of identity. For example, during Chile's September 18th centenary celebrations in Santiago in 1910, the official program of government-sponsored expressions of nationalism reflected the basic tenets of nineteenth century conservative

¹³ "Sensaciones del campo," *El Diario Ilustrado*, 15 March 1931.

identities: Christianity, European practices, and a strong state. The events began with a parade for veterans of the War of the Pacific, an artillery salute, and a military procession. Following these tributes, celebrations included a *Te deum* service in the Metropolitan Cathedral, a performance by a five-thousand member children's choir, a "gala" at the Municipal Theater, and a "Garden Party" for diplomats with orchestral music and international anthems at Cerro Santa Lucía. Unlike conservative elites, the middle and lower classes primarily attended popular celebrations that centered on *fondas*, a variety of popular games and competitions, *zarzuelas*, and *cuecas*.¹⁴

Although military parades, *Te Deum* services at the Metropolitan Cathedral, garden parties at Santa Lucía, and smaller, private salon celebrations with orchestral music remained hallmarks of conservative, upper-class *Fiestas Patrias* celebrations (Independence Day celebrations), a gradual transition was occurring. By 1919, an increasing number of references, announcements, and advertisements pertaining to *cuecas* and *huasos* had begun to appear in the pages of the conservative newspaper, *El Diario Ilustrado*. Additionally, coverage of *Fiestas Patrias* in conservative periodicals incorporated public festivities in Parque Cousiño, where revelers danced *cuecas* and received a visit from the President.¹⁵ Moreover, salons near the park now advertised themselves to conservatives as locations where individuals might take in the Parque Cousiño festivities, but also retire to a more refined setting with orchestral music afterwards. Indeed, the conservative notion of nationalism and Chilean identity was shifting, much as the *criollismo* movement had already shifted middle class liberals' notion of nationalism and Chilean identity, towards a sense of *chilenidad* that incorporated select versions of rural, Central Valley-based images, practices, and traditions.

Huaso traditions and practices originated in the Central Valley countryside, where hacienda agriculture shaped a distinct socioeconomic system that continued through the first half of the twentieth century. At the

¹⁴ *Programa Oficial: Fiestas Patrias en Santiago*. Also see coverage in *Revista Selecta*, *El Diario Ilustrado*, and *El Mercurio* editions before and after the 1910 Centennial Celebrations.

¹⁵ "La celebración del aniversario," *Diario Ilustrado*, 20 September 1919.

bottom of this system were transient, seasonal laborers and increasingly by the late nineteenth century, *inquilinos* (service tenants); at the top of this system were the rural elite, who owned the haciendas or *fundos* and for whom transient laborers and *inquilinos* worked.¹⁶ Life for rural laborers was particularly difficult. In addition to the general hardships associated with agricultural labor, which rural laborers began to endure as children, *inquilinos* rarely earned a wage, faced ramshackle living conditions, existed under the often-repressive thumb of the *patrón*, and had few means by which to improve their situation.¹⁷ Even after some turn of the century elites began to take a more paternalistic approach to the treatment of their laborers by providing marginally better houses and an occasional latrine, *El Mercurio* still noted in 1911 that the condition of rural labor remained “simply monstrous, unworthy of a civilized country and an affront to Chilean landowners.”¹⁸ Elites, on the other hand, lived comfortably on the back of their laborers and demanded subservience from them. The rural elite viewed rural laborers at best as dimwitted and unrefined, but more commonly as lazy, drunk, immoral, and even mentally handicapped.

By and large, elites and their rural labor lived separate, diverging existences and had little to bind them other than their labor and living agreements. However, the lives of *inquilinos* and *patrones* did overlap in additional ways. For example, in *Chile: Land and Society* (1935), political geographer George McBride recalled his encounter with an early twentieth century *huaso* landowner and his *mozo* employee:

I met them on a country road, Don Fulano and his *mozo* (servant), the latter riding at a respectful distance behind. Don Fulano was mounted on a tall, beautiful dapple-gray mare... The *mozo* rode a much smaller horse of the somewhat shaggy mountain type, a real country nag but a good traveler withal. Both men used Chilean saddles. Don Fulano's was made of handsome leather, and the seat was covered with the soft, down-clad skin of a large mountain bird. His stirrups, carved in the usual Chilean fashion out of heavy blocks of wood, were ornamented with bands of iron and inlaid silver. His bridle, too, with reins and headstall of neatly braided rawhide, bore

¹⁶ Arnold Bauer, *Chilean Rural Society from the Spanish Conquest to 1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). Also see: George McBride, *Chile: Land and Society* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1971).

¹⁷ Gabriel Salazar, *Labradores, peones y proletarios: formación y crisis de la sociedad popular chilena del siglo XIX* (Santiago: Ediciones Sur, 1985).

¹⁸ Bauer, *Chilean Rural Society from the Spanish Conquest to 1930*, 168.

elaborate silver ornaments about the bit and the brow band. Large-roweled spurs were worn by both the riders. The mozo's accoutrement was simple, a thick sheepskin covering the uncomfortable wooden frame of the saddle, while bridle and riding whip were made of rough-tanned leather thongs... Don Fulano had pushed back his flat-brimmed hat and had thrown the blanket-like poncho, which every Chilean horseman wears in the country, back over his shoulder to allow his arm more freedom and to give him the benefit of the fresh midmorning air... His strong figure, sitting firmly but gracefully on his mount and set off with the handsome character of his trappings and his horse, made a strikingly attractive of virile, prosperous, commanding manhood. The appearance of his riding companion was in sharp contrast. Not in rags by any means, but cheaply clad underneath his coarsely woven poncho, with ill-fitting trousers, the ungainly short jacket used by the men of his kind on Chilean farms, a dilapidated felt hat and well-worn shoes, the mozo could be seen at once to belong in a different class. He was well-built and muscular, though of distinctly smaller stature than Don Fulano, and his features seemed somewhat less European in cast, though both men gave evidence of a strain of Araucanian blood from some remote ancestor. The mozo waited in silence and at a little distance, allowing his horse to nibble at the bushes beside the road while Don Fulano greeted us. Then he dismounted and, hat in hand, brought over the beautifully ornamented saddlebags which he had been carrying behind his saddle, holding them up while his *patrón* stowed away the letter of introduction that we had presented. Furthermore, in the same deferential manner and with many repetitions of "Sí, sí, Señor," he corroborated his master's detailed orders for preparations to be made for our reception on the farm.¹⁹

McBride's account illustrates significant socioeconomic disparities and power relations among the two men he encountered, but it also reveals that *patrón* and worker shared some experiences. *Inquilinos* and *patrones* shared the general experience of living on a Central Valley *fundo*, and although the specific experiences of *inquilinos* and *patrones* on that *fundo* differed dramatically, both lived their lives in the midst of, and identified with, the same surroundings. As historian Arnold Bauer has further explained, *inquilinos* felt ties to their home, and although those ties were sometimes weak, they nevertheless established "a certain community of interest and compassion.'...Most [*inquilinos*] came to identify with the estate itself; the land was his land, the cattle better, the bulls braver than on

