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When Tejano Ruled the Airwaves: The Rise and Fall of KQQK in Houston, Texas

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

When Tejano Ruled the Airwaves: The Rise and Fall of KQQK in Houston, Texas¹

Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., University of Houston

INTRODUCTION

“Tejano is back and so are all your old Tejano artists,” states an animated DJ for radio station KQQK 106.5 FM. Immediately thereafter, the station puts on a jamming ranchera by a top Tejano artist. This is quickly followed by another ranchera and another and another - a good 45 minutes of non-stop music. Later in the broadcast, the DJ announces that “Tejano is back and better than ever.”

This comment was in reference to the radio station’s earlier abandonment of Tejano music in 1999. KQQK was Houston’s leading Spanish-language radio station during most of the 1990s. Unlike other stations, it played *solamente* (strictly) Tejano music, a particular form of music developed by Tejanos in the early 20th century. It also used Spanglish in its DJ chatter and in its commercials. Its format was unique to other stations that played mostly Spanish language music from Mexico and other parts of the Spanish speaking world, and that used a Spanish only policy when addressing its listeners. The use of this bilingual format and the focus on Tejano music catapulted KQQK to the top of the Spanish-language radio

market. By mid-1999, however, KQQK abandoned this format and switched to other forms of music. When and why did KQQK quit playing Tejano music and what did it replace it with? Why did it return to Tejano music and with what results? To understand these developments we need to go back to the radio station's founding in the mid-1980s in order to explore the role that it played in Houston's Spanish language radio market.

TEJANO AND REGIONAL MEXICAN MUSIC

Before discussing KQQK, a brief description of Spanish language or "Latin" music is necessary. The world of Latin music includes a wide variety of genres divided into three major categories- Latin pop, tropical/salsa and regional Mexican. The latter comprises over 52% of all sales of Latin music. Regional Mexican, in turn, is comprised of nine distinct subgenres: Tejano, norteño, conjunto, grupo, mariachi, trio, tropical/cumbia, vallenato, and banda.² Each of these subgenres is distinct in the instrumentation, vocalization, repertoire, and performance styles. Because of a lack of consensus on definitions, there is a great deal of confusion over these labels. For our purposes, we will define each in the following manner. Tejano is a distinct type of music played primarily by Tejanos, for Tejanos. It is comprised of several genres of music including orquestas, conjuntos, grupos, and Chicano country bands playing a variety of Mexican music updated over the decades (San Miguel, 2002). Norteño is accordion-based music from northern Mexico and southern Texas. Conjunto is a generic term given to any accordion based group that plays Mexican music. Mariachi is a particular type of orquesta típica comprised of string and wind instruments. Trio makes reference to a group of three individuals usually playing two or three string instruments and harmonious singing of romantic songs. Tropical/cumbia makes reference to musical groups that specialize in the playing of cumbias, social dance music with a tropical flavor. Grupo is a particular musical group that is based on the keyboard. Vallenato is a particular style of accordion-based music from Latin America. Banda is an orquesta de pitos (horn orchestra) that plays a variety of Mexican music (Burr, 1999).

In Texas, *musica Tejana*, as well as most of the various forms of regional Mexican music, can be heard on Spanish language radio. Over the decades, these different forms of Mexican music competed for listeners but in the last decade of the 20th century, the competition between Tejano and *norteño* was fierce and full of tension. The following documents the manner in which this conflict manifested itself in one particular radio station, KQQK, in Houston, Texas during the 1990s.

ORIGINS OF KQQK AND THE RISE TO THE TOP

Prior to 1986, Spanish language radio, with a few minor exceptions, followed a “Mexico only” policy. This meant that radio stations only spoke Spanish on the radio and only played music popular in Mexico. Spanish language radio, for the most part, appealed to the Mexican immigrant population (Patoski, 1996).

