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Localizing Hybridity: The Politics of Place in Contemporary Cuban Rumba Performance

by

Rebecca Marina Bodenheimer

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Jocelyne Guilbault, Chair
Professor Benjamin Brinner
Professor Percy Hintzen

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by Rebecca Marina Bodenheimer

ABSTRACT

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This study examines a range of innovations that have emerged in the performance of the Afro-Cuban music and dance genre *rumba* during the last three decades. Rumba, which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century within black and racially mixed communities in western Cuba, is a hybrid musical practice that integrates Central- and West African-derived percussion instruments and rhythmic patterns with European melody and Spanish poetic forms. Recent innovations include the creation of fusions with a variety of Afro-diasporic musical practices, the incorporation of Afro-Cuban sacred music and dance into the repertoires of rumba groups, and the invention of a new percussion style. Rather than employing an indiscriminate approach to their fusions, I posit that musicians from different provinces in Cuba have drawn on specific, locally-defined traditions in their respective innovations. I propose that recent rumba fusions can be viewed as an example of the entangled relationship between regional identity formation and musical innovation.

The main theoretical focus of my dissertation is an exploration of how racialized regional identities are performed through the rumba innovations emerging respectively from Havana and Matanzas, the two western Cuban cities with the longest and most influential histories of rumba performance. While Havana and Matanzas share many of the same Afro-Cuban musical traditions, the two cities have been inserted into polarized cultural discourses: whereas Havana is represented as the cosmopolitan center of innovation and racial/cultural hybridity, Matanzas is known as "the cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" and constructed as the site of "authentic" blackness. My fieldwork with rumba groups in both Havana and Matanzas leads me to complicate these widely held assumptions about where tradition is "located" and where hybridity "takes place" in Cuba, as they paint incomplete portraits of the two cities' respective folkloric scenes. Although these tropes of place result in a problematic essentialization of the cultural identities of the two cities, they enjoy widespread currency both in Cuba and abroad and cannot simply be dismissed. The government's investment since the mid-1990s in cultural tourism centered around Afro-Cuban music and dance has significantly raised the stakes for folkloric musicians in terms of representing themselves as "authentic." Competition between Havana and Matanzas for cultural tourism, mainly in the form of music and dance lessons, thus presents a concrete example of how racialized discourses of place and related claims of authenticity have material effects on the livelihoods of folkloric musicians.

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INTRODUCTION

La Diana

The Afro-Cuban music and dance practice *rumba* has been the site of intense musical innovation in contemporary Cuba. In the last three decades, rumba musicians have created fusions with a variety of Afro-Cuban and foreign musical practices, incorporated Afro-Cuban sacred music and dance into their repertoires, and invented new percussion and performance styles. Rather than employing an indiscriminate approach to their innovations, I argue that musicians from different regions in Cuba have drawn on specific, locally defined traditions in their *hybridizing practices*.[1]

Traditional musical practices in Cuba are usually associated with the particular regions of the country from which they emerged, as is evident from the common assertion that rumba is from western Cuba and the traditional dance genre *son* is from eastern Cuba (Robbins 1990; Gomez Cairo 1996[1980]). Departing from the notion that the island's music functions as a prominent signifier of *Cubanidad* (Cubanness), both on and off the island, my dissertation proposes that musical genres play an important role in the construction of regional and local, in addition to national, identities.[2] Furthermore, I argue not only that the social histories of particular places inform local and regional identity formation, but that the racial and cultural tropes attached to these locales – which circulate in part through musical texts and which I refer to more broadly as "discourses of place" – are also constitutive of this process of place-based identification. Thus, rumba fusions emerging over the past three decades can be viewed as significant examples of the entangled relationship between regional/local identity formation, racialized discourses of place, and musical hybridizing practices.

This study explores how racialized regional identities are performed through the particular rumba hybridizing practices emerging respectively from Havana and Matanzas, the two western Cuban cities with the longest and most influential histories of rumba performance. By examining rumba fusions through the analytical lens of the politics of place, I engage with a more specific and situated notion of hybridity, following the theorization of Stuart Hall (Chen 1996), than is offered by the normative use of the term. As I discuss in chapter six, this alternative notion is meant to challenge the overly celebratory and apolitical invocation of hybridity that is characteristic of hegemonic nationalist discourses in Latin America and the Caribbean and which construct racial and cultural mixing as the essence of the nation.

My research focuses on three distinct but interrelated hybridizing practices that have emerged at different moments in the past three and a half decades. I examine the incorporation of Afro-Cuban religious music and dance into rumba groups' repertoires beginning in the early 1980s, a phenomenon that has resulted in the performance of sacred traditions alongside rumba,

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[1] I introduce the umbrella term "hybridizing practices" to refer to a variety of innovations, including those listed above, that have taken place in Cuban rumba performance within the last three decades. I do not wish to imply that these are the first instances of hybridizing practices in rumba's history, only that the more recent ones entail a greater expansion of the genre's boundaries.

[2] In the last ten years there has been a proliferation of scholarly work addressing the constitutive role of music in the construction of both individual identities and of notions about particular locales. See Cohen 1994; Stokes 1994; Bennett 2000; Forman 2002; Whiteley et al. 2004.

a secular genre, and has been evidenced in both Havana and Matanzas (see chapter five). I also investigate two rumba innovations, one in Matanzas – which constitutes another manifestation of the hybridization of sacred and secular traditions – and the other in Havana (see chapter six). First, I detail the creation of a hybrid sub-genre called *batarumba* in 1973 by the Matanzas-based folkloric group Afrocuba de Matanzas. *Batarumba*, the most prominent rumba hybrid to have emerged within the last thirty years, fuses a sacred practice – *batá* drumming associated with the Yoruba-derived religion known popularly as *Santería* – with secular rumba rhythms, creating an especially dense polyrhythmic texture.[3] Second, I explore a rhythmic innovation in rumba percussion and performance style called *guarapachangueo*, created during the 1970s in a municipality on the outskirts of the capital called San Miguel del Padrón and disseminated in the center of Havana in the 1980s. This relatively free-form approach to percussion playing has revolutionized Havana-style rumba to such an extent that it is now rare to hear local groups playing the traditional interlocking conga drum rhythm that has functioned for so long as rumba's primary sonic signifier.

Rumba historiography

Rumba's shifting "location" within the Afro-Cuban musical spectrum

Primarily influenced by the instruments, rhythmic patterns, formal features and dances from Central and West African traditions, rumba has always been a hybrid musical practice that also integrates elements of European melody and Spanish language and poetic forms. The subtitle of this introductory chapter, *La Diana*, references the Cuban term for the introductory section of a rumba song, where the lead singer uses vocables to establish the song's tonal center. Rumba emerged as the main musical accompaniment for parties and secular festivities in poor black and racially mixed communities in western Cuba in the mid-nineteenth century. Although a decidedly secular performance tradition, from its inception rumba incorporated percussion ensembles and dances associated with both sacred and secular African traditions, primarily those of Bantu origin such as *yuka* and *makuta* (León 1991[1982]; Crook 1992). This stems from its emergence within *cabildos de nación* (Martinez Rodriguez 1977), mutual aid societies formed in the nineteenth century by Africans and their descendants, whose official purpose was to orient newly arrived slaves to life in colonial Cuba. *Cabildos* were formed principally and theoretically along African ethnic lines – for example, the *Lukumís* (Yoruba) had their *cabildo*, the *Congos* (Bantu) had a separate one, etc. – although in practice there was a great deal of inter-ethnic exchange within the societies (Delgado 2001). They also functioned as the primary venues for slaves and free blacks to continue practicing their musical and religious traditions, and as a site of cultural exchange between Africans of different ethnic groups, creating the conditions for the emergence of syncretic genres such as rumba (Crook 1992). By the early twentieth century *cabildos* had all but died out, although there are still a few extant ones in different Cuban cities.

[3] Although *batarumba* incorporates the sacred *batá* drums in its instrumentation and features rhythms drawn from the Yoruba-derived repertoire, it is considered to belong to the secular generic complex of rumba, and would not be appropriate for a religious context (Daniel 1995). I consider *batarumba* to be the most influential rumba hybrid because of its widespread diffusion beyond its local site of emergence, i.e., to national and international performance arenas. Havana-based rumba groups such as Clave y Guaguancó have created other hybrids that incorporate foreign popular styles, such as rumba-rap and rumba-flamenco.

Throughout the twentieth century, rumba has occupied shifting positions within both the taxonomization of Afro-Cuban musical practices and the cultural nationalist discourse. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, rumba was a marginalized and criminalized cultural practice owing to its associations with poor and working-class blacks, many of whom had migrated from the countryside to the port cities of Havana and Matanzas to search for employment as dockworkers after emancipation in 1886 (Crook 1992). During the nation-building decades of the 1920s and 30s, rumba, in addition to other Afro-Cuban popular genres such as *son* and *comparsa*, was appropriated and stylized by elite nationalist composers such as Amadeo Roldán, and reinterpreted as a national music practice (R. Moore 1997). After the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 the socialist government began to institutionalize the performance of rumba and Afro-Cuban sacred traditions, which was taken as evidence of the Castro regime's dedication to the elimination of class and racial inequalities (Daniel 1995).

