Introduction

Mexican corridos are commonly thought to be a form of genre or music, but corrido scholars argue that rather they are certain kind of tradition that is told through the form of a ballad. With origin in Spain, this particular form of ballad - the corrido - began in Mexico. Corridos can be described as a tradition of “follklorico.” They were first documented around the middle of the nineteenth century, and were centered around the border conflict and crisis that came upon the Mexican people who authored them. This corrido was referring to the eventual surrender of Juan Navarro Francisco in below.

Theory and Method

Sociologist Jeffrey Halley’s theoretical work on how art can resist rationalization formed the main premise for this research project needed. Corridos can be thought of as a cultural resistance to rationalization. The border imposed by the state can be understood as a form of rationalization in this case. Rationalization as defined by Weber is the increasing orderliness of life into rules in order to impose rational control. Rational control is an integral aspect for the reproduction of a capitalist society as it creates the conditions by which labor and production can be consolidated and controlled. Borderlands are both a physical and social space of denoting fixed identity markers, restrictions, and intended divided legal lines. Cultural practices which were once together or share social space and space are not only determining but also become associated with state boundaries. Corridos are “self-conscious reconstructions of subjectivity” (Nee 2009) due to the way they mimic rhetoric of dominion and the subjectivity of that discourse - the corrido defines fixed identity which is a prevalent in dominant discourse (An example being the othering of immigrants and communities). Another theoretical framing for the study of the corrido was that it needed to be understood in non-static terms. The study of culture cannot be confined to a single place and should take into account the sociability of the practice. Framing corridos (as well as narcocorridos) as a non-static, cultural form of resistance to rationalization that reflects the identity of Mexican-Americans growing up near the border contextualizes the historical and cultural relevance of the corrido and gives another framework to understand Mexican life on the border.

Narcocorridos

The rise of the narcocorrido, a specific kind of corrido that portrays narcotraficantes as larger-than-life social bandits who rise up from poor backgrounds and challenge both U.S. and Mexican authority. The U.S. alcohol prohibition was a boon to drug border commerce. The first narco corrido was recorded in 1934 and told of a smuggler who fell into the clutches of Texas law. “It could be said that the border is a distiller of themes and a “metropolitan region of ambiguity - a liminal space.” It is a zone of conflict, a zone of movement and transition, a zone of both damn poverty and fantastic wealth... but also a zone where normal life exists, on its own terms” (Liddick 2016). Narcocorridos have been interpreted as being a performative social model of active resistance to the exercise of state power that was a cultural expression of resistance against the border. The narcocorrido - “Los Super Capos” (above) can be seen as both an event on the brutal reality of the drug trade at the time and mimicry of dominance and associations with “lesser” citizens. Narcoorridos can be understood as not only a model for social mobility but a cultural expression of resistance against the border. This poster briefly outlines how corridos and narcocorridos are forms of cultural resistance to rationalization that reflects the identity of Mexican-Americans growing up near the border.

Conclusion

This poster briefly outlines how corridos and narcocorridos are forms of cultural resistance to rationalization that reflects the identity of Mexican-Americans growing up near the border. The rise of the corrido was intended to frame corridos in this way for future analysis as well as provide a framework for understanding how corridos serve as a cultural resistance to rationalization. The border imposed by the state can be understood as a form of rationalization in this case. This is indicative that they are a cultural resistance to rationalization that reflects the identity of Mexican-Americans growing up near the border.

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Sources


The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Acknowledgements

I’d like to thank my mentor Jeffrey Halley in guiding my theoretical understanding of corridos as a cultural resistance to rationalization. My thanks also go to the UTSA Creative Writing Program who provided support and guidance in the articulation of my ideas. It has been an honor to work with all the members of the MEXCAN team in research, writing, and sharing our findings. Finally, I would like to thank all of the Mellor Fellows and their work continues to inspire me and create spaces where I can discuss my own work.