KQQK challenged this “Mexico only” policy and developed a novel one that targeted Tejanos in its marketing campaign. Tejanos are Mexican-origin individuals born or raised in the U.S. and, unlike immigrants, grew up speaking both English and Spanish. They also listened to a variety of social dance music heard in the United States and in Mexico, including *musica Tejana*. This type of music popularly referred to as “Tejano” in the 1990s, was neither Mexican nor American but a complex hybrid that entailed the creative combination of rhythms, styles, and songs from both countries.³ Despite its complexity, the core of *musica Tejana* was the ever present polka-based *ranchera*.⁴

In order to appeal to Tejanos KQQK encouraged Spanglish among the DJs and in its commercials. It also encouraged the playing of songs performed by older Tejano artists such as Little Joe, Latin Breed, and Laura Canales and by the more contemporary ones of that period like Selena, Emilio, Mazz, and La Mafia.

Although founded in 1986, KQQK did not immediately settle on this “*Solamente Tejano*” (strictly Tejano) format. During the first three years of its existence it spent a great deal of effort developing this approach. From 1986 to 1989, for instance, it went from a predominantly English language station with an afternoon Tejano program to a full-time Spanish language station geared towards the bilingual Latino market.⁵

From 1989 to 1992 KQQK battled other Latino radio stations for supremacy. The station's primary competitors during these years were KXYZ 1320 AM and KLAT 1010 AM. KXYZ 1320 AM, owned by Infinity Broadcasting, went on the air in 1983. It transmitted 5,000 watts and played soft listening Spanish international contemporary music and appealed to a wide variety of Spanish speaking immigrants. The latter station, known as La Tremenda, also went on the air with 5,000 watts in 1983 and focused on regional Mexican music, especially rancheras. KLAT was owned by Tichenor Media Systems, one of the largest Spanish-language radio companies in the United States, and its listeners were mostly working class Mexican immigrants (Washington, D.C.: The Media Institute, 1987, p.99).

During these years, KQQK consistently ranked as the number two Latino radio station in the Houston market. This changed in the spring of 1992 when the arbitron ratings showed that KQQK, now known as Tejano 106.⁶ ranked as the number one Latino radio station in Houston.⁷ For the remainder of the 1990s it retained this position, despite fierce competition from other Spanish language radio stations.

KQQK's rise to the top of the Latino radio market occurred in the context of a general boom in *musica Tejana*. During the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s, *musica Tejana's* popularity increased dramatically as Tejano artists like Selena, La Mafia, Emilio, and Mazz sold hundreds of thousands of CDs and filled stadiums, coliseums, and rodeos. Other indicators of increased popularity were the establishment of bilingual TV programming, print media, and Tejano radio.⁸ By mid-decade, *musica Tejana* was heard on the radio in twenty-three states from California to Rhode Island and listened to by countless others throughout Mexico and Latin America (San Miguel, Jr. 2002).

REMAINING AT THE TOP

KQQK's continued dominance of the Latino radio market in Houston after 1992 was not easy. It always had fierce competition from several radio stations, especially two FM radio stations founded in the early part of the decade. One of these was KLTN 93.3 FM *Estereo Latino*, founded in 1992, and KXTJ 108.5 FM *Super Tejano*, founded in 1993.

The latter was a clone of KQQK and played *musica Tejana*. It became this radio station's strongest competitor. This competition ended in January 1995 when the owners of KXTJ Super Tejano, El Dorado Communications, bought out KQQK Tejano 106 and began to broadcast the same type of music with some minor differences.⁹ By late 1997, however, and in response to market conditions, KXTJ switched formats from Tejano to regional Mexican music.¹⁰ This left KQQK, again, as the only station broadcasting *musica Tejana*.