It was precisely at this moment of institutionalization that rumba began to be understood by many academics and some musicians as a folkloric practice in need of preservation rather than as a popular genre, although many musicians do not view rumba in this way.[4] It is necessary to emphasize here that the Spanish adjective *popular,* which literally translates as "popular," has other meanings beyond its English cognate, and often alludes to a certain sector of the population, the "people" or the "folk." Thus, rumba is a traditional "popular" practice in the sense that it has not lost its association with the black lower class, and because its genre boundaries are much more porous than those of other "folkloric" genres – namely, Afro-Cuban sacred practices – that often adhere to strict rules of performance. Nonetheless, neither is rumba a "popular" practice in the same way that it was a century ago and even up until the 1950s: it is not often performed spontaneously, most house parties now feature recorded dance music instead of rumba, and it is performed more in institutional venues than on street corners or in *solares*.[5] Moreover, rumba has never enjoyed mass-media circulation, which is a primary referent of the English phrase "popular music."[6] These ambiguities have led to my belief that rumba occupies an interstitial space between Afro-Cuban popular/secular and folkloric/religious music, and that its resistance to rigid taxonomic classification facilitates fusions with both sacred and secular musical practices.

In speaking and conceiving of rumba as a traditional musical practice, I wish to elucidate my use of the word "tradition" as a dynamic form that has a long history and is conceived of by its contemporary practitioners as a significant expression of their cultural roots, but that does not preclude innovation, change, or contestation. Thus I follow Jocelyne Guilbault in her conceptualization of tradition as "not a passive cultural inheritance, but rather an operative force shaping the past, present, and future (Guilbault 2007: 40). Her assertion that, " Selective traditions are saturated by hegemonic processes, at once the objects and the arena of contentious

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[4] In Cuban musicological scholarship, "folkloric" musical practices are generally discussed as synonymous with Afro-Cuban sacred music, largely due to the classifications put forth by famed Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (Hagedorn 2003). Certain state-sponsored events such as the weekly *Sábado de la Rumba* (Saturday Rumba) feature the performance of rumba alongside Afro-Cuban sacred traditions, contributing to the discursive association of rumba with "folklore" since the Revolution.

[5] *Solares* are small urban housing complexes with a group of small houses/shacks arranged around a central, common patio area. Their construction dates back to the nineteenth century and since then they have constituted a common living arrangement for Afro-Cubans and poor whites living in urban areas, and the most traditional context for rumba performance.

[6] Anthropologist Lisa Knauer notes that two Cuban ethnographers, Jesús Guanche and Idalberto Suco, coined the neologism "tradicional-popular" (traditional-popular) in 1982 to refer to genres such as rumba, that could be considered "traditional" but "were not museum pieces" (Knauer 2005: 51).

cultural politics" (ibid), is also relevant to my discussion of the racialized politics of place (see chapters one and four).

Rumba literature

My project is informed by the substantial body of work published by Cuban music scholars who have addressed the changing attitudes of the Cuban state toward different Afro-Cuban traditions at distinct historical and political moments within the last century (Daniel 1995; R. Moore 1997, 2006; Hagedorn 2001; Knauer 2005).[7] As the only full-length book on rumba in English or Spanish, dance scholar Yvonne Daniel's *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba* (1995) provides a close look at contemporary performance practice within the context of socialist Cuba. Daniel details the post-Revolutionary nationalist elevation and "folklorization" of rumba, elucidating the symbolic significance of the government's choice of rumba to represent the newly socialist nation: "…[rumba] gets closest to the member of Cuban society who is most venerated ideologically, the worker…*los humildes, los jíbaros, los negros pobres, los trabajadores* [the humble, peasants, poor blacks, workers]" (Daniel 1995: 114, 117). Regarding the socialist government's incorporation of rumba into institutional spaces, she emphasizes that it was not merely an egalitarian gesture, but was partly designed to discipline rumba performance and curtail "undesirable" behavior, such as drinking and fighting (ibid.: 61). Daniel's book is also the first and only academic text to discuss *batarumba* with more than just a passing reference, situating it as a newer "variation" within the rumba complex (ibid.: 68). Her recognition that despite categorical distinctions, there exists relatively little separation between sacred and secular domains of expression within Afro-Cuban contexts (ibid.: 132), has greatly informed my notion that rumba occupies an interstitial space between folkloric and popular musical practices.

Ethnomusicologist Katherine Hagedorn's *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (2001) also contributes to the recent critiques of post-Revolutionary Cuban nationalist discourse by illuminating the contradictions in the Castro regime's attitude toward Afro-Cuban religious practices. She notes that even as the folkloric representation of *Santería* music and dance was becoming normalized and professionalized in the 1960s through institutions such as the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional (National Folkloric Group or CFN), Afro-Cuban religious worshippers continued to be targeted for police repression until the 1980s. Hagedorn also details the shift in government policy toward Afro-Cuban religions after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, which had catastrophic effects on the Cuban economy. In pursuing Western European and Canadian tourism and foreign investment as a remedy for economic crisis, the state has capitalized on religious tourism – what Hagedorn calls *Santurismo* (Hagedorn 2001: 11) – where foreigners pay thousands of dollars to come to Cuba and be initiated into *Santería*. Like Daniel,

[7] Cuban scholars, beginning with Fernando Ortiz and his large body of published ethnographic and historical research on Afro-Cuban musical practices (which, curiously, did not include much on rumba specifically) and extending into the socialist era, have constructed an impressive body of literature on the histories, instrumentation, formal structures and styles of Cuban folkloric and popular music. Notwithstanding this crucial scholarship, due to the political climate during the last half decade – specifically the fact that intellectuals have faced varying levels of censorship and have been pressured by the state cultural apparatus to publish work that is in line with socialist ideals and agendas – scholars have not generally engaged in critical analyses of the relationship between rumba/Afro-Cuban religious musics and the state. U.S. anthropologist Lisa Knauer (2005) asserts that there has been a lack of engagement with critical theory in Cuban scholarship, which I believe is due largely to the intellectual isolation faced by scholars on the island as a result of the U.S. embargo, as well as the aforementioned issues of academic censorship.

Hagedorn's attention to the increasingly blurry boundaries between the sacred and secular realms in Afro-Cuban expressive culture is particularly instructive for my project's examination of the expansion of rumba groups' repertoire to the sacred domain.

One of my dissertation's primary goals is to fill the lacuna in English-language scholarship on the musical elements of rumba and its performance in the post-Revolutionary context, and to focus specifically on the post-Soviet period. Daniel's book is still rightly considered to be a classic in terms of rumba scholarship, especially because the only in-depth Spanish-language studies published by Cuban scholars are B.A. theses (Álvarez Vergara 1989; Grasso González 1989). Nevertheless, because she is a dance scholar, rumba music is of secondary concern in Daniel's work, and her fieldwork was conducted almost a quarter of a century ago, before the onset of Cuba's economic crisis and the *período special* ("Special Period," the term used to denote the years immediately following the fall of the Soviet Bloc). Anthropologist Lisa Knauer's dissertation, "Translocal and Multicultural Counterpublics: Rumba and La Regla de Ocha in New York and Havana" (2005), is a recent study that contributes a significant and convincing analysis of the challenging social and economic conditions facing rumba and Afro-Cuban religious musicians in the post-Soviet era. She highlights the continued racialization and marginalization of rumba and its practitioners, which is at odds with the state's rhetoric valorizing and elevating the practice to the status of national music. However, as an anthropologist, Knauer treats rumba primarily as a social, not musical, practice. Thus, within rumba historiography, there have been no English-language books or lengthy studies published by music scholars or authors from other disciplines that focus on musical sounds.[8]

The B.A. theses cited above are ethnographic studies of professional rumba groups in Havana and Matanzas respectively, and thus provide crucial information about the situation of rumba musicians in the 1980s, when many groups gained professional status. In addition, these studies discuss groups with whom I conducted research: Rosa Esther Álvarez Vergara's thesis discusses three professional rumba groups in Havana, one of which is Yoruba Andabo, and Nancy Grasso González's thesis focuses on the two major rumba groups in Matanzas: Afrocuba de Matanzas and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. My own discussion of the histories of Yoruba Andabo and Afrocuba de Matanzas draws on this previously conducted fieldwork (see chapter five), and Grasso González's thesis has been particularly useful for my discussion of the Matanzas rumba scene more generally (see chapter three). Beyond these ethnographies, Cuban scholars have included discussions of rumba within books or articles, the most significant examples of which are musicologist Argeliers León's chapter on rumba in his *Del Canto y El Tiempo* (1984), musicologist Leonardo Acosta's article "The Rumba, the Guaguancó, and Tio Tom" (1991[1983]), two very short articles by Raul Martínez Rodríguez (1977; 1996 [1977]), and a section on rumba in folklorist Odilio Urfé's article "Music and Dance in Cuba" (1984). All of these works were published in the 1970s and 80s, are historical and descriptive in nature, and generally discuss rumba without any mention of specific practitioners or the larger social context of its performance.[9] Thus, my dissertation complements the existing rumba literature,

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[8] While not in-depth studies, U.S. ethnomusicologists have written articles and/or sections of chapters analyzing rumba music. These include Larry Crook's two articles (1982; 1992), Philip Pasmanick's 1997 article, Peter Manuel's chapter on Cuba in *Caribbean Currents* (1995), and Robin Moore's *Nationalizing Blackness* (1997). Interestingly, there has been more in-depth research published on rumba performance in the Cuban diaspora (specifically New York City) than in Cuba, including Knauer's dissertation and various articles on New York's Central Park rumba scene and a dissertation by performance studies scholar Bertha Jottar Palenzuela (2005).