¹⁹ McBride, *Chile: Land and Society*, 3-4.

other haciendas.”²⁰ Bauer’s study of the Chilean countryside explained that although landowners did not maintain the same type of emotional bond to a specific plot of land, they possessed a strong love for the rural Central Valley in a more general sense.²¹

In a similar manner, the cultural traditions of landowner and laborer also overlapped to a limited degree. *Inquilinos* and *patrones* generally heard mass at the same *fundo* church, and they partook in shared celebrations on saints’ days and other holidays. While such gatherings served in part to reaffirm power relationships—priests preached against disobedience and immorality, and landowners made money off the sale of beverages or played the role of powerful or benevolent master—they also fostered shared experiences to which both *patrón* and *inquilino* attached their own meanings. Moreover, as a recollection of 1894 *fiestas patrias* celebrations in Temuco by Chilean writer Antonio Acevedo Hernández demonstrates, although rich and poor may have fractured into separate parties after attending the day’s mass, all celebrated similarly at *armadas* with *cuecas*, *tonadas*, and *décimas* and shared a profound attachment to this music. Acevedo Hernández continued by noting that the *tonadas* he heard at such celebrations as a child “have accompanied me all my life... To think that a musician would have been able to express the infinite tenderness...of that so pure, so emotional popular music like a supplication of love, like a confidence...pure emotion and beauty without contortions.”²²

Eventually, leftists, who sought to break the power of the oligarchy, came to view such commonalities and shared experiences as trivial at best. In their eyes, the tremendous inequalities between *inquilino* and *patrón* far outweighed in importance a few shared experiences that they perceived the elite to be using as a means to prevent the collapse of the rural labor system. However, conservatives, who increasingly searched for means to stave off class conflict and the potential unraveling of the rural labor system

²⁰ Bauer, *Chilean Rural Society from the Spanish Conquest to 1930*, 164. Bauer attributes the portion of the quotation that reads “a certain community interest and compassion” to Eric Wolf, *Sons of the Shaking Earth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 208 and to Augusto Orrego Luco, “La cuestión social en Chile,” *Anales* (January-June 1961), 50.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² “Un dieciocho hace setenta años,” *En Viaje* (September 1955), 8-11.

during the twentieth century, came to stress in their opposing view of the countryside the importance of these few points of commonality among all rural inhabitants, while ignoring the far more numerous differences in the lives of *inquilinos* and *patrones*. They emphasized an image of the benevolent *patrón* and the notion of a common underlying experience of life in the countryside that united all rural inhabitants. In particular, they contended that for *inquilino* and *patrón* alike, *huaso* culture represented a shared sense of identity and provided a range of symbols and practices to which all related.

The romanticized image of the *huaso* and the folk traditions of central Chile emerged as key sources for the new conceptions of *chilenidad* that had already become popular among *criollistas* and were now slowly gaining influence as part of conservative notions of self-identity. This trend bore some resemblance to similar processes across the Andes in Argentina, then the most prosperous nation in Latin America. Historian Richard Slatta has described a process in which the Argentine elite resurrected and rehabilitated as a symbol of Argentina's national character the *gaucho* (Argentine cowboy), who having been "maligned as a barbarian and outlaw a few decades earlier, took on the virtues of obedience, patriotism, honesty, and trustworthiness—attributes rarely attached to him before. The ruling elite manipulated the gaucho as a symbolic weapon against a new and more dangerous foe, the urban immigrant masses."²³ At the same time, historian Oscar Chamosa has described a process in which Argentina's nationalist intellectuals, regional sugar elites, media industries, and folklorists all created and embraced an "authentic national culture" that celebrated the traditions of Argentina's rural workers. Within this "authentic national culture," Argentine nationalists tended to focus more strongly on the *gaucho* of the pampas, while folklorists emphasized more strongly the "cultural purity" of mestizo-criollo communities in northern Argentina. According to Chamosa, the ideological diversity and geographic span of the

²³ Richard Slatta, *Cowboys of the Americas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 197.

Argentine folklore movement ultimately enabled it to transcend and outlast the limits of the nationalist movement.²⁴

In Chile, even as the *huaso* and central Chilean folk traditions became essential components of national identity in central Chile, diverse climates and traditions existed across Chile's geographical and political spaces. Accordingly, populations in outlying regions did not necessarily assimilate the Central Valley notion of Chilean identity. In northern Chile, where the country had obtained a significant tract of Peruvian territory through the War of the Pacific (1879-1884), the Chilean government promoted its Central Valley-based conception of Chilean identity with a heavy-handed campaign to "chileanize" the inhabitants of that region.

Up until 1918, the Chilean government encouraged immigration as a means to increase the size of its small skilled labor force and to populate undeveloped areas. In the late nineteenth century, the nitrate boom created a demand for labor in northern Chile. As historian Michael Monteón has shown, the British capitalists who dominated the nitrate sector met this demand through the use of *enganche*, a system in which nitrate producers and northern merchants recruited a combination of day laborers and peons from central Chile, Peru, and Bolivia to the nitrate zones in mass.²⁵ Laborers and labor organizers in the north were concerned that immigration would create an over-supply of labor, and this concern fostered tensions among a working class of diverse nationalities. Nonetheless, these tensions did not ultimately prevent Peruvian, Bolivian, and Chilean workers in northern Chile from striking together on many occasions. In the eyes of the Chilean elite, the immigration of foreign labor and the increasing mobilization of labor in the north went hand in hand; the elite attributed the rise of subversive ideas among the northern labor force to foreign populations and foreign-inspired rabble-rousers. At the same time, particularly strong political tensions stemming from the War of the Pacific remained between Chile and Peru, and these tensions flared during the early twentieth century. Fueled by ongoing tensions with Peru;

²⁴ Oscar Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010).

²⁵ Michael Monteón, "The Enganche in the Chilean Nitrate Sector, 1880-1930," *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Summer 1979): 66-79.

what the Chilean elite believed to be foreign-derived, subversive, destabilizing influences among the working class, and xenophobic attitudes towards the indigenous Quechua and Aymara populations of the north, Chile's upper class took an increasingly nationalistic approach to governing and stabilizing the north. They began to turn against their country's longstanding policy of open immigration, and politicians increasingly utilized Peru and Peruvians as convenient scapegoats for Chile's social and economic difficulties. Additionally, the government intensified its effort to "chileanize" northern regions as a means to drive a wedge between workers inside and outside of Chile, to stress national unity over class divisions, and to eliminate the threat that the government perceived to its authority from "non-Chilean" (meaning not of the Central Valley) practices and identities. In doing so, the government demanded that populations adopt cultural symbols linked to the central Chile-based notion of *chilenidad*. Such symbols included the Chilean flag, a pantheon of heroes from Chilean independence and the War of the Pacific, the Chilean national anthem (which celebrated Chile's defeat of Peru in the War of the Pacific), the *cueca* dance of Chile's Central Valley, and the *huaso*.²⁶ Moreover, the government defined both overt symbols of Peruvian allegiance, as well as any other practices that did not adhere to this conception of *chilenidad*, as Peruvian, and therefore inherently anti-Chilean. Chilean officials accordingly banned the celebration of Peruvian *fiestas patrias*, the flying of the Peruvian flag, and the singing of the Peruvian national anthem within Chile's borders. They also expelled all Peruvian priests from northern Chile, closed Peruvian schools and social clubs, prohibited "Peruvians" from gathering publicly, and replaced Peruvian newspapers with Chilean periodicals that published pro-Chile propaganda.²⁷