KLTN Estereo Latino, unlike KQQK, appealed primarily to what publicity director Arturo Sanchez then called the "Hispanic yuppie" market, that is, the increasing numbers of upwardly mobile Spanish language immigrants from Mexico, Central and South America. It also targeted a growing bilingual market of third and fourth generation Mexican Americans and some crossover English-language listeners. KLTN initiated a Spanish-only policy in its content and a more diverse musical selection comprised of various types of Spanish language music, especially *musica romantica* (romantic pop ballads).¹¹

In 1995, KLTN increased its competitive edge when it initiated a simulcast broadcast with its sister station, KLTO 104.9 FM.¹² In the next several years, KLTN came consistently close to beating KQQK in the rankings but was unable to displace it as the number one Latino radio station in Houston. KQQK's "Solamente Tejano" format remained a winning strategy in the 1990s.

SWITCH TO "TEJANO Y MAS" (TEJANO PLUS)

Although KQQK had been quite successful with its "Solamente Tejano" approach, it switched over in the latter part of the summer of 1999 to what I call a "Tejano y Mas" (Tejano plus) format. This type of programming was aimed at expanding KQQK's base by making the radio station more appealing to the large number of Mexican immigrants that had settled in Houston during the 1990s.¹³

To attract these new listeners, KQQK made three significant changes to its programming. First, it abandoned the bilingual format and initiated a

Spanish only policy. As part of this effort, the radio station replaced bilingual commercials and DJ chatter with Spanish only ones. In most cases, the station “forced” its DJs to speak only Spanish, a difficult task given that most of them were Tejanos not formally trained in that language. Second, it played more artists from Mexico and more *musica norteña*. Among the groups that began to dominate the air waves at KQQK were Limite, Los Invasores del Norte, Ramon Ayala y Los Bravos del Norte, and Intocable. Third, the radio station played fewer polka-driven rancheras and more cumbias and baladas. Unlike rancheras, which appealed primarily to the older generation, cumbias and baladas were embraced by the new generation and by the new immigrants as part of their musical heritage. Tejano artists such as Mazz and Jay Perez and the ranchera-based songs they recorded became an insignificant part of KQQK’s play list.¹⁴ The radio station’s slogan--“exitos Tejanos y norteño” (Tejano and norteño hits) -- and its greater dependence on Spanish only on the air reflected this switch away from Tejano only.

KQQK Top 10 Playlist for Dec 6, 1999

1. Se Baila Asi, Los Tigrillos, Norteño
2. Dices Ya No, Pesado, Norteño
3. La Chica de los Ojos Tristes, Cornelio Reyna, Jr., Norteño
4. Solo Una Patada, Ramon Ayala, Norteño
5. Me Hace Llorar, Masizzo, Norteño
6. Perdedor, Intocable, Norteño
7. De Vida o Muerte, Los Invasores, Norteño
8. El Amigo Que Se Fue, Intocable, Norteño
9. Tu Muñeca, Zulmara Norteño
10. Fuiste Malam, Kumbia Kings, Tejano

Source: KQQK FM 106.5 Top 25 Playlist, December 6, 1999 El Dorado Communications, Houston, Texas (in author’s possession).

Three official reasons were given for this “modification” in programming, as Tom Perry, Director of Programming, called it. First, Mexican immigrants had become an important and increasing segment of the Spanish language listening audience. Second, norteño music had become extremely popular during the latter part of the 1990s, especially among recent immigrants from Mexico. Groups like Intocable, Limite, and Invasores del Norte were selling millions of CDs and taking the industry by storm. Third, Tejanos themselves had become very fond of this type of music. Award presentations and concert performances indicated the increased popularity of norteño among Tejanos. From 1996 to 2000, for instance, two norteño groups won the Tejano Music Awards for album of the year under the traditional conjunto category—Michael Salgado and Intocable. Intocable and Limite also became the most popular artists in the Go Tejano Day at the Houston rodeo since Selena and Emilio of the early 1990s.¹⁵

Two other factors also undoubtedly contributed to KQQK's changes in radio programming. One of these was the slump in the Tejano music industry. Tejano nightclubs throughout the state closed down or switched to other types of music, CD sales were down, and no new artists as popular as Selena or Emilio had emerged. Tejano industry observers blamed this slump on several major factors: an increasingly conservative radio market, a shrinking live-music circuit, a glut in the Tejano market, and the absence of new creative and charismatic superstars comparable to Selena or Emilio of the early 1990s (San Miguel, Jr., pp. 126-128). Tejano's slump greatly benefited the larger regional/Mexican genre, which included *musica norteña*, an accordion-based music done in the style of northern Mexican conjuntos such as Ramon Ayala.