[9] Cuban scholar Maria del Carmen Mestas published a short book in 1998 called *Pasión de Rumbero*, but it consists almost solely of biographies of important rumba musicians. I do not reproduce much historical or descriptive

particularly by offering an in-depth English-language study centered around rumba music and performance in Cuba, instead of focusing on rumba dance (Daniel 1995), solely on its larger social context (Knauer 2005), or on diasporic rumba communities (Knauer 2005; Palenzuela 2005). In addition my study constitutes a holistic investigation of *contemporary* rumba performance, approaching the subject primarily through ethnographic research. Finally, I explore this musical practice through the lens of the "politics of place," an analytic that borrows theoretical frameworks from non-musicological disciplines, specifically cultural studies, cultural geography, and anthropology.

Theoretical approaches

My research, which examines recent rumba innovations in relation to the politics of place, rests on an assumption that the "cultural" is always imbricated with the political and economic spheres, and with power relations. Eminent cultural studies scholars Raymond Williams (1977), Stuart Hall (1996d [1993]), and Edward Said (2003) have all argued convincingly against the discursive separation of these realms. In *Orientalism,* Said draws on Michel Foucault to refute the notion that "culture," assumed to be a "pure" and "autonomous" realm, is necessarily sullied by an association with politics. He states, "…to believe that politics in the form of imperialism bears upon the production of literature, scholarship, social theory, and history writing is by no means equivalent to saying that culture is therefore a demeaned and denigrated thing…internal constraints upon writers and thinkers were *productive*, not unilaterally inhibiting" (Said 2003: 14). Hall elucidates the ways that power is effected in the cultural domain, stating, "Cultural practices are never outside the play of power. And one way in which power operates in the apparently decentred sphere of culture is through the struggle to harness it, to superimpose on it, to regulate and enclose its diverse and transgressive forms and energies, within the structure and logic of a normative or canonical binary" (Hall 1996d [1993]: 302). The constructed dichotomy between the domains of culture and politics/power does not correspond to the daily realities of most musicians in the world, much less Afro-Cuban folkloric musicians living in a socialist society. The entanglements between these realms, and in particular the fact that economic concerns are of tremendous importance to folkloric musicians in post-Soviet Cuba, are detailed in chapter two.

I highlight the political nature of recent rumba hybridizing practices by viewing them in the context of the politics of place, a framework that has yet to be explored in relation to Cuban genres such as rumba that are practiced in distinct ways in different locales.[10] Before outlining my analytic, I want to emphasize that this study focuses on the production of place, and the ways that locales come to have racialized associations and to signify certain types of music-making, i.e., the fact that Matanzas is linked to blackness and a traditional style of rumba, whereas Havana is represented as a racially and culturally hybrid place defined musically by fusion and innovation. Thus, I am primarily engaging with theorizations of "place," and not "space" as such, although I find that the distinction between the two is not always clear even in the work of geographers. Nonetheless, I follow geographer Doreen Massey's conceptualization of the relationship between place and space, in which she argues against the traditional polarization of the two within her

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information about rumba, except where relevant in different chapters, because Cuban scholars have published substantially in this area.

[10] *Rumba matancera* (Matanzas-style rumba) and *rumba habanera* (Havana-style rumba) are traditionally distinguished by slightly different rhythmic patterns within the percussion ensemble, although there are other elements that differentiate them.

field. She notes that the "persistent counterposition of space and place…is bound up with a parallel counterposition between global and local [that] resonates with an equation of the local with realness, with local place as earthy and meaningful, standing in opposition to a presumed abstraction of global space" (Massey 2005: 183). Massey's own framework views the relationship between space and place in terms of scale, i.e., place exists on a reduced scale as compared to space and constitutes a "particular envelope of space-time" (Massey 1994: 5). She states, "If…the spatial is thought of in the context of space-time and as formed out of social interrelations at all scales, then one view of place is as a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings" (ibid). In this vein, I treat Matanzas and Havana as places produced by and through social relations manifested at a particular point in time, the early twenty-first century.

Challenging sedentarist metaphysics: a non-essentialist notion of place

Anthropologists James Clifford (1992), Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1991), and others have critiqued ethnographers' long-held assumption of a natural link between particular cultural groups, seen as unitary and homogenous, and the territories they inhabit, what Liisa Malkki calls a "sedentarist metaphysics" (Malkki 1997). Malkki, also an anthropologist, describes this sedentarism as "deeply moral, sinking 'peoples' and 'cultures' into 'national soils' and the 'family of nations' into Mother Earth…it actively territorializes our identities, whether cultural or national" (Malkki 1997: 61-2). Addressing the role that ethnographers play in the construction of a sendentarist metaphysics, Gupta and Ferguson call on their colleagues to examine their own *production* of spatialized difference, and the ways that these naturalized assumptions about "others" contributes to what Arjun Appadurai calls the " 'spatial incarceration of the native'" (Gupta and Ferguson: 14).[11]

My framework is strongly informed by these crucial anthropological interventions that have problematized the naturalized links between place, culture and identity. However, following Massey (1994) and others (Bennett 2000; Turino 2000), I also wish, to emphasize the importance of what Massey terms "locality studies." In her influential *Space, Place, and Gender*, Massey offers an alternative theorization of place, one that sees places as defined not by fixed essences, nor by "some long internalized history but…constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" (Massey 1994: 154). My analytic draws on her reconceptualization of place, which, as noted above, eschews the traditional fetishization of place as a "safe haven" from the supposedly alienating effects of increasing globalization. Instead, places are characterized by porous, shifting boundaries and social relations that are inevitably entangled with extra-local political and economic conditions (ibid: 133-4). Ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino similarly asserts, "For me, *local* simply indicates a place where face-to-face interchanges are common, likely, or at least possible…My use of the word does not necessarily indicate cultural distinction or a binary opposition in relation to cosmopolitanism (as in 'local-global')" (Turino 2000: 17-18). Donald Moore posits the hybridity of the "local," stating, "Place emerges as a distinctive mixture, not an enduring essence, a nodal point where these

[11] In his book *Suffering for Territory: Race Place, and Power in Zimbabwe,* anthropologist Donald Moore presents a similar critique of this "spatial incarceration," which he describes as the "ethnic spatial fix," a divide-and-conquer colonial strategy in which "affixing [ethnic] identities in tribal territories" was used as a tool of domination and control over Africans (D. Moore 2005: 14).

translocal influences intermesh with practices and meanings previously sedimented in the local landscape" (Moore 2005: 20). In the frameworks of Massey, Turino, and Moore, then, places are porous, relational, heterogeneous, and even hybrid, a conceptualization that is very productive for my own project, in which the notion of hybridity is so central.

Because sedentarist metaphysics inevitably involve claims of authenticity, evident in the notion, for example, that Matanzas is the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture," another main objective for me in problematizing discourses of place is to highlight that there is "no authenticity of place" (Massey 1994: 121). Here I also draw upon cultural geographer Michael Watts' provocative suggestion that marginalized communities "involve[s] a territorialization of history" (Watts 2003: 446), which functions to buttress their claims for land rights, or in the case of my study, musicians' claims of racialized authenticity. This notion, which Watts also refers to as " 'an invented space of authenticity'" (ibid.: 447), is useful for interrogating place-based discourses of authenticity as they relate to local identity formation.