Although the chileanization campaign caused thousands of refugees to emigrate from northern Chile to Peru and Bolivia, it achieved only partial

²⁶ Alberto Díaz Araya and Rodrigo Ruz Zagal, "Cuando se agitaron las banderas," in Gálvez Vásquez, Macarena, et al., *Tarapacá: un desierto de historias* (Iquique: Taller de Investigaciones Culturales, 2003), 62. Also note that the "cueca" in the context of chileanization meant the Central Valley version of the *cueca*, as opposed to the various regional styles that existed in other areas of Chile.

²⁷ Raúl Palacios Rodríguez, *La chilenización de Tacna y Arica: 1883-1929* (Lima: Editorial Arica, 1974).

success among those who remained in Chile. Those populations that remained in Chile often played Chilean anthems on local “Peruvian” or “Bolivian” instruments, celebrated Peruvian holidays, and performed and embraced much of the same *altiplano*-derived music they had practiced prior to the chileanization efforts.²⁸ Among other distinctions, most variants of the *altiplano* music that these populations continued to play possessed characteristics that distinguished this Andean or *altiplano*-derived “Peruvian” and “Bolivian” music clearly from Central Valley-derived, “Chilean” folk-based music. For example, such “non-Chilean” music utilized *quena* flutes, panpipes, *charango* guitars, and/or brass and woodwind-based *orquesta típica* ensembles; structural arrangements that contained a *fuga* closing section, which presented a contrasting theme in a faster tempo at the end of songs; and Quechua and Aymara words in their lyrics. Moreover, this music also maintained connections to local religious festivals and community celebrations specific to the *altiplano*.²⁹ Even Andean, *zamacueca*-derived *bailecitos*, which shared the most commonalities with “Chilean” music, were distinct from the “Chilean” *cueca*, as the lyrics and instrumentation varied, and as *bailecitos* accented beats two and three, whereas “Chilean” *cuecas* stressed the “and of two” and the three.³⁰ The chileanization campaign, however, solidified among

²⁸ See: Alberto Díaz Araya, “De acordes andinos al ritmo chileno: los músicos aymaras durante las primeras décadas del siglo XX en el área rural de Arica,” *Revista Percepción*, Vol. 3-4 (2000), 83-98. Also, note that on March 31, 1921, Lima’s *La Voz del Sur* newspaper estimated that the Chileanization campaign in northern Chile caused roughly 18,000 Peruvians to flee northward into Peru. (cit. Sergio González Miranda, *El dios cautivo: las ligas patrióticas en la chilenización compulsiva de Tarapacá (1910-1922)* (Santiago: Ediciones LOM).)

²⁹ For further discussion of what this article will refer to as “Andean” musical styles, see Alberto Díaz Araya, “De acordes andinos al ritmo chileno: los músicos aymaras durante las primeras décadas del siglo XX en el área rural de Arica,” *Revista Percepción*, Vol. 3-4: 83-98. Also see sections on Bolivia and Peru in Dale Olsen and Daniel Sheehy (eds.), *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 2: South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean* (New York: Garland, 1998); Thomas Turino, *Moving Away from Silence and Music in the Andes: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Raúl Romero, *Debating the Past: Music, Memory and Identity in the Andes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Zoila Mendoza, *Creating Our Own: Folklore, Performance, and Identity in Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Fernando Ríos, “La Flute Indienne: The Early History of Andean Folkloric-Popular Music in France and its Impact on Nueva Canción,” *Latin American Music Review*, Vol. 29 (2): 145-181.

³⁰ Ríos, “La Flute Indienne,” 176.

other segments of the Chilean population a sense of nationalism that became more clearly defined in opposition to a northern Andean popular class of Peruvian and Bolivian origin that many Chileans xenophobically viewed as “dirty as the Indians that they are.”³¹ Identifying *chilenidad* according to a particular set of traditions and images from Santiago and the Central Valley, the chileanization movement in the north expanded and intensified during the second decade of the twentieth century. Chilean nationalists in these regions formed *Ligas Patrióticas* (Patriot Leagues) that, in the midst of a fervor of extreme nationalism, concern for national defense, fear of working-class radicalism, and xenophobia, sought to eliminate anything nationalists perceived as not “Chilean.”

The *Ligas Patrióticas* began in 1911 in Iquique, where the large population of Peruvian and Bolivian workers along with competition over mining jobs had created particularly strong tensions among Chileans and foreigners. They expanded quickly and new chapters established themselves throughout the north and progressed southwards to Santiago and Valparaíso. The Iquique publication, *El Roto*, which affiliated itself with the *Ligas Patrióticas*, expressed in 1920 the general sentiment of the *Ligas Patrióticas* and proclaimed the magazine’s mission to be part of a “heroic campaign, against this pernicious element, the conspirator that still lives in our midst: the Peruvians.”³² In pursuit of this objective, the *Ligas Patrióticas* inflicted intimidation, destruction of property, and physical violence upon those whom they viewed as not “Chilean.” This campaign targeted both the previously noted types of cultural symbols and expressions, which the *Ligas Patrióticas* perceived as demonstrations of Peruvian nationalism, as well as efforts at labor organizing, which also contradicted several fundamental beliefs then held by both Chilean liberals and conservatives: a *criollista* conception of national pride, the growth of order and progress, and the romanticized, nationalist images of industrious and patriotic *huasos* and *rotos*.³³ Among the few voices of dissent against the crusade to chileanize the north were leftist Luis Emilio Recabarren and

³¹ Alberto Díaz Araya, “De acordes andinos al ritmo chileno,” 79.

³² “Nuestro propósito,” *El Roto*, 2 August 1920.