Despite the slump in this particular industry, Tejano did not disappear or wither away, as many observers noted.¹⁶ Tejano remained where it has always been - in the community. It continued to thrive in community festivals like Party on the Plaza or the International Festival and in neighborhood nightclubs such as Oscar's in the Northside, the Casino Ballroom, Bea's Island Club, and Palmer's Ice House. It also continued to be played in family-based dances celebrating birthdays, quinceñeras (15 year old dances), bodas (weddings), and graduations.

The other important factor impacting KQQK's changes was the surge in the popularity of KLTN. In 1998, KLTN, a constant competitor to KQQK's dominance of Latino radio, acquired a bigger signal and went from 93.3 to 102.9 on the FM dial. Soon thereafter, the radio station also modified its format by switching from Spanish language contemporary music to a mixture of *musica norteña* and other forms of regional Mexican music. Although it played an occasional Tejano group like Emilio or Selena, KLTN concentrated on the hit tunes recorded by northern Mexican groups such as Los Tigrillos and Limite or by *norteño*-based conjuntos such as Los Tigres del Norte, Intocable, Ramon Ayala, and Los Invasores del Norte.¹⁷

These changes increased KLTN's popularity among Latinos, including Tejanos, and improved its ratings. By early 1999 KLTN toppled KQQK as the leader of Spanish language radio in Houston.¹⁸ The surge in KLTN's popularity and ratings, as well as the other factors mentioned above, created fear and anxiety in KQQK and encouraged the station's executives to abandon its "Solamente Tejano" format.

LISTENERS RESPOND: DISILLUSIONMENT AND ABANDONMENT

The shift from "Solamente Tejano" to "Tejano y Mas" backfired. The strategy not only failed to attract Spanish speaking immigrants in significant numbers, but it also cost them their Tejano listeners. Many of them were turned off by the radio station's changes and disillusioned with its direction.

Within weeks after these changes were implemented Tejano listeners began to complain about the station's direction, especially its music. "They play the same song over and over and do not have a diverse selection," noted Debra Barrera Carrizal, a former KQQK listener. "They don't play the Tejano artists of the past or of the present," noted Jumping Jess Rodriguez, a former KQQK DJ. "They play too much immigrant music or music from Mexico and not enough from Tejanos," stated Gordy "the Boogiemán" Rodriguez, another former KQQK DJ.¹⁹

Some listeners opposed these changes because they were using too much Spanish or they were using it incorrectly. "When they (the DJs) spoke

Spanish, they wouldn't even do it right. Estaba forzado (It wasn't natural)," stated Alicia Moreno, another disillusioned KQQK listener. "It didn't flow," she added.²⁰

A more profound reason for opposing these changes has been suggested by Cecilia Balli in a report to the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. She argues that KQQK listeners viewed the changes as a form of betrayal to la cultura Tejana. Radio executives tend to view music on the radio as a business, as a moneymaking enterprise. They are only interested in the bottom line. Tejano listeners, however, tend to view music on the radio as cultura, that is, as a reflection of their own distinct identity as Mexicanos living in a culturally insensitive state. For Tejanas/os, musica Tejana is a lived cultural experience that aids in the process of identity formation by providing a connection to the past and to the culture found in the community. The decline of musica Tejana on the airwaves then was viewed by many as "taking part of your culture away."²¹ Regardless of the reasons for opposing these changes, the result was usually the same: disappointment, anger, and mixed feelings towards the radio station.