The politics of place: the spatiality of identity, regionalism, and racialized discourses of place

The politics of place, as I conceive of it, includes the following elements that are examined in the dissertation: the "spatiality of identity," regionalist sentiment among Cubans of different provinces, and racialized discourses of place. My research thus contributes to the recent works that theorize space and place in relation to identity and cultural practices, which have proliferated particularly in popular music studies (Cohen 1994; Bennett 2000; Forman 2002; Connell and Gibson 2003; Whiteley et al. 2004).[12] In this vein, my study takes as given the notion that music and place mutually constitute each other, and inform the construction of local identities. In his introduction to the anthology *Ethnicity, identity, and music: the musical construction of place*, ethnomusicologist Martin Stokes states, "I would argue therefore that music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them" (Stokes 1994: 5). In *Music, space and place: popular music and cultural identity*, Sheila Whitely and her co-authors further suggest that "music plays an important role in the narrativization of place…the way in which people define their relationship to local, everyday surroundings" (Whiteley et al. 2004: 2). This notion of music "narrativizing" place is particularly useful for my discussion of discourses of place (see chapter four), and the ways these discourses are entangled with musical and cultural production. Finally, while the bulk of the aforementioned scholarship concerning the relationship between music and place has been written by cultural geographers and popular music scholars, my dissertation contributes to the few ethnomusicological studies (for example, Stokes 1994) that ground theorizations of place in ethnographic research.[13]

A central part of my framework relates to what cultural geographer Don Mitchell characterizes as the "spatiality of identity" (Mitchell 2000: 62). As a basic tenet of cultural geography, this notion points to the powerful effects that space and place have on the production of social identities, whether they are locally, regionally, nationally and/or transnationally defined. In *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop*, Murray Forman highlights the

[12] Vincenzo Perna's 2005 book on *timba* (Cuban salsa) presents song lyrics with localized references, but he does not comment on these spatial discourses. Lisa Knauer's 2005 dissertation briefly discusses the racialized geography of Havana's neighborhoods.

[13] Anthropologists, on the other hand, have produced a number of ethnographic studies framed by issues of space and place. See, for example, Peter Wade (1993), Steven Gregory (1999), and Donald Moore (2005).

fascinating cross-cultural assumption of a "latent relationship between spatiality and identity" (Forman 2002: 30), evidenced by the ubiquitous tendency to ask someone where s/he is from as a way of gaining insight into his/her character. In the context of contemporary Cuban rumba performance, the spatiality of identity is inevitably entangled with processes and discourses of racialization. As Forman and anthropologist Peter Wade (1993) have noted, there is a widespread tendency to correlate race and place, and the two often stand in for each other discursively, as evidenced by the racialized discourses of place I discuss below.

My interest in investigating the politics of place in rumba performance stems from my observations during preliminary fieldwork trips that expressions of regionalism, which have a long history on the island, are pervasive in contemporary Cuban society.[14] Although largely ignored in both Cuban and North American academic scholarship, assertions of regionalist sentiment are ubiquitous both in everyday discourse and in dance music and rumba lyrics, an issue I detail in chapter one. Despite the state's official rhetoric espousing national unity, Cubans cling tightly to their regional identities and at times express hostility towards people from other provinces. I thus argue that both performances of regional/local identity exhibited in contemporary dance music, and recent rumba fusions complicate the notion of a unified hybrid nation put forth by virtually all Cuban governments during the twentieth century. Rather than suggesting that regional or local identity supplants national identity, or that they are mutually exclusive, I find that these identific categories co-exist in a state of contradictory tension.

The final element of my analytic is constituted by what I call racialized discourses of place, which conjure up an isomorphic link between race and place/region/province, and which I examine in chapter four in relation to Havana and Matanzas. While the two cities share many of the same Afro-Cuban musical traditions, they have been inserted into polarized racial and cultural discourses: whereas Havana is represented as the center of contemporary innovation and racial/cultural hybridity, Matanzas is known in popular and academic discourse as "the cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" and constructed as the site of authentic blackness. My fieldwork with rumba groups in both Havana and Matanzas leads me to complicate these widely held assumptions about where tradition is "located" and where hybridity "takes place" in Cuba, as they obscure the diversity that animates both cities' folkloric scenes. My main goal in problematizing these tropes is to counter the notion that hybridizing practices and tradition-bearing activities are mutually exclusive. Although these discourses of place entail a problematic essentialization of the cultural identities of the two cities, they nonetheless enjoy widespread currency both in Cuba and abroad and cannot simply be dismissed, particularly because of the material effects they have on the livelihoods of folkloric musicians (see chapter four). I now move on to detail my conceptualization of hybridity.

Situated hybridity: an alternative theorization for the analysis of hybrid practices

Correlated with the explosion of the "world music" phenomenon in the early 1990s, the concept of hybridity has in recent decades been celebrated by musicians, music industry representatives, audiences, and academics, and touted as the perfect conceptual apparatus for eradicating essentialist notions of music and culture. While the recognition of the inherent hybridity of all cultural practices is a relatively new trend in the Euro-American context, the

[14] I use "regionalism" and its related terms to refer to the discourses of spatialized difference that assume a set of naturalized distinctions between Cubans from different provinces and/or regions of the country.

promotion of this concept has a very long history in the Caribbean and Latin America. *Mestizaje* (which translates roughly to racial mixing), and related concepts of *antillanité* and *creolité* in the Francophone Caribbean and *creole* and *callaloo* in the Anglophone Caribbean, have been the conceptual centerpieces of Latin American and Caribbean nationalist discourses throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nationalist elites have utilized discourses of hybridity not only to distance themselves from their former European colonizers, but also to proclaim the triumph of racial equality as an automatic result of decolonization, thus disregarding the continuing legacies of hierarchical theories of racial difference. Hybridity discourses have thus maintained colonial structural conditions in the postcolonial context by denying the racialization of access to political power, and to economic and land resources. Finally, the fact that Cuba is a nation constituted largely of mixed-race people has been used to refute the existence of racism. However, as political scientist Mark Sawyer asserts, Cuba might be considered a "pigmentocracy," since lighter skin – independently of one's racial self-identification – is positively correlated with higher social and economic status. Summing up his challenge to the notion that mixed-race heritage is synonymous with an anti-racist stance, Sawyer states, "Rather than eliminate racial hierarchy, miscegenation has only created more steps on the staircase of racial hierarchy" (Sawyer 2006: 138).

Following critiques of hybridity discourses by Latin Americanist and Caribbeanist scholars (Wade 1993; Marx 1998; Hintzen 2002; Puri 2004), and Cuba scholars (Pérez Sarduy and Stubbs 1993; R. Moore 1997; de la Fuente 2001; Sawyer 2006), my research problematizes the vague and celebratory nationalist promotion of hybridity that has been hegemonic in Cuba for over a century, as it denies the material effects that racialized notions of difference have had on Cubans of African descent. I posit that rumba as a musical and social practice exemplifies the tension inherent in the gap between the discursive celebration of hybridity as racial equality, and the lived realities of inequality that black citizens confront in contemporary Cuba. As will be discussed in chapter two, rumba is still a highly racialized practice that, despite its incorporation by the state into the nation's "folklore," is marginalized due to its continuing association with blackness and *el bajo mundo* (the "low" world/life).

Donald Moore borrows postcolonial scholar Dipesh Chakrabarty's notion of "provincializing Europe" – which critiques the assumption that European modernity has a natural claim to "Universal History and Reason" – for his own metaphor of "provincializing governmentality." Moore's Foucaultian notion "suggests a spatial mode of analysis – an emphasis on the production of scale, of a politics of location, of power geometries and geographical imaginaries" (Moore 2005: 12). Following Chakrabarty and Moore, my study aims to "provincialize" hybridity by foregrounding how rumba musicians in Havana and Matanzas engage in fusion practices in distinct and locally specific ways. To accomplish this, my analysis of rumba innovations draws on Stuart Hall's notion of situated hybridity (Chen 1996), which views hybrid identities as anchored in a particular place and time, and thus counters the aspecificity and depoliticized nature of normative uses of the term. I argue that rumba hybridizing practices constitute precisely this type of situated hybridity, informed greatly by the socio-economic histories and current power relations of, and the racialized discourses attached to, the locales from which they emerge.

Methodological approaches

As noted above, my decision to conduct fieldwork in Havana and Matanzas was guided primarily by the cities' long histories of rumba performance, which are intertwined in many ways, and my observations during an early trip to Cuba that the their rumba styles and scenes are discussed in very different, even opposing, terms. I conducted my primary fieldwork between August 2006 and May 2007, a stay that had been preceded by four preliminary research trips between 2004 and 2006. I spent roughly six and a half months in Havana, which allowed me to conduct ample ethnographic research with the three following rumba groups: Yoruba Andabo, Clave y Guaguancó and Los Ibellis. Although known primarily for the performance of rumba, all three groups also include Afro-Cuban sacred music and dance traditions within their repertoire. I spent ten weeks in Matanzas conducting ethnographic research with the folkloric group Afrocuba de Matanzas, focusing my inquiries on their 1973 creation of the rumba hybrid *batarumba* and their expansion of repertoire to the sacred domain in 1980.