³³ For further explanation of the *Ligas Patrióticas*, see Sergio González Miranda’s *El dios cautivo*.

his followers, who, as Michael Monteón has explained, contended that “the struggle for workers rights was international and should be directed against employers rather than immigrants”; they accused the *Ligas Patrióticas* and their anti-Peruvian nationalism of dividing the working classes.³⁴

The sense of a Peruvian threat in the north made chileanization efforts in that region particularly dramatic and volatile; however, efforts to chileanize the country in a refined, *criollista*, and predominantly Central Valley-based image of *chilenidad* also occurred in other regions and took other forms. For example, beginning in the 1930s, Chilean authorities ordered police to arrest anyone performing the *cueca urbana* (urban *cueca*), a *cueca* popular among the working classes of Santiago and Valparaíso during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that authorities considered to be particularly “voluptuous” and even “violent.”³⁵ Although, similar to the results of chileanization efforts in the north, this endeavor did not eliminate the *cueca urbana*, it did serve to reduce its presence and to facilitate greater space for the rural-based *cuecas* of the Central Valley that more “refined” social sectors considered to be socially acceptable and “Chilean.” Additionally, educational reformers began to push a more “Chilean” based curriculum in the arts. By the early 1920s, Chilean reformers had joined with those from other Latin American countries in asserting that “all the artists of America, painters, musicians, poets, etc., [should] create works that are essentially American...[and] all the countries of America [should] establish in the primary schools an artistic teaching that responds as much as possible to the spirit [of this proclamation]...through laws or private initiatives.”³⁶ As the implementation of such Chilean-centered curriculums in primary and

³⁴ Monteón, “The Enganche in the Chilean Nitrate Sector, 1880-1930,” 75. For Recabarren’s specific commentary on the anti-Peruvian campaigns, see the May and June 1911 editions of *El Grito Popular*.

³⁵ See Juan Pablo González, Claudio Rolle, and Oscar Ohlsen, *Historia social de la música popular en Chile, 1890-1950* (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 2009), 395-397. Also see commentaries by Andrés Bello and Joaquín Edwards Bello regarding the *cueca* and popular celebrations in: Sonia Montesinos (ed.), *Revisitando Chile* (Santiago: Presidencia de la República, 2003), 151-152 as well as Oscar Núñez, *Poesía popular y cuecas* (Santiago: Sociedad Chilena del Derecho de Autor, 1997), 14-15.

³⁶ Congreso Americano del Niño celebrado en Montevideo, “Conclusiones sancionadas,” *Revista de Instrucción Primaria*, No. 1-2 (March/April 1920), 93.

secondary schools developed over the coming decades, individuals also took it upon themselves to educate and “chileanize” the broader public. Carlos Valdez Vásquez, for example, designed a concert program in 1930 that the conservative newspaper, *El Diario Ilustrado*, described glowingly as consisting entirely of “noble, melodic, and always inspiring” *tonadas* and *cuecas* from central Chile that had a true “scent of the earth.”³⁷ Dressed from head to toe in *huaso* clothing, Valdez Vásquez took his program across Chile in an attempt to, as *El Diario Ilustrado* put it, “remind us that we are Chilean.”³⁸

Such endeavors reflected and promoted the spread of the *criollista* vision of *chilenidad*, and by the close of the 1920s, both conservatives and liberals openly embraced *huaso* symbols and traditions as fundamental to their identity. Whereas refined Garden Parties once had been central components of *fiestas patrias* celebrations at Cerro Santa Lucía, conservatives by this point celebrated not just with *Te Deum* services, military parades and bands, and European style symphonic music, but also with *huaso* outfits and imagery, *cuecas*, and *tonadas*.³⁹ This changing notion of *chilenidad* became a central component of conservative political expression and identity, as demonstrated by *El Diario Ilustrado*’s report that an estimated two-thousand *huasos* on horseback turned out to express their support for Conservative Party candidate Gustavo Ross in Cauquenes in 1938. Ross and other conservative officials watched from the balcony of the Teatro Municipal as the *huasos*, dressed in their best *huaso* suits and carrying Chilean flags, filed past the conservative politicians; they tipped their round brimmed *huaso* hats and broke into cheers as part of a patriotic display of *chilenidad*.⁴⁰

Huaso traditions also became central components of conservative leisure activities and family life, indicating that conservatives’ attachment

³⁷ “Valdes Vásquez quiere recordarnos que somos chilenos,” *El Diario Ilustrado*, 22 Jan 1930.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “Impresiones de las fiestas,” *El Diario Ilustrado*, 20 September 1935. Also see: “El patriotismo revive con gran fuerza,” *El Diario Ilustrado*, 20 September 1935; “Ecos de un gran rodeo a la chilena,” *En Viaje*, No. 19 (May 1935), 21-23.

⁴⁰ “Trifuneral fue la recepción hecha a candidato Ross,” *El Diario Ilustrado*, 27 August 1938.

to *huaso* identity extended beyond symbolic acts during *fiestas patrias* and electoral campaigns. For example, through the early years of the twentieth century, rodeos remained primarily, as journalist Rafael Maluenda noted in 1905, the “most boisterous task of the campo.”⁴¹ These events combined the functional labor of rounding up and cutting livestock with a subsequent celebration among the exhausted cattle workers in which the “creole happiness is truly brought to life: the *tonadas* and *cuecas* triumph.”⁴² While the *cuecas* and *tonadas* remained linked to the rodeo, the general purpose and environment of the rodeo began to evolve during the first quarter of the twentieth century towards a festive event that Chileans of all backgrounds frequented. *El Diario Ilustrado*, for example, publicized extensively a large rodeo competition that took place in Santiago’s Parque Cousiño to benefit the “Protección al Trabajo de la Mujer” society in 1915. The conservative newspaper’s coverage of the rodeo noted that spectators completely filled the rodeo grounds, and it emphasized the distinctively “Chilean” character of the event:

...the fiesta had an essentially Chilean character, and all the events of the rodeo...were followed with great interest by the public; each test that demonstrated qualities of skill or of valor, received great applause... An amateur bullfight, and especially a cueca, danced to harp and guitar, contributed to the enthusiasm of the public.⁴³

The number and popularity of such rodeo festivals increased during subsequent years, and as historian Patrick Barr-Melej has explained, “By the 1940s, Chilean rodeos, which began during the colonial period as seasonal roundups of cattle from the outskirts of the haciendas, had been transformed from a laborious duty for *inquilinos* into a ritual thought to demonstrate cultural singularity and the nation’s heritage.”⁴⁴ Between the 1920s and the early 1930s, a new genre of popular music also emerged: groups of primped, clean-cut *huasos* performed versions of Central Valley *cuecas* and *tonadas* for various urban audiences. As *criollista* symphonic composer Pedro Humberto Allende asserted in 1935, “Many times...I have

⁴¹ “En el rodeo,” *Zig-Zag*, Vol. 44 (17 December 1905): 43-49.

⁴² “El rodeo: la epopeya del campo chileno,” *En Viaje* (November 1955), 18-21.

⁴³ “El rodeo á la Chilena,” *El Diario Ilustrado*, 25 October 1915.

⁴⁴ Patrick Barr-Melej, *Reforming Chile* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 138.

lamented that our America unfortunately confuses vulgar music with genuinely popular music... Popular art has never been born in the large cities, but in the most remote countryside.”⁴⁵ Humberto Allende argued that these emerging “*huaso*” groups, such as Los Huasos de Chincolco, Los Cuatro Huasos, Los Huasos de Peldehua, and Las Hermanas Orellana, were “true patriots” for their efforts to elevate “our noble tonadas and cuecas” to a place fitting of “genuinely Chilean music.”⁴⁶ By the 1930s, many conservatives shared this sentiment, as groups such as Los Cuatro Huasos “brought their culture to the salons...and they demonstrated how among us [Chileans] the love for things of the land can overcome baseless prejudices.”⁴⁷ Thus, although through the 1920s *cuecas* in particular had entered the elite domain predominantly during *fiestas patrias* alone, during the 1930s Chileans from diverse social backgrounds embraced more broadly and deeply the burgeoning, stylized *huaso* groups.