Within weeks after the changes to a "Tejano y Mas" format many of these listeners began to speak badly about the radio station. Some even developed "KQQK SUCKS" stickers, which they displayed on their hats, cars, and trucks.²² Many of its listeners also abandoned KQQK and went to other radio stations, including KLTN, its major competitor.

RETURN TO "SOLAMENTE TEJANO" (STRICTLY TEJANO)

In response to these developments, KQQK abandoned its "Tejano y Mas" programming and returned to solamente Tejano in February of 2001. The complaints by Tejano listeners, the abandonment of KQQK by Tejano listeners, and the perceptible decline in the radio station's arbitron ratings (and in its revenues) served as important motivators. Tom Perry also noted, unconvincingly, that a resurgence of the Tejano music industry and the appearance of more "mainstream" Tejano music and artists contributed to this change in format.²³

In an effort to woo back its Tejano listeners and to improve its ratings KQQK made at least three significant changes in its programming. First, it abandoned its Spanish only policy of the recent past and returned to bilingualism. Second, it quit playing mostly Mexican or norteño based groups and started focusing on Tejano artists such as Emilio, Eddie Gonzalez, and Mazz. By doing so, it also began to play more polka-based rancheras and less cumbias because that was the type of music favored by Tejano artists. The comparative list of Top Ten Hits for June 25, 2001 reflects this return to “Solamente Tejano.”

KQQK Top 10 Playlist for June 25, 2001

1. Como El Viento, Texas Latino, Tejano
2. Siempre Cuenta Conmigo, Leonardo Gonzalez, Tejano
3. La Que Me Hace Llorar, Fama, Tejano
4. Por Amarte Asi, Jimmy Gonzalez, Tejano
5. Infiel, Joe Lopez, Tejano
6. Los Tres Amigos, Roberto Pulido, Tejano
7. Esos Dos Amigos Brindaron Por Ella, Ramon Ayala, Norteño
8. Dime Que Soy Tuyo, Gary Hobbs, Tejano
9. Cosita Dulce, Texas Latino, Tejano
10. Ruben Naranjo, Medley Eddie Gonzalez, Tejano

Source: KQQK FM 106.5 Top 25 Playlist, June 25, 2001 El Dorado Communications, Houston, Texas (in author's possession).

While most of these types of songs and artists were played throughout the day, it highlighted them during the noon hour, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., and during the rush hour of 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Finally, it established the “Old School” program on Sunday afternoons. During the hours from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. the radio stations played songs and artists popular in Texas during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The music of the orquesta greats such as the Royal Jesters, Little Joe, Freddie Martinez, and Latin Breed; of conjunto artists such as Bernal and Los Chachos; and of grupos such as La Movida, Laura Canales, Selena, Mazz,

and La Mafia, were played during the entire afternoon. Additionally, KQQK encouraged one of the longest surviving Tejano nightclubs-- Hullabaloo-- to initiate "Old School" music on Wednesday and Friday evenings.²⁴

Audience response to the return of "Solamente Tejano" at KQQK was mostly positive. "Increasing numbers of Tejano listeners are calling and telling us that 'you guys are jamming,' 'you guys are on our radio dial once again,' and 'your music is awesome,'" noted one of the radio station's DJs.²⁵

Despite these favorable comments, a few individuals, such as "the Boogieman" and Jumping Jess Rodriguez strongly believed that KQQK was still "not Tejano enough" because it ignored the "classic era" of this music.²⁶ This usually refers to the variety of music played by orquestas, conjuntos, and grupos Tejanos during the 1960s and 1970s. The radio station, however, promised its listeners that KQQK would develop a "Tejano classic" hits program in the near future. By late February 2001 KQQK had still not developed this program.