My primary methodological approach consisted of ethnographic observations of rehearsals and performances by the four groups, and interviews with musicians within these groups. In addition to attending many performances by each of the above-mentioned groups, I regularly attended other weekly and bi-weekly rumba events in Havana, which provided me with a broad perspective concerning the capital's contemporary rumba scene. I attended all the rehearsals of Afrocuba de Matanzas during my stay in Matanzas, but was able to attend only a few rehearsals of each of the Havana-based groups. This disparity is due in part to the fact that Afrocuba holds many more rehearsals than the Havana-based groups, usually three to four a week, as opposed to once a week or less by the latter groups.[15]

In addition to the many casual conversations, or "unstructured interviews" (Knauer 2005) I had with musicians from all the groups, I conducted formal interviews with five members of Afrocuba de Matanzas, three members of Yoruba Andabo, the director of Clave y Guaguancó, the director of Los Ibellis, and one of the musicians involved in the creation of the innovation *guarapachangueo*. In each of the interviews the musicians provided me with oral histories regarding their group's respective career trajectories, including details about their regular venues of performance. My interview questions were designed to elicit information related to two major themes. The first revolved around issues of musical repertoire and innovations, and included the following three topics: the expansion of repertoire that was brought about by the incorporation of sacred practices; the emergence of the specific hybridizing practices– *batarumba* for the members of Afrocuba de Matanzas and *guarapachangueo* for the Havana musicians – and their group's particular relationship to these innovations; and, finally, the musicians' larger conceptions about fusion practices. The second category of inquiry was centered on the discourses of place attached to Havana and Matanzas, and the musicians' views on them. My goal here was to explore how these racialized discourses of place might be imbricated with local identity formation, and thus inform the musicians' artistic choices regarding repertoire and fusion practices. I produced all the transcriptions and translations of the interviews presented in the following chapters. .

[15] One of the group directors explained that Havana's sprawling geography and the severe problems with public transportation make it difficult to hold many rehearsals as some members must travel from rather distant municipalities to arrive in the center of Havana (personal communication, October 2006). In contrast, Matanzas is a small city and most group members can walk to the rehearsal space.

Besides interviews, formal and unstructured, I found that some very provocative issues and questions arose within the context of my percussion and song lessons, particularly in relation to the contemporary reality of rumba and Afro-Cuban folkloric musicians.[16] Thus, the music lessons that I took in both cities, from three to five times a week, constituted a crucial ethnographic activity for my research. Finally, I also conducted archival research in several libraries, spending many hours at Cuba's primary music research institution, the CIDMUC (Center for the Investigation and Development of Cuban Music). The examination of texts – which included academic books, magazine articles, and theses conducted under the auspices of the Instituto Superior de Arte (the principal university-level institution for the arts in Havana) – allowed me to become familiar with the publication of rumba-related materials in Cuba. Furthermore, this research aided in my discourse analysis, in chapter four, of academic literature in Cuba and the United States implicated in the construction and reinforcement of racialized discourses of place. In my consultation of these documents, I detected both tensions between academic discourses and the views and lived experiences of folkloric musicians, and points at which the perspectives converged.

Rumba groups

Several reasons guided my choice to work with the specific professional rumba groups with whom I conducted research. Most importantly, three of these groups – Afrocuba de Matanzas, Clave y Guaguancó and Yoruba Andabo – are considered in Cuba and abroad to be the elite purveyors of rumba in their respective styles, Matanzas- and Havana-style, in the last three decades. Nonetheless, they have not been discussed in depth in English-language publications.[17] Los Ibellis, the fourth group with whom I worked, has not enjoyed the widespread fame or success of the other groups. However, I include them within the scope of my research because their somewhat unstable economic situation is much more representative of the large majority of rumba groups in Havana and across the island that have not been able to reach international audiences or gain the type of recognition of the three other groups. In other words, I present Los Ibellis as a contrast to the "big-name" groups. Notwithstanding the many differences between the groups in terms of their style of rumba, province of origin, the types of innovations they have been engaged in, and their professional and economic status, there are two overriding similarities that make my choice of groups a coherent one. First, all three of the prominent groups started out as rumba groups, performing only the various styles of rumba, and only later expanded their repertoire to include Afro-Cuban sacred/folkloric music and dance traditions. Second, all of them (including Los Ibellis) are known for their engagement with the hybridizing practices I examine: Afrocuba with *batarumba*, and the three Havana groups with *guarapachangueo*.[18]

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[16] For example, my interest in the politics of place was inspired in part by discussion on the part of percussion/song teachers in both Havana and Matanzas about the different styles and attitudes towards rumba performance in each city; these comments led me to observe how the two cities are constructed as sites of innovation and tradition, respectively.

[17] As mentioned above, Grasso González's 1989 thesis on Matanzas-style rumba profiles Afrocuba de Matanzas, and Álvarez Vergara's 1989 thesis on rumba groups in Havana discusses Yoruba Andabo.

[18] Other important rumba groups that currently enjoy popularity and international recognition include the Havana-based Rumberos de Cuba – a group currently considered to be, along with Yoruba Andabo and Clave y Guaguancó, the rumba elite in the capital – and Rumbatá, a group from the central Cuban city of Camagüey. A few other rumba groups who are less critically esteemed but popular among rumba audiences are the Havana-based Rumba Morena (an all-female rumba group), Iroso Obbá (a group that enjoyed significant success in the early

Another primary, although less methodologically rigorous, reason for my choice of these groups is that each of their performance practices has a stylistic uniqueness that inspires my admiration as a listener and researcher. In terms of my choice for a Matanzas-based group, some might wonder why I decided to work with Afrocuba instead of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, perhaps the most recognized rumba group in the world. An obvious reason has to do with Afrocuba's creation of *batarumba*, a rumba fusion that has always fascinated me, and that I view as pioneering in terms of the creation of rumba hybrids. However, there are other reasons for my interest in the group: since their transition from rumba to folkloric group in 1980, Afrocuba has become renowned for having the most diverse and comprehensive repertoire of Afro-Cuban sacred and secular music in Cuba and for performing certain religious traditions not practiced anywhere else on the island. In addition, I also find that Afrocuba is one of the most hardworking folkloric groups on the island, which results in a consistently high level of performance. Finally I appreciate their dedication to the performance of traditional styles of rumba at a time when the musical practice is undergoing intense innovation.

Yoruba Andabo and Clave y Guaguancó are the two most popular and critically acclaimed Havana-based rumba groups in the last twenty-five years, and both have been major innovators in rumba performance. Both have long histories that span more than forty years, although they gained professional status in the mid-1980s. Yoruba Andabo has been a pioneering group in many ways: they were the first to disseminate the *guarapachangueo* style widely and they constituted the inaugural "house" group for two of the most popular and longstanding rumba events in Havana: *La Peña del Ambia* and the Sunday rumba at the Callejón de Hamel. In addition, a Yoruba Andabo singer has been at the forefront of innovations in rumba song, specifically the appropriation of reggaetón refrains for rumba repertoire. Finally, like Afrocuba, Yoruba Andabo consistently performs at a very high level, and boasts some of the most intricate vocal work, specifically in their harmonizations, in contemporary rumba performance.

The performances of Clave y Guaguancó, a group whose rumba singing has also been outstanding, often have a uniquely diverse quality, in that rumba fusions are often performed alongside very traditional repertoire that has been all but forgotten. The group is particularly renowned for their rumba hybridizing practices that include fusions with a wide array of Afro-Cuban practices – like Afrocuba, they have recorded rumba-*batá* fusions – and foreign popular genres such as rap and flamenco. The group has frequently pushed the boundaries of rumba with their hybrids and apparently limitless approach to fusion.

The final Havana-based group with whom I worked is Los Ibellis, which was formed in the early 1980s and thus constitutes a relatively young ensemble as compared with the other three groups. Because their repertoire never consisted exclusively of rumba, Los Ibellis presents a contrast with the other groups, which began with rumba and later expanded their repertoire to the sacred domain. In addition to the various factors that distinguish Los Ibellis from the other groups – namely, less recognition and more economic and professional instability – I chose to work with the group because the musicians have created a unique style and repertoire that is recognized as distinct among the Havana rumba public. Moreover, the group's members are substantially younger than the performers of the other three groups, and their performances are particularly energetic.

2000s, but whose popularity has declined in recent years), Rumba Herriera, Ensila Mundo, Ire Aye (a group formed by former Yoruba Andabo singer Pedro Celestino Fariñas Meneses), and a young Matanzas-based rumba group called Los Reyes del Tambor. These groups perform mostly rumba, and occasionally Afro-Cuban sacred music and dance. Not included in this list are the highly esteemed folkloric groups in the capital (whose performances are not centered around rumba), including the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional (CFN) and Raíces Profundas.

Finally, a brief note about how I refer to the musicians with whom I worked. All the musicians whose opinions and/or comments I reproduce in this study have given their consent for their real names to be used, and thus I do not anonymize them except in cases where a sensitive topic was broached. I do not use a uniform manner of referring to them, for example, by first or last name, preferring instead to use the names by which they are commonly known in their musical/professional contexts. Thus, while some are called by their first or last name, many are known by nicknames they have acquired either within their family or in musical arenas, and I refer to them in this way.