Such changes both reflected and furthered a significant reorientation of society in which both liberals and conservatives came to share a notion of national identity rooted in *huaso* culture. Given the strong divisions between conservative and liberal notions of national identity during the late nineteenth century, the conservative adoption of a *criollista* concept of *chilenidad* might appear particularly abrupt. However, several important factors contributed to this transition and facilitated the development of a deep emotional connection between conservatives and a *huaso*-based conception of *chilenidad*. For conservatives who looked to Europe for inspiration and a sense of self, the European model of national identity increasingly focused “exclusively on the rural, where European and western countries had found the true artistic soul that characterized their population.”⁴⁸ Following this European trend, Chilean conservatives turned towards their own domestically-rooted, rural-based sense of self. Yet, the conservative adoption of a more *criollista*-oriented concept of identity was more than simply an adherence to a European trend of extolling rural life as the source of national identity. First, as labor unrest

⁴⁵ “Nuestra Música Popular,” *El Mercurio*, 1 January 1935.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Zig Zag* (May 1928). (cit. Eugenio Rengifo and Catalina Rengifo, *Los Cuatro Huasos: alma de la tradición y del tiempo* (Santiago: Catalonia, 2008).)

⁴⁸ “Nuestra Música Popular,” *El Mercurio*, 1 January 1935.

grew in the north and as the *inquilino* system in the Central Valley gradually broke-down over the first half of the twentieth century, the romanticized image of a hard-working, happy *huaso* expressed an idealized image of social conditions. It provided a model of social behavior that was compatible with the increasingly threatened conservative pillars of traditional Catholic morality and the preservation of the sociopolitical status quo. Second, even though the majority of Chile's conservative elite resided in urban centers, most also had contact with rural Chile. In fact, by 1900, fifty-seven percent of the members of Congress owned a hacienda in the Central Valley.⁴⁹ As research conducted by Maurice Zeitlin and Richard Ratcliffe also has shown, the rural landowners who dominated the Chilean countryside often were members of the same families as those urban elites who dominated the corporations, banks and financial institutions, and state bureaucratic posts in Santiago.⁵⁰ Even those members of the urban elite who did not themselves own rural haciendas became members of kinship networks that tied them to the rural conservative elite. At the very least, these relationships exposed urban elites to rural practices and traditions. Finally, increased immigration into urban Chile from the countryside influenced both the practices and self-image of elite conservatives, as well as those of the popular classes. As conservative, Chilean writer and politician Alberto Cardemil has described it, when *huasos* came to the cities, they organized their homes and neighborhoods according to the rural mode that was "stamped on their hearts."⁵¹ The arrival of *huaso* culture from rural Chile initiated an intensified process of cultural hybridization which, as anthropologist Néstor García Canclini has theorized, is the fundamental progression according to which cultural influence functions.⁵² In other words, the spread of *huaso* culture occurred as a blending process of "modern" and "folk" cultures: the practices and values of Europe and of urban Chile blended with the rural practices and values of *huaso* culture,

⁴⁹ González, Rolle, and Ohlsen, *Historia social de la música popular en Chile, 1890-1950*, 364.

⁵⁰ Maurice Zeitlin and Richard Earl Ratcliff, *Landlords and Capitalists: the Dominant Class of Chile* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁵¹ Alberto Cardemil, *El huaso chileno* (Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello, 2000).

⁵² Canclini, Nestor García. *Culturas híbridas: estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana), 1992.

thereby making the *huaso* a source of “cultural values that...configured a perdurable fold for all of Chilean society.”⁵³ Santiago, in particular, possessed many elements derived from European society, but as Alberto Cardemil has observed, it also developed a distinctive flavor rooted in Chile’s rural Central Valley:

How can one compare the nightlife of Buenos Aires or São Paulo with the rural silence of Santiago after midnight? Through these [rural] values the hacienda gave to Chile its poetry, its history, its art, its music, its political architecture, and its implacable imprint prevails in Chilean culture until today... Neither discipline nor social organization would exist without the *huaso*.⁵⁴

Although Cardemil himself dismissed the importance of European influence and culture in urban Chile, he insightfully noted the underlying impact of the *huaso* on the country’s social and political structures, as well as on its sense of identity. Despite the elite’s infatuation with all things European during the nineteenth century, elements of the *huaso* embedded themselves in the lives of urban Chileans after the turn of the century alongside shifting perspectives about how best to combat class conflict and radical political movements. These elements would provide the basis for the elite’s even more prominent embrace of the *huaso* in subsequent decades.

Huaso Music and Competing Conceptions of Folklore

Two interrelated developments further established the place of Central Valley-based *cuecas*, *tonadas*, and images of the *huaso* in urban Chile: radio and the recording industry. Although these forms of mass communication helped to popularize various international musical styles, such as the *fox trot*, the *charleston*, the *tango*, *swing*, *jazz*, *rumba*, *ranchera*, and *bolero*, they also increased the dissemination of Chilean music and fostered a growing market for musicians who played *cuecas* and *tonadas*. Performing creole music that drew on Central Valley traditions, “*huaso* groups” became popular among diverse segments of society. The developing music industry, in combination with industry-related groups

⁵³ Cardemil, *El huaso chileno*, 60-61.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

that viewed mass media as a key means by which to spread “Chilean” music throughout Chile and abroad, played a fundamental role in the success of these groups. For example, the popular culture magazine *Ercilla* took up the task of promoting Chilean music in 1937, announcing:

The revista *Ercilla* takes the initiative and carries on its shoulders the responsibility to elevate Chilean music... In our next edition, we will publish the guidelines for a competition among creole music artists. In two months, once the best compositions are chosen, with the cooperation of the best broadcasters, we will make them known in all of Chile.⁵⁵

While one central element of the nationalist promotion of *huaso* groups was the dissemination of the music that *huaso* musicians created, the precise nature of the music itself was just as integral a component in the push to popularize this version of Chilean folklore. Proponents of such creole, folk-based music believed that “the *tonada* and the *cueca* continued [to be] profoundly ingrained in the heart of the Chilean people;” however, these proponents also observed that Chilean music did not share the domestic or international popularity of Mexican, Cuban, or Argentine music.⁵⁶ They reasoned that a lack of dissemination and a lack of musical refinement in Chilean music had caused a significant discrepancy between the popularity of these foreign styles and the popularity of Chilean styles. Noting that examples of more widely popular folk-based music from Mexico, Cuba, and Colombia utilized orchestras, “vocal masses with surprising effects,” and “new instruments,” respectively, an *Ercilla* editorial argued that “the solo guitar is not enough to be an interesting base... We believe the moment has come to resort to new voices and groups that include, besides the guitar, the accordion, the harp, and perhaps the piano and banjo.”⁵⁷ The editorial further asserted, “It is indispensable, in consequence, to take our musical folklore from the campo, from the cordillera, from the *ranco* and from the tenements, redressing its esthetic form in order to intensify its interest, and cast it definitively into the market in which the songs from all the world compete, with the assuredness that it

⁵⁵ “La música chilena ocupará el lugar que le corresponde,” *Ercilla*, No. 90 (1 January 1937): 16.