Although KQQK returned to the "Solamente Tejano" format, the damage had been done. Not only did it lose its Tejano listeners, the radio station also lost its dominance of Spanish-language radio in Houston. As Tejanos and Tejanas abandoned KQQK, its ratings and popularity plummeted. The ratings of other radio stations, especially KLTN 106.5 FM, in turn surged as those of KQQK fell. By the summer of 2002, KLTN 106.5 FM Estereo Latino gained dominance of both the Spanish-language market and the general market. KLTN, in other words, became the leading radio station for the entire Houston metro area.²⁷ Increased immigration from Mexico as well as the growth of the Hispanic media, especially the role played by Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation, played a crucial role in its dominance.²⁸

The rapid growth of regional Mexican radio stations soon led to the disappearance of Tejano music from the airwaves. In late 2001, KQQK 106.5 FM, the last remaining Tejano station in the Houston area, abandoned this type of music for Spanish pop. It also changed its call letters and became known as the XO. Tejano music on the radio officially came to an end in Houston.²⁹

A few months after the demise of KQQK several efforts were made to bring back Tejano to Houston. In October of 2002, for instance, KRTX AM, now called Tejano 980, began to play Tejano music. This station, however, based in the Richmond/Rosenberg area, a suburb of Houston, had a weak signal that was hard to pick up in many parts of Houston. Another local station, KGOL AM 1180, featured Tejano music, but only from 7 to 8 a.m. on weekdays.³⁰

In the absence of Tejano radio and in order to appeal to Tejano fans, two avid fans, Jumping Jess Rodriguez and Gordy “the Boogiemán” Rodriguez, former KQQK DJs, started an internet Tejano station that played only Tejano music 24 hours a day - bandidoradio.com. “Spanish radio is not playing our music and English stations aren’t playing our music. We’ve always been left in-between,” noted the Boogiemán. “On the Internet, we can be heard all over the world,” he added.³¹

Soon after it started airing, Bandidoradio.com merged with La Nueva Voz, a small but growing bilingual newspaper from Fort Bend County. The intent of this small merger was to promote *musica Tejana* locally through the print media and globally through the internet.³² Bandidoradio.com experienced steady growth in late 2002 and early 2003 but legal problems soon led to its demise.³³ Despite these brave efforts, Tejano music did not reappear. It disappeared with the demise of KQQK *Solamente Tejano*.

CONCLUSION

This case study of the rise and fall of a Tejano music radio station symbolizes, illustrates, showcases, suggests, and intimates a strong relationship between popular culture, music in this case, and a host of other factors such as identity, demography, power, and competition.

The rise and fall of KQQK especially illustrates the strong relationship between popular culture and identity formation. For Tejanos, KQQK was not simply a money-making venture. It was an aspect of Tejano culture. More specifically, it represented an integral part of their culture that had been absent in the public arena. The radio’s musical selections, its use of Tejano DJs, and its acceptance and utilization of bilingualism as a medi-

um of communication publicly legitimized their much despised and repressed cultural heritage.

For over a century and a half, Tejanos experienced a daily barrage of institutional and personal assaults on their cultural heritage, on their language, on their cultural traditions, and on their persons/bodies by both Anglo and Mexican authorities. Anglo American institutions and officials, for instance, consistently repressed, distorted, dismissed, or ignored the rich cultural heritage of the Mexican origin population born and raised in Texas. They passed policies against the speaking of Spanish, condemned a variety of cultural practices such as dancing, cock-fighting, and drinking, demeaned or dismissed the contributions of Mexican origin individuals to the making of Texas, and appropriated the land, lives, and livelihood of Tejanos (De Leon, 1999; Stewart and De Léon, 1993; De Leon, 1989). Mexican immigrant organizations and officials also failed to give proper credit and recognition to Mexican origin individuals born and raised in Texas and to their cultural heritage. The exclusion of Texas Mexican music from Spanish-language radio during most of the twentieth century is one example of their dismissal of Tejano culture.

KQQK contested these historical policies and practices by publicly recognizing the cultural heritage and musical tastes of Tejanos on the radio. For Tejanos then KQQK was culture; it reflected, legitimized, and affirmed the rich cultural and musical heritage that had developed under oppressive socio-economic and political conditions in Texas since the 1820s.