Issues of terminology and taxonomy

Although rumba is sometimes discussed as a "genre" of Afro-Cuban music, it is actually considered to be a "complex" within Cuban musicological taxonomies. As discussed by Cuban musicologist Olavo Alen Rodríguez (1998), Cuban music is generally divided into five major complexes - *son, rumba, canción, danzón*, and *punto guajiro* – each of which includes several different genres that may be either antecedents or offshoots of the umbrella musical practice.[19] The rumba complex includes three main genres that are still practiced today: *yambú*, *guaguancó*, and *columbia*.[20] Nonetheless, I generally refer to these genres as styles of rumba, and use the word "genre" interchangeably with "musical practice" and "complex" to refer to rumba, largely because there are many musical features that are consistent across these styles. The main distinctions between the three styles are to be found in their respective tempos – *yambú* is the slowest (and oldest) style, *guaguancó* has a medium tempo, and *columbia* has the fastest tempo – and in the different dance steps of each style (the first two are couple dances, representing different relationships between the man and the woman,[21] and the third is a solo male dance). There are also certain distinctions in vocal style between the three. I will be speaking mainly about rumba *guaguancó* in this study, as it is the principal platform for both of the innovations (*batarumba* and *guarapachangueo*) that I analyze.

Throughout my study, I will be referring to groups as either "rumba" or "folkloric," although there is an ambiguous politics of naming involved in identifying groups as one or the other, as I noted above in my assertion that rumba is not uniformly viewed or categorized as "popular" or "folkloric". I retain the distinction between "rumba" and "folkloric" groups in order to signal a difference in the proportion of repertoire that is dedicated to rumba and Afro-Cuban sacred

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[19] For example, the *danzón* complex includes *contradanza*, an antecedent derived from the French *contredanse* via Haiti, and its mid-twentieth century progeny mambo and *cha-cha-cha*.

[20] In the nineteenth century, there were several mimetic rumbas regularly danced that are collectively categorized under the term *rumba del tiempo de España*, or rumbas from the colonial era. They are no longer performed by contemporary rumba groups, although occasionally they are danced in folkloric representations by the CFN. *Batarumba* might be considered to be another, newer genre within the rumba complex.

[21] *Guaguancó* dance dramatizes a game of sexual possession, and is famous for its characteristic gesture, the *vacunao* (from the verb *vacunar*, which means to "vaccinate" literally and also, as a double entendre, to sexually possess a woman). The male dancer executes the *vacunao* by thrusting his groin towards the groin area of the female dancer (without touching), although he can also use other appendages such as his foot, elbow or hand to achieve the gesture. The female dancer's job is to deflect the *vacunao*, thereby proving herself to be the more adept dancer, by covering her groin area either with her skirt or, if she has on pants or shorts, a handkerchief. In contrast, the *yambú* dance represents a non-erotic heterosexual relationship, most often conceived of as an elder couple, in which the basic movements are similar to *guaguancó* with the major difference that there is no *vacunao.* This dance serves as a showcase for the female dancer who should execute her steps with grace and sensuality, but no overt sexuality.

traditions respectively. Since becoming a folkloric group in 1980, Afrocuba de Matanzas' performances tend to be more oriented towards the latter rather than focusing on rumba. Furthermore, the group has become so strongly associated with Afro-Cuban folkloric/sacred musical practices that many rumba aficionados and even some musicians are not aware that Afrocuba began as a rumba group. For these reasons I refer to Afrocuba as a "folkloric" group. In contrast, the Havana rumba groups are all known primarily for their rumba performance, despite the fact that they now perform Afro-Cuban religious traditions as well as rumba, and that they have received the appellation of "folkloric group" by the state cultural apparatus. Thus I refer to these as "rumba" groups.

Both Cuban and North American scholars have scrutinized certain terms that have long been used to speak about rumba and African-derived religious practices. One of these terms, "folklore" (and its derivative "folkloric"), relates to the politics of taxonomization, while the other, "Afro-Cuban," has to do with the racial associations attached to cultural practices. These terms are very interrelated, precisely because "folklore," as used in Cuba, has referred primarily to Afro-Cuban religious traditions, and only secondarily to secular musical practices. Katherine Hagedorn critiques the former term thus: "In Havana, at least from the late 19th century to the present, the concept of 'Cuban folklore' has been simultaneously racialized and disempowered – racialized because it has come to refer almost exclusively to the religious performance traditions of Cubans of African heritage, and disempowered because those religious traditions were categorized by nonpractitioners not as divinely potent modes of communication between deities and mortals, but rather as 'folk traditions,' objectified and reconstructed without consideration for their contemporary religious context" (Hagedorn 2001: 4).

Both Hagedorn and prominent Cuban folklorist Rogelio Martínez Furé (2004) have pinpointed pioneering ethnographer Fernando Ortiz as the source for the introduction of the term *afrocubano* (Afro-Cuban) in the 1930s, the impetus of which was to recognize and valorize African contributions to Cuban culture (Hagedorn: 193). Notwithstanding his invaluable contributions to the documentation and historiography of African-derived religious and musical traditions, Hagedorn argues that Ortiz's approach towards these practices and, more importantly, their practitioners, revealed an ingrained racism. She states, "Ortiz's scholarly interest and support did not necessarily translate into black empowerment, which was part of the point of Negritude in other countries…Rather, Ortiz's work and perspective allowed for further objectification and romanticization of Cuba's blacks through the continued exposure of their 'positive folklore'" (ibid: 194). Martínez Furé, the principal scholar involved in the creation of the CFN (National Folkloric Group) in 1962 who originally supported the use of both "Afro-Cuban" and "folklore," has in recent years eschewed both terms, considering them to be "racist" (ibid: 195). In his recent collection of essays called *Briznas de la Memoria* (2004), Martínez Furé explains that while Ortiz came up with the terms *hispanocubano* (Hispano-Cuban) and *afrocubano* to designate cultural practices that were of predominantly Spanish or African origin respectively, people have taken these terms too literally and translated them into "white" and "black." According to an interview Hagedorn conducted with him, he now rejects the term "Afro-Cuban" because he feels it reflects a polarized and racialized conceptualization of Cuban culture that does not accurately describe Cuba's hybrid "Afro-European" population and cultural products (Hagedorn: 195). In terms of his objections to the term "folkore," both in Martínez Furé's own essays and in Hagedorn's narrative, he asserts that the term is racist and classist because it alludes to antiquated binary notions of "high" culture and "low" folklore, the former identified with whiteness and the latter with blackness (ibid; Martínez Furé: 142).

I encountered another viewpoint when I struck up a conversation with prominent Cuban musicologist Olavo Alen Rodríguez while conducting archival research at the CIDMUC in April 2007. He objected to my use of the term "Afro-Cuban" in reference to rumba because he takes "Afro-Cuban" to mean a "typology" or variant in Cuba of something originally created and extant in Africa. As rumba was a practice created in Cuba by African-derived populations of various origins, it does not fit into Alen Rodríguez's conceptualization of "Afro-Cuban," as opposed to the music of *Santería* or other African-derived religions that were recreated on the island and currently utilize similar instruments as those in Africa, such as the Yoruba *batá* drums. Thus, in his mind, rumba should be referred to as a "Cuban" practice. Alen Rodríguez further declared, echoing Martínez Furé's concerns about reproducing racial dichotomies, that designating rumba as an "Afro-Cuban" musical practice led to a disregard for the European influences not only in rumba song – which is the only musical element attributed to Europe and Spain in rumba historiography – but also in the percussion, which is generally attributed exclusively to African influences. This, he further explained, despite the fact that the *tumbadora* (conga drum) was created in Cuba,[22] and that one of rumba's earliest percussion ensembles was constituted by European-derived *cajones* (wooden boxes of various sizes).

In his genealogical essay concerning Fernando Ortiz's neologism, Cuban scholar Tomás Fernández Robaina demonstrates that not all Cuban scholars have found the term "Afro-Cuban" to be entirely problematic. He discusses some of his compatriots' critiques of the term, which date back to the late 1930s when some intellectuals considered the designation "Afro-Cuban" to be divisive, in that it supposedly undermined a unified *Cubanidad* (Cubanness), an argument that is still being utilized today.[23] In contrast to this perspective, Fernández Robaina asserts that it is necessary to employ the prefix "Afro" for two primary reasons: first, because it facilitates archival research on African-derived people and culture in Cuba (i.e., it would be impractical for a researcher to browse through every book categorized under "Cuban" culture); second, and perhaps more importantly, he believes it is crucial to continue to emphasize the African contributions to Cuban culture, particularly because they were denigrated for so long.

While there is clearly not a consensus among Cuban scholars regarding the usefulness of the term "Afro-Cuban", Lisa Knauer (2005) finds that many Cubans – practitioners and musicians of "Afro-Cuban" traditions included – use the term unproblematically to refer, for example, to a group of African-derived religions. She asserts, however, that no black Cubans referred to themselves as "Afro-Cuban" in terms of their racial identity, preferring instead the term *negro* or "black" (Knauer: 45). My fieldwork experiences confirm this assertion, partially, I believe, because Cuba's hegemonic racial taxonomy revolves around the primary categories of *blanco* (white), *negro* (black), and *mulato* (mulatto), with various "in-between" categories used to make further distinctions in skin color and other phenotypic features, i.e., *jabao* (a light-skinned mulatto person), *trigueño* (a person who is even lighter than *jabao* and has straighter hair), and *prieto* (a black person with very dark skin).[24] The term "Afro-Cuban" is used so liberally and in so many different ways by different people, that it can potentially refer to any person or thing/practice with some degree of African derivation; thus, even though the traditional dance genre *son* features more audible traces of European influence than rumba, both can be and are discussed as "Afro-Cuban" musical practices. In other words, the term "Afro-Cuban" does not necessarily

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[22] Although it is derived from the Bantu-derived *ngoma* (drum), the *tumbadora* is not an African instrument.