⁵⁶ “Un S.O.S. de nuestro folklore,” *Ercilla*, (31 December 1937).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

will have sufficient merits to triumph.”⁵⁸ In effect, this philosophy viewed folkloric music as an evolving sound that in a refined form could serve as a source of national identity and pride, as opposed to a notion of folklore as an inherited, unfettered expression of the pueblo that revealed the true character of Chile and its cultures.

Huaso groups and their music fit neatly with the belief that Chilean folk music could be refined and elevated to compete with established international music styles. The musicians, who were largely university-educated young men from families that owned or had ties to lands in the Central Valley, “exchanged their urban suits for those of the huaso [and] sang upbeat tonadas and zamacuecas.”⁵⁹ Drawing upon musical traditions within their families and upon the songs of amateur musicians they encountered on Central Valley *fundos*, *huaso* groups refined and “cleansed” rural tunes “of vulgarities, adding verses or polishing them and, finally, fortifying them with a guitar *plucking*...that replaces the simplicity of the previous sound.”⁶⁰ In doing so, these groups made rural, Central Valley traditions palatable for refined, cosmopolitan tastes.

Although these emerging *huaso* musicians were deeply interested in rural folklore, they also believed that, in order to flourish, their music needed to conform to the demands of the urban marketplace. Correspondingly, in addition to the *cuecas* and *tonadas* that they played, these creole musicians also utilized other popular genres in their performances, including *tango*, *bolero*, and *foxtrot*. Additionally, their renditions of *cuecas* and *tonadas* varied to some degree from the rural forms of these styles. For example, as Juan Pablo González, Claudio Rolle, and Oscar Ohlsen have described, the stylized, urban *tonadas* broadened the rural *tonada*'s harmonic and melodic language by introducing the use of dominant seventh chords towards the subdominant, dominant and parallel tonic, and additional notes and chromatics around three inversions

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ “Ecos del beneficio de anoche,” *El Imparcial* (13 July 1927). (cit. Eugenio Rengifo and Catalina Rengifo, *Los Cuatro Huasos: alma de la tradición y del tiempo*.)

⁶⁰ Quotation from Juan Astica, member of *Los Cuatro Huasos*. (cit. González, Rolle, and Ohlsen, *Historia social de la música popular en Chile, 1890-1950*.)

of the chord.⁶¹ Such urbanized versions of *tonadas* also increasingly varied in tempo; developed vocal and instrumental virtuosity; utilized microphones; and broadened instrumentation to encompass various combinations of piano, double bass, harp, accordion, and even orchestras. Additionally, although it was women who had generally played and sung *tonadas* in rural Chile, the vast majority of the new, urban musicians were quartets of young, middle class men. This trend paralleled the massification and professionalization of Chilean “folk-based music,” or music that drew heavily on the folklore of the countryside, but which also made significant departures from existing rural folklore by changing some of its musical properties, the themes or tone of its lyrics, the background of the musicians who performed it, and/or the context or manner in which those musicians disseminated it. In a similar vein, the *huaso* groups also modified the composition of the *cueca*. Although they drew heavily on the *cueca*’s rural, Central Valley form, they also altered the composition of stanzas and remolded the general format of the style so that each *cueca* conformed to the three and one-half minutes of recording time on a record. Such versions often repeated a ninety-second *cueca* twice with the same lyrics, with different lyrics, or with no lyrics at all.⁶² *Huaso* musicians also often filled this extra recording time by incorporating their *cuecas* into radio sketches, in which various exclamations, verses, dialogues, or interludes altered the length of a *cueca* and served to animate the music and dance.⁶³ In this manner, the *cuecas* and *tonadas* that *huaso* groups performed became a hybrid embodiment and expression of rural traditions and industrial, urban consumerism.

Despite the alterations in these renditions of *cuecas* and *tonadas*, both conservatives and many middle class liberals believed that the refined and stylized forms of *cuecas* and *tonadas* retained the essential spirit and

⁶¹ González, Rolle, and Ohlsen, *Historia social de la música popular en Chile, 1890-1950*, 387.

⁶² For a more detailed discussion of this process, see González, Rolle, and Ohlsen, *Historia social de la música popular en Chile, 1890-1950*; also see Samuel Claro, Fernando González Marabolí, Carmen Peña Fuenzalida, and María Isabel Quevedo Cifuentes, *Chilena o cueca tradicional: de acuerdo con las enseñanzas de Fernando González Marabolí* (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 1994). For other related topics, see: “Criollismo literario y musical,” *Revista Musical Chilena* (January-March 1967): 15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

fundamental components of rural, Chilean folk music. They therefore considered the new, urban versions of *cuecas* and *tonadas* to be fundamentally “Chilean,” as they believed these songs to have adopted the basic language, cadence, and lyrical structure of rural folk music.⁶⁴ Paralleling Pedro Humberto Allende’s previously noted comments about the *huaso* groups, the newspaper *El Imparcial* enthusiastically reported in 1927 that *Los Cuatro Huasos* “made the public in attendance pulsate with [their] performances of Chilean music.”⁶⁵ Nobel prize winning Chilean poet, Gabriela Mistral, expressed a similar sentiment towards *Los Cuatro Huasos* and their style of music in 1940:

The four Chilean singers are for me, more than anything else, those who have saved our rural “aires,” which had become lost and were going to disappear. Thanks to creole tawdriness, spoiled tonadas and cuecas were circulating in the cities and countryside of Chile. Our songs had regressed towards the ravines of the cordillera... The group appeared in their genuine dress without falling into the grotesque that is the great danger of artificial folklore. The hats with hard rounded cups do not startle a public that is familiarized with the Mexican hat, more exotic in its triangular cup. The small manta might be slightly unfamiliar, perhaps in contrast with that larger [Mexican] garment. The colors are very much ours; they have not copied either the Aztec serapes or the old Argentine vicuña manta.⁶⁶

In accordance with such perspectives, Chilean governments began to encourage and promote *huaso* musical groups. By the mid-1940s, the Juan Antonio Ríos administration had started to sponsor free public festivals for the “highest exponents of creole singing,” in nationalist support of those “harps and guitars that, in other times, presided over the dawn of the Republic.”⁶⁷ Commenting on these endeavors, *El Mercurio* noted that such music “still remains a generous corner of the world of the metropolitan *pobladores*...[and] they fill with pride to feel the magical sounds of the *campesina* harps and the fresh and haughty voices of our

⁶⁴ For additional discussion of middle and upper class responses to “*huaso* music” throughout the twentieth century, see Mularski, *Music, Politics, and Nationalism in Latin America: Chile During the Cold War Era*.