This case study also intimates a strong relationship between popular culture and power. At one level, it shows how Tejano listeners were able to influence the direction of a radio station without having a direct say in its management. Although they were not owners of the station, Tejano listeners wielded power by either supporting or withholding support for this radio station. Their support led to the rise of KQQK; their withdrawal of support helped lead to its demise. On another level, this case study also shows how powerless Tejanos were in determining the ultimate shape that Spanish-language radio would eventually take. The rise and fall of KQQK took place within a larger context of rapid Mexican and Latino immigration to Houston and fierce competition between major

corporations interested in profiting from the presence of these immigrants. Tejanos, in this case, were minor actors in these developments.

Although norteño music now dominates Spanish-language radio in Houston and elsewhere, Tejano fans will always remember this exciting period when their music, however brief in time, ruled the airwaves in one major Latino market.

Endnotes

1 Paper originally presented at the 29th Annual Conference of the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies, March 28-30, 2002, Chicago, Illinois. My paper was originally titled "Tejano vs. Norteño: A Case Study of Inter-ethnic Conflict in Tejano Radio."

2 Ramiro Burr, *Tejano and Regional Mexican Music* (NY: Watson-Guipill Publications, 1999), p.9.

3 For a popular history of this music see Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Tejano Proud: Tex-Mex Music in the 20th Century* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002). See also Manual Pena, *Musica Tejana* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999).

4 Musica Tejana likewise reflected the distinct historical experiences and ethnic identities of the Tejano population. This music reflected its history of conflict, limited opportunity, and cultural pride in this country. For further elaboration see San Miguel, Jr., 2002.

5 In October 1986, KQQK was known by the call letters of KXXK and played Spanish-language music. By April 1987, it was playing top 40 hits, heavy metal, and some Tejano (9-12 noon on Sundays). It also played Spanish only or bilingual commercials and used bilingual DJs. Sylvia Cavazos was the station's program director and the evening DJ. Iris Moreno hosted the morning slot. Louis B. Parks, "Boldly bilingual: KQQK combines English, Spanish in new approach," *Houston Chronicle*, April 20, 1987, Houston section, p. 1. In April or May 1989 KQQK changed its format and became a mostly Tejano radio station. In addition to using bilingualism in its DJ chatter and in its commercials, the station played Tejano hits for about 80% of the time and top 40 hits the other 20%. Juan R. Palomo, "Houston Station shows the future," HP, October 21, 1990, A26.)

6 Carole Juarez G., "KQQK sets airwaves a blaze with Tejano music," *Viva: A Supplement to the Houston Post*, Vol. 5, No. 10 (December 4, 1992): F1, F4.

7 In 1992, KQQK was the top Hispanic radio station and stood at no. 18 in market share among all Houston radio stations and at the top of the Hispanic stations, with 1.9 % of all listeners. It was followed closely by two other Hispanic radio stations, KXYZ at 1320 AM, with 1.7% and KLAT, with 1.4%. Debra Beachy, "1 tongue, many voices: Hispanic radio stations compete for Houston listeners," *Houston Chronicle*, Aug 31, 1992, Internet copy. See also Carole Juarez G., "KQQK sets air-

waves ablaze with Tejano music," *Viva*, supplement to the *Houston Post*, vol 5, Number 10, Dec 4, 1992, F1,F4.

8 For the growth of Latino and Tejano music on the web see Ramiro Burr, "Growth of Tejano and Latino music online," *Houston Chronicle*, Sun July 9, 2000, p. 13 and Ramiro Burr, "Internet Plugs into Latino Music," *Houston Chronicle*, Sunday, March 5, 2000, p. 14. For information on Tejano music video channel see Anissa R. Hernandez, "Here it is-all-Tejano music video channel," *La Onda*, Noviembre, 1997, p. 9.