[23] See Fernández Robaina 2005: 175 and chapter one of this study.

[24] Cubans draw even further racial distinctions by pinpointing "contrasting" phenotypic traits. For example, I have often heard Cubans speak of a *negra con pelo bueno*, a black woman with "good," or relatively straight, hair, which presumably offsets in part the negative associations of her skin color and assumes a greater level of attractiveness.

distinguish between *mulato* and *negro* and thus is not useful for most Cubans in terms of racial identification, because they tend to be extremely distinguishing about differences in skin color, sometimes revealing racist overtones or ideas.[25] In this context and with these critiques in mind, I use "Afro-Cuban" primarily to refer to cultural and religious practices (and practitioners) that display heavy African influences – which, in my opinion, also include rumba despite the fact that it does not derive directly from Africa. In line with the ways that Cubans identify themselves, I avoid using the term to refer to an individual's racial identity. That said, in order to avoid overly wordy descriptions, I do utilize the term "Afro-Cuban" to refer to Cubans of African descent as a large population group (including both black and mixed-race Cubans of different skin colors), and primarily when discussing historical contexts, as is common among U.S.-based Cuba scholars (for example, Helg 1995; R. Moore 1997; de la Fuente 2001; Fernandes 2006).

Knauer identifies the problematization of the term "folklore" as primarily an academic concern, noting that many Cuban musicians use it frequently, and even in a positive manner due to its discursive associations with "authentic" culture (Knauer: 49). In other words, "folklore" is often used by Cubans – including the rumba and Afro-Cuban sacred musicians with whom I conducted fieldwork – to signify pride in their national culture. I thus see no problem with using the term in relation to sacred practices and, at times, rumba, although, as I discussed earlier, I do not take the meaning of "folkloric music" (or "popular music") to be transparent or stable.

A final issue concerns the various terms used to refer to Afro-Cuban sacred traditions, particularly the Yoruba-derived religion popularly known as *Santería*. The Bantu-derived religion, known as *La Regla de Palo* (the "rule" or order of *Palo*), is spoken of popularly in Cuba with several terms, the most common of which is *Palo*. Some also call it *Palo Mayombe* or *Palo Monte*, which are actually different types/manifestations of the Bantu-derived religion. I use the word *Palo* in this study. Two other Afro-Cuban religions that will be mentioned throughout the dissertation are the Calabar-derived male secret society called *Abakuá* and the Dahomey-derived *Arará*, both of which are referred to only with these Cuban names.[26] The Yoruba-derived religion has the most terminological variants in Cuba, which include: *Lukumí* (the Cuban term for Yoruba-derived peoples), *Yoruba*, *La Regla de Ocha* (the order of *Ocha*), and *Santería*. Martínez Furé (2004) asserts that the term *Lukumí* has been used since the nineteenth century to designate the culture, traditions and religions derived from Yoruba peoples, and that it was only in the late 1930s with Fernando Ortiz's research on Afro-Cuban religions that the term *Yoruba* came to be used. He notes that its use has become more widespread since the Revolution and the government's overall valorization of the African roots of Cuban culture.[27] Following Afro-Cuban religious

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[25] Fernández Robaina offers quite a different reason for why Cubans don't tend to use the term to refer to themselves, stating, "Within all Cubans, and deeply within blacks and mulattoes, is embedded [independence hero/national poet José] Martí's view that to be Cuban is to be more than white, more than black, more than mulatto; or [independence hero Antonio] Maceo's dictum not to ask for anything as a black but for everything as a Cuban" (Fernández Robaina: 173). This assertion clearly points to the hegemony of the nationalist hybridity discourse, which eschews racial difference, and is at odds with my experiences of how Cubans identify themselves and others racially.

[26] The Yoruba peoples (whose descendants are called *Lukumí* [sometimes spelled as *Lucumí*] in Cuba) come from modern-day southwestern Nigeria, the Bantu (*Congo* in Cuban vernacular) peoples from the modern-day two Congos and northern Angola, the Calabar (*Carabalí*) peoples from southeastern Nigeria, and the Dahomey (*Arará*) peoples from modern-day Benin.

[27] The term *Yoruba* also came to be popular in the United States in the 1960s and 70s as increasing numbers of African-Americans, particularly in New York, became initiated into the religion. Guided by ideologies of Black Power and Pan-Africanism, these practitioners eschewed the term *Santería* and denied any Catholic/European

practitioners on the island, I use any and all of the aforementioned terms interchangeably, although I primarily refer to the religion as *Santería* or *Lukumí*.

The particularities of conducting ethnographic research in Cuba

The longstanding political antagonism between the Cuban and American governments may seem to present an almost insurmountable challenge for U.S. researchers who conduct ethnographic fieldwork in Cuba. The obstacles I and other Cuba researchers have faced due to the lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries primarily relate to the serious difficulties in obtaining research funding and the legal issues involved in traveling to and residing for a period of time on the island.[28] For each research trip I took, I was required to obtain permission from the University of California to use their special license to travel to Cuba, academic institutions being one of the only entities exempted from the travel ban on U.S. citizens going to the island.[29] In addition to the impediments imposed by my own government, the Cuban government has historically made it very difficult for foreign researchers to legally undertake ethnographic research on the island (see also Knauer 2005). The Ministry of Culture (the apparatus that oversees many cultural and research institutions such as La Fundación Fernando Ortiz in Havana, which generously provided me with an institutional affiliation for my fieldwork), may approve a research visa (and this is not a given at all). However, there is no guarantee that the researcher will be able to stay for the length of time needed to conduct a large-scale project. In fact, many U.S. and foreign researchers conduct their research "illegally," under the auspices of a tourist visa, which lasts for 30 days and can only be extended for one month before they must leave and re-enter the country on a new tourist visa. While I was not able to secure a major research fellowship outside of my home institution and actually arrived in Cuba

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influences on the Yoruba-derived Cuban religion (Gregory 1999); some even decided to forego *Lukumí* and headed straight to the "source" (Nigeria) for initiation.

[28] Conducting research during the Bush administration constituted an even greater challenge, since between 2003 and 2009 much harsher restrictions were imposed on Cuban-Americans and immigrants traveling back to Cuba than had existed in the previous forty years. These included limits on the frequency of travel – Cubans were permitted to go only once every three years instead of the previous restriction of once a year – as well as on the amount of money that could be sent to relatives, and a redefinition of "relatives" as immediate family members only. One of the first acts of the Obama administration was to repeal the Bush administration's additional restrictions, and in early September 2009 Obama lifted all restrictions related to family remittances and travel between the two countries. The President has yet to address the increasing calls both from American citizens and members of Congress of both parties to end the travel ban and the embargo altogether. Although several delegations led by U.S. Congressmen in 2009 suggest that diplomatic relations between the two countries might be partially restored, acts of hostility by both parties have continued. President Obama extended the economic embargo for another year in 2009 and has still not removed Cuba from the list of countries designated as "state sponsors of terrorism," despite the overwhelming acknowledgement around the world that Cuba does not constitute a terrorist threat. On the Cuba side, an American citizen was arrested on the island in December 2009 while dispersing cell phones, laptops and other electronics, and accused by the government of being a spy. The Raúl Castro-led government has thus far not been very receptive to the small and largely symbolic olive leaves offered by the Obama administration, such as, in summer 2009, removing the ticker headlines that had been placed atop the U.S. Interests Section in Havana during the Bush administration. These running headlines were designed to counter the state media's monopolistic representation of global events and present Cubans with "real" and "democratic" news headlines. See chapter two for a discussion of the changes in policies regarding cultural exchange since the election of President Obama.

[29] Contrary to popular understandings of the embargo, U.S. citizens are not actually prohibited from traveling to the island, but instead from spending any money there and thus contributing dollars to the Cuban economy and supposedly helping to maintain the socialist regime in power.

on a tourist visa, I was extremely fortunate to get my research visa approved after two months without having to leave the island, and to be given the amount of time I requested, nine months.[30] Ironically, in my last month of fieldwork, I met an anthropologist who had won a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research fellowship – and was therefore much better funded than myself – but who was given only three months to conduct his research. When it comes to research in Cuba, the stars must be aligned for both adequate funding and long-term visa approval to fall into place.