⁶⁵ “Ecos del beneficio de anoche,” *El Imparcial* (13 July 1927). (cit. Rengifo and Rengifo, *Los Cuatro Huasos: alma de la tradición y del tiempo*.) Additionally, these groups also sang at times a mixture of other styles of international popular genres.

⁶⁶ “La música americana de los ‘Cuatro Huasos’,” *El Mercurio*, 1 December 1940.

⁶⁷ “Música popular chilena,” *El Mercurio*, 17 March 1945.

popular singers...the pure expression of our pueblo.”⁶⁸ The González Videla administration continued and expanded such promotional efforts, as its *Dirección General de Informaciones y Cultura* pushed for a strong enforcement of a government mandate that the music played on Chilean radio stations be at least thirty percent Chilean.⁶⁹ These attempts to increase radio dissemination of Chilean music complemented government sponsored tours to outlying regions of Chile by *creole* musicians, such as Los Provincianos “cultural mission” to the far southern province of Magallanes in 1947.⁷⁰ In effect, by the 1940s, urban Chileans from diverse segments of society viewed the stylized *huaso* sound not only as a central element of *chilenidad*, but also as an expression derived directly from the *pueblo*; accordingly, the Chilean government devoted a strong effort to entrench these perceptions deeply throughout the country.

The growing popularity of the *huaso* groups did not necessarily mean that other musical styles disappeared from the Chilean cultural landscape. In fact, many Chileans lamented throughout the 1930s and 1940s the relative “disappearance” of “Chilean music” at the hands of foreign styles. For example, despite the growth of *huaso* groups, musician Pablo Garrido bemoaned the difficulties that continued to face *Los Cuatro Huasos* and other *criollista* performers during this era: “Whereas we believed that the miraculous conquest of the radiophone would have been an admirable, propellant vehicle for vernacular expressions, we have found that to these ends we are absolutely invaded by music that says nothing about our patriotic fiber.”⁷¹ Particularly with the growth of radio and the commercial recording industry, various forms of foreign popular music ranging from *jazz* to *cumbia* to *ranchera* achieved popularity along side the *huaso* groups. Despite such competition, the *huaso* groups still acquired a popularity that to a large degree extended across class and political lines. In addition to their growing popularity among moderate and conservative segments of society, *huaso* groups retained strong popularity among

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ “Editorial: Música chilena en la radio,” *Revista Musical Chilena* (April 1947): 3.

⁷⁰ Rengifo and Rengifo, *Los Cuatro Huasos: alma de la tradición y del tiempo*, 103.

⁷¹ “Música popular chilena,” *El Mercurio*, 17 March 1945.

progressives as well. Popular Front President Pedro Aguirre Cerda requested that Los Cuatro Huasos represent Chile at the 1939 World's Fair in New York, and his party also commonly incorporated creole *huaso* musicians and *cueca* music at domestic public events.⁷² For example, the Popular Front's publication *Frente Popular* advertised a large party-sponsored event in 1939 that began with a politically focused play put on by "enthusiastic young people." Described by *Frente Popular* as a "dramatic comedy, which was a cry of suffering and rebellion from the proletariat," the play contained scenes illustrating "the humble life, filled with anguishes and hopes of our *pueblo*."⁷³ Following the performance, "the event [would be] completed with a great fiesta campera, in which various outstanding Chilean artists...[would take] part, including numerous creole groups."⁷⁴

Such examples indicate a shared embrace among Chileans from various social and political sectors of the *huaso* identity and *creole-huaso* music through the 1930s and 1940s. Nonetheless, just as views about socioeconomic "inclusion" became increasingly diversified over this period, a slowly growing segment of the middle class intelligentsia developed a broader conception of national identity that was not limited to *huaso* imagery and music. The emergence of this wider notion of Chilean identity was a manifestation of broader shifts occurring in Chilean political, social, and cultural perspectives, and it was rooted in the notion that *chilenidad* encompassed a more diverse array of influences than those of the immediate, rural areas that surrounded Santiago. The premise of this perspective became popular among many progressive intellectuals through the 1930s, and in 1943, a commission of academics and musicians that included Carlos Isamitt, Carlos Lavín, Eugenio Pereira Salas, Jorge Urrutia Blondel, Alfonso Letelier, Vicente Salas Viu, and Filomena Salas founded the Instituto de Investigaciones del Folklore Musical in collaboration with the Facultad de Bellas Artes of the Universidad de Chile. The following year, the Instituto officially became part of the Universidad de Chile and undertook a number of endeavors to study and promote its notion of

⁷² Rengifo and Rengifo, *Los Cuatro Huasos: alma de la tradición y del tiempo*, 48.

⁷³ "Todo el barrio Independencia prepara gran festival criollo de esta noche," *Frente Popular*, 19 October 1939.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

“Chilean” music. In addition to conducting “folkloric concerts” with “*authentic* national airs recovered from oral tradition and from history” at the Teatro Cervantes and the Teatro Municipal in Santiago, the *Instituto* began a “methodic study of the geographic distribution of our [Chile’s] musical folklore.”⁷⁵ One of the primary objectives in this study was to develop a “folkloric map” of Chile that would cover *all* of the country’s territory and include a “Calendario Santoral Católico” that “classified ceremonies in relation with our religious folklore in the diverse regions of Chile.”⁷⁶ Additionally, the Instituto published, in conjunction with RCA Victor during December 1944, a first collection of “authentic versions” of Chilean music from “regional folk singers, ceremonies, and melodies of interest” entitled *Aires tradicionales y folklóricos de Chile*. Twenty-seven examples of “national music” from diverse outlying regions of central and central-southern Chile comprised the collection, including *tonadas*, *villancicos*, *décimas*, *cantos de velorio*, *canciones*, and *danzas tradicionales*. The Instituto chose various folklorists to perform the songs in this compilation, selecting those artists with particular “consideration for their being performers who presented, as much as possible, the most authentic form of traditional and *campesino* signing, without theatrical effects.”⁷⁷ Among the participating artists were Las Hermanas Estela and Margot Loyola, whom *La Revista Musical Chilena* noted to be particularly appropriate selections on account of their “tours of diverse regions of Chile”; El Dúo Molina-Garrido; Ismael Navarrete; and Los Provincianos, a *huaso* group whose links with the Universidad de Chile and strong interest in collecting and reproducing folkloric music with minimal stylization fostered a distinctive connection between the group and progressive elements of the middle class.⁷⁸

The Instituto strove to “find the best form of bringing to the masses the true traditional culture and folklore of the past, the only possible road...for conserving and bettering...popular song.”⁷⁹ In doing so, it