9 Beverly Narum, "Tichenor Media Systems Turns on Hispanic Radio Market Campaign," *Houston Chronicle*, April 3, 1995. Internet copy.

10 Ramiro Burr reports that in 1997 major-market radio stations began switching formats from Tejano to regional/Mexican (or to "Tejano y mas"). The decline of the Tejano market, the lack of new innovative artists, and the growth of Mexican and Central American immigrants accounts for these changes. Among these stations was KXTJ 107.9 FM and KRTX 100.7 FM in Houston. Ramiro Burr, "Tejano loses some appeal on the radio," *HC*, Jan 4, 1998, p. 6, Zest section.

11 Eileen O'Grady, "Hispanic radio Making Inroads," *Houston Post*, Sept 12, 1994, E2, internet copy.

12 Beverly Narum, "Tichenor Media Systems Turns on Hispanic Radio Market Campaign," *Houston Chronicle*, April 3, 1995. internet copy.

13 Interview with Tom Perry, Director of Programming, KQQK. February 15, 2002.

14 Interview with Tom Perry, Director of Programming, KQQK. February 15, 2002.

15 Interview with Tom Perry, Director of Programming, KQQK. February 2002.

16 See, for instance, the alarmist view offered by Russell Contreras, "Roll Over Selena and Tell Emilio the News," *Houston Press*, May 6-12, 1999.

17 See "Who's numero uno?," *Houston Chronicle*, February 10, 1999, p. 1 (Star section).

18 According to one source, KTLN was so popular in the fall of 1998 that it tied with an English language station, KRBE, for the number one spot in the general Houston radio market. See "Who's numero uno?," *Houston Chronicle*, February 10, 1999, p. 1 (Star section).

19 Personal interviews with Debra Barrera Carrizal, February 16, 2002; Jumping Jess Rodriguez, February 17, 2002; Gordy "the Boogiemán" Rodriguez, February, 17, 2002.

20 Personal interview with Alicia Y. Moreno, February 18, 2002.

21 Cecilia Balli, "Its Not About Music Anymore," Unpublished manuscript, commissioned by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, December, 2001, p. 64. (In author's possession).

22 Cecilia Balli, "Its Not About Music Anymore," Unpublished manuscript, commissioned by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, December, 2001. (In author's possession).

23 Interview with Tom Perry, Director of Programming, KQQK. February 2002.

24 Interview with Tom Perry, Director of Programming, KQQK. February 2002.

25 Heard on KQQK 106.5FM, February 20, 2001.

- 26 Personal interviews with the Boogiemán and Jumping Jess, February 20, 2001.
- 27 Clifford Pugh, "Arbitron ranks Spanish-language KLTN-FM número uno," *Houston Chronicle*, July 25, 2002, p. 4D.
- 28 For fascinating articles on the changes in the radio industry and the role of major corporations see David Kaplan, "A niche no more: Spanish-language networks are becoming media titans," *Houston Chronicle*, June 23, 2002, 1A and Clifford Pugh, "Changes in the airwaves: as corporations gobble up local stations, will listeners be winners or losers?," *Houston Chronicle*, July 14, 2002, p. 8, 17.
- 29 Clifford Pugh, "Fanning the 'flame' of Tejano: Houston faithful keeping musical niche alive here," *Houston Chronicle*, Dec 1, 2002, p. 13.
- 30 Clifford Pugh, "Fanning the 'flame' of Tejano: Houston faithful keeping musical niche alive here," *Houston Chronicle*, Dec 1, 2002, p. 13.
- 31 Clifford Pugh, "Fanning the 'flame' of Tejano: Houston faithful keeping musical niche alive here," HC, Dec 1, 2002, p. 13.
- 32 Interview with Gordy "the Boogiemán" Rodríguez, February 17, 2002.
- 33 Although bandidoradio.com went off the air, Tejano music continued to be played under two new internet sites-BNETradio.com and Amigosradio.com. Email from Boogiemán to Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr. September 12, 2003 (in author's possession).

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