⁷⁵ “Instituto de investigaciones del folklore musical,” *Revista Musical Chilena* (July 1945): 19.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

offered an alternative notion of “Chilean” music and identity. First, it conceived of “Chilean” traditions as stemming from various regions of the country—especially central-southern Chile and the Araucanía—as opposed to being rooted solely in the Central Valley’s *huaso* culture. This more diverse notion of *chilenidad* stood in opposition to much of the Central Valley and *huaso*-dominated imagery and traditions that defined the chileanization efforts of the 1920s. As previously discussed, early leftist leaders, such as Emilio Recabarren, had rejected the chileanization campaign by arguing that the chileanization movement and the *Ligas Patrióticas* amounted to little more than an effort by Liberal Democrats to distract the laboring class from its own plight through the promotion of nationalist fervor. Recabarren in particular railed against this “nationalism” and argued that the Peruvian and Chilean elite masked their close ties behind this patriotic “farce” in order to “plant hatred among the workers so that they always remain divided and therefore [are] easy to exploit.”⁸⁰ Second, the Instituto and those who shared its vision contended that the Chilean populace alone created authentic Chilean music. Accordingly, any altering or embellishment of rural folk traditions (Central Valley or otherwise) was fundamentally detrimental. As reflected by composer Domingo Santa Cruz’s comments 1947, stylizations of rural folk music came to be viewed from this perspective as “a Chilean song that has nothing to do with the pueblo, a song filled with fermatas, breaths, falsettos and effects of poor taste and of the most detestable consequence.”⁸¹ The *huaso* groups were not “genuine cultivators of our [Chilean] folklore,” but musicians who “lacked a clear and respectful concept of folklore.”⁸² Moreover, the Instituto and those who shared its vision lamented that radio airtime allotted to *huaso* music had made this perceived lack of respect for folklore prevalent in Chilean society.⁸³ In response, those who held this point of view not only argued that the state must be responsible for

⁸⁰ “Chilenos y peruanos,” *El Grito Popular*, 25 May 1911. (See *El Grito Popular* issues between May and July 1911 for numerous additional examples of Recabarren’s criticism of the *Ligas Patrióticas* and chileanization efforts.)

⁸¹ “Editorial: música chilena en la radio,” *Revista Musical Chilena* (April 1947): 2.

⁸² Carlos Isamitt, “El folklore como elemento básico del liceo renovado,” *Revista Musical Chilena* (July-August 1946): 21-24.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

supervising radio programming to ensure the survival of “authentic” folklore, but they additionally argued against commercial music in general and believed that no relationship could exist between commercial music and true *chilenidad*. As Domingo Santa Cruz asserted:

The State should supervise the radio transmission of music; it must procure the treasure of our genuine expression and of our popular tradition with the spread in bulk of the foreign, or that which falsely brings the etiquette of music from other countries. The commercial exploitation that the radio, stimulated by the masses, is happy to adopt, has produced...a taste for the general, exaggerating the ordinary, the gaudy, and tending to produce a cheap effect...it is striking to walk through the campo and hear the workers, as they leave their jobs, if they sing or whistle, it is no longer what we heard twenty years ago: invariably, that which attracts them and inspires them is the music of a movie, almost always Mexican or Argentine or some of those unearthly “melodic songs” that they have produced in order to serve as a link between the cosmetic ads, remedies or articles of clothing.⁸⁴

During the 1930s and 1940s, the perspective of the Instituto and those who shared its point of view did not necessarily match the musical perspectives held by most Chileans. The already pervasive, *huaso*-based conception of *chilenidad* limited popular acceptance of the Instituto’s notion of “authentic” Chilean music, particularly within the Central Valley and Santiago. Indeed, the *huaso*-based, *creole* conception of Chilean identity, which for years had been propagated heavily by radio and *chileanization* campaigns inside and outside of the Central Valley, had established itself across Chilean society. Regardless of whether or not Central Valley-based *huaso* traditions were endemic to a particular area, or whether or not they stemmed from what the most progressive Chilean reformers viewed as the exploitative structure of Chile’s *fundos*, individuals from diverse segments of society enjoyed the stylized *huaso* music and had come to see in it a sense of themselves, their life experiences, and their countrymen. Accordingly, implanting a new musical cannon that consisted largely of regional sounds, to which individuals in other parts of Chile generally had little or no pre-existing affinity, proved a difficult task for the Instituto, particularly without the resources of a full-fledged, state-

⁸⁴ Domingo Santa Cruz, “Editorial: música chilena en la radio,” *Revista Musical Chilena* (April 1947): 2.

sponsored, cultural campaign or any significant assistance from the commercial recording industry. Although the government did support to a very limited degree the Instituto's efforts to collect and disseminate what the Instituto perceived to be "authentic" folk music, this support never remotely approached the extreme levels of intensity that drove the chileanization campaigns, nor did those bureaucrats who granted support to the Instituto's efforts ever view the stylized *huaso* groups as anything less than additional examples of "authentic" Chilean folklore.⁸⁵

Reflecting on the public's acceptance of artistic expressions of *criollismo*, journalist Joaquín Edwards Bello argued in 1956 that "it matters little to the public that a book is *criollista* or not. What is important is that it is interesting... The learned men can condemn a book as ignorant, but the public will judge it to their taste, without concern for the enlightened learned critics."⁸⁶ The phenomenon that Bello's noted was not exclusive to literature, but also existed within the realm of music: Chileans listened and formed emotional attachments to music they found "interesting." In most cases, "interesting" means that individuals see something of themselves in a particular song or style, either as a forward-looking and new conception of who they can be, or as a residue of something from their past, such as nostalgic memories they have come to associate with particular sounds. Whereas some individuals may have enjoyed the *huaso* groups and their *creole* music because they recognized folkloric sounds of the Central Valley that generated fond recollections of their own past and "revived those memories of better times," others may have considered that music to represent a new and exciting, nationalist image of Chile that blended the rural and the traditional with the cosmopolitan and modern.⁸⁷ In either event, Chileans became emotionally attached to the music and the notions of self and *chilenidad* that they associated with it. Even though the widespread embrace of 'unrefined' folk music from Chile's outlying regions

⁸⁵ Mularski, *Music, Politics, and Nationalism in Latin America: Chile During the Cold War Era*. This book analyzes how such debates over folklore and "authenticity" continued in subsequent decades, which as noted in the final paragraph of this article, helped to shape the cultural orientation of the Popular Unity government and the *nueva canción* movement.

⁸⁶ "Criollismo y chilenidad," *La Nación*, 22 November 1956.

⁸⁷ *El Mercurio*, 6 November 1943. (cit. González, Rolle, and Ohlsen, *Historia social de la música popular en Chile, 1890-1950*.)

and their less recognized populations was unlikely in this environment, the Instituto-aligned folklorist movement and its conception of *chilenidad* endured. This conception of *chilenidad* spread gradually over the coming decades, paralleling the growth of socioeconomic perspectives that continued to evolve out of the liberal tradition and strive increasingly for a more inclusive society. Eventually, this general orientation would play a central role in shaping the cultural perspectives of socialist President Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government in the polarized political environment of the early 1970s, as Popular Unity became intertwined with Chile's *nueva canción* ("new song") movement, a roots-based musical movement that reacted against cultural imperialism and the commercial recording industry by combining lyrics about the plight of the working classes with indigenous instrumentation, rhythms, and melodies from throughout Chile and across Latin America.