In addition to the logistical and economic difficulties of conducting research in Cuba, which in terms of the visa-related bureaucracy extend to non-U.S. researchers, there are a number of ethical issues that have arisen for Cuba scholars as a result of the economic changes since the economic crisis of the Special Period. The growth of the tourism industry and the installation of a dual economy, which I detail in chapter two, have meant a re-exacerbation of income inequality among Cubans, which had been greatly reduced in the prior three decades of the Revolution. Cubans have been made to feel like second-class citizens in many ways owing to the privileged treatment accorded tourists and other foreigners in terms of the products and services, and the quality of both, that are offered in *divisa* (hard currency or dollars, in which foreigners operate) versus Cuban *pesos* (the national currency in which Cubans are *meant* to operate, although they often gain access to some dollars through various means). As Cuba researchers quickly come to learn, there is an economic aspect of all relationships created between Cubans and foreigners due to this inequality in the dual currency system, for there is no denying that even a poor graduate student making $15-20,000 per year is viewed as wealthy in the eyes of Cubans, most of whom earn $150-300 per year on average. Thus, while Cubans are likely to tell a foreign researcher who has spent long periods of time on the island, and who does not often partake of the privileges and services offered to tourists, that they have become "almost Cuban," the awareness of the difference in economic means between themselves and the non-Cubans is always lingering in the air.[31] This issue took on an added significance for me when I began a long-distance relationship with a Cuban during an early research trip that eventually resulted in his immigration to the United States and our marriage in 2008.

This almost constant awareness of economic difference can be difficult for most researchers who feel an obligation to help Cuban friends and collaborators by giving them money periodically or buying them things, sometimes even groceries, all the while trying to stretch insufficient research funds as far as possible. These circumstances are also difficult and uncomfortable for Cubans, who tend to be very proud and who are used to thinking of themselves as self-sufficient. There is an unmentioned exchange of resources that occurs between a Western researcher and a non-Western collaborator, which balances out the power relations in certain ways: the former often provides much-needed financial help through gifts and/or private lessons, while the latter imparts intangible resources, knowledge of the given phenomenon, and/or connections that facilitate entry into a particular social or musical network. Nevertheless, the possession, or lack thereof, of economic resources is an incredibly influential factor that impacts the quality of life one has in Cuba, and money is the prime issue around which (unequal) power relations are constructed. Thus, I want to emphasize that the complex and sometimes

[30] Many dissertations and even books on Cuban topics are based on only a few months of continuous fieldwork, or on several short fieldwork trips.

[31] Economic difference in Cuba does not necessarily translate to class difference, as we tend to assume in the U.S., for Cuban professionals and intellectuals are not compensated much better than their working-class compatriots. In fact, it is commonly acknowledged that waiters in large hotels and taxi drivers earn more than doctors, professors and engineers because of their proximity to tourist dollars.

uncomfortable dynamics of interrelation between Cubans and foreigners must be understood as a product of two related phenomena: the continuing U.S. trade embargo and Cuba's post-Soviet economic situation, specifically the almost universal desperation and deprivation suffered by its citizens in the early to mid 1990s.

Being cognizant of the economic and class differences between myself and the Cubans with whom I worked closely does not translate into an assertion that my fieldwork experience on the island was filled with negativity, or that there is a foreigner-Cuban abyss that cannot be bridged or avoided. Over the past six years, I have created close, affectionate relationships and experienced many moments of warmth and especially shared laughter with Cuban musicians and friends beyond my husband and his family. I have also adopted many Cuban mannerisms, including a Cubanized accent when speaking Spanish, and certain larger life philosophies. At the same time, my experiences living in Cuba and my reactions to difficult situations have taught me, to my chagrin, how culturally conditioned I am as an American in certain ways. Rather than "becoming Cuban" and shedding my American identity then, I have become, as Jocelyne Guilbault terms it, a "commuter." She states, "What this commuting has led me to develop is a series of affinities and a special connection with particular circuits of the transnational Caribbean space" (Guilbault 2007: 15-16). Similarly, I feel a tremendous sense of affinity and intimacy with many Cubans and their music that, despite the thorny and unavoidable issues of economic – and often racial – inequality that arise in relationships between Cubans and foreigners, impels me to return to the island again and again.

The politics of representation

As ethnomusicologist Kevin Delgado (2001), political scientist Sujatha Fernandes (2006), and others have noted, anything published by a U.S scholar on a Cuban topic is inevitably politicized, because the discourse and views about the island have been so polarized for so many years. For this reason, it has become *de rigueur* for U.S. scholars to address the politics of representation entailed in the publication of lengthy work on a Cuba-related phenomenon/issue, particularly when the scholar is an ethnographer. However, while Cuba is usually held up as an exception in almost all matters – politics, research, and otherwise – I do not believe that an extra level of self-reflexivity is necessarily warranted in order to discuss Cuba-related topics as opposed to those associated with, say, Bali. Following the wealth of publications on the politics of representation during the so-called "anthropological crisis" of the 1980s, it is now well-acknowledged that researchers can never fully or objectively represent the culture of an "other" or even of a community to which they belong, without recognizing their own role in the production of "the field" and the social/power dynamics surrounding the given phenomenon. Along these lines, I do not view a U.S. scholar discussing Cuban musical performance as more inherently problematic or complex than if the researcher were Canadian or Italian, or than if I was researching Balinese gamelan, whose performance practice is also informed by post-colonial relations.

Contrary to widespread belief in the U.S. that Cubans are brainwashed by the socialist government to hate all things American, many have professed to me that they feel more affinity with Americans and our culture than with Europeans. They often explain their feelings in terms of the Latin American tradition of hemispheric solidarity - advocated strongly by Cuban independence hero Jose Martí - which views the whole Western hemisphere as *Las Américas* (the Americas), a geographical entity that entails elements of shared history (the "discovery" and

European colonization), shared culture, and a certain unity. Thus, it would be a mistake to reify the notion that the political hostilities between the U.S. and Cuban governments have succeeded in producing similarly polarized attitudes between the citizens of the two countries. Nevertheless, I do not want to dismiss the significance of the half-century old antagonisms, and thus recognize the need to discuss my own positioning as a U.S.-based Cuba researcher. In his recent book *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba*, ethnomusicologist Robin Moore makes an eloquent statement that reflects my feelings very closely: "I consider myself sympathetic to the goals of socialism and believe that many of its basic precepts are more humane than those driving decision-making in capitalist countries. However, this has not blinded me to the oppressiveness of many aspects of life in Cuba today. I hope that readers on the left and right of the political spectrum will agree that it serves no one's interest to gloss over mistakes made by any government" (Moore 2006: xiv).

In terms of my own relationship to the longstanding U.S.-Cuba conflict, I was raised in San Francisco by leftist parents who were active in the domestic opposition to U.S. imperialist ventures into Latin America in the 1970s and 80s. Cuba's socialist Revolution was held up as the one permanent victory in Latin America's struggle for sovereignty and self-determination, and thus a significant thorn in the side of the U.S. and our longstanding hegemony within the Americas. Thus, while it is the extraordinary allure of Cuban music that drove my decision to conduct research on the island, I also recognize that my choice was strongly informed by a certain romanticization of Cuban socialism that pervaded both my childhood and the larger environs of the San Francisco Bay Area. Like Moore, I continue to believe that the Revolution's social reforms have been overwhelmingly beneficial for a majority of Cubans, and that they enjoy a level of educational privilege and a welfare safety net unmatched in Latin America, and probably in North America.[32] However, Cuba's first- and second-wave exile community, and its positioning on the extreme right end of the political spectrum in this country, has resulted in a polarized discourse around Cuba that has forced leftists into the position of being apologists for the Castro regime. In response to the rabid anti-communism of the Miami exile power elite and mafia-style intimidation of any moderate Cubans or others who dare to suggest a normalization of relations with the island, leftists have often responded with a complete and unproblematic endorsement of the Castro regime, despite its non-progressive agendas in several arenas.[33] These have included heavy repression of dissent in general and the imprisonment of gays, lesbians,

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[32] In addition, Cuba's consistent solidarity with other nations in the "global South" in their liberation struggles, and its dedication to aiding these countries, was strikingly evident in the aftermath of the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti in early 2010. The 400 Cuban doctors already in Haiti immediately set up field hospitals and were the first to begin treating earthquake victims, and since then Cuba has sent hundreds more medical professionals who were trained at Havana's Escuela Latinoamericano de Medicina (Latin American School of Medicine, which offers low-cost or free medical training to citizens of many countries, including the United States). Many of these doctors are Haitian.

[33] See journalist Ann Louise Bardach's excellent book *Cuba Confidential: Love and Vengeance in Miami and Havana* (2002) for an in-depth exploration of the mafia-style tactics of the Miami exile power elite. Here I am not including the third wave (the so-called *Marielitos* of the early 1980s) or fourth wave (the *balseros* of the mid-1990s) of Cuban immigrants because their racial and class composition was noticeably different than the first two waves and because they tend to have more nuanced, less extreme views of the Revolution. While the early waves were constituted by many former land-owning whites fleeing the socialist redistribution of land and nationalization of economic resources, the later immigrants included much larger proportions of poor, black and mixed-race Cubans. In addition, many of the *Marielitos* were people deemed by the Castro regime to be *indeseables* (undesirables) or *escoria* (scum), including felons, gay men, and people with mental illnesses. See chapter two, footnote 40 for more details on these later waves.

political dissidents and other "undesirables" (in Fidel Castro's words) in the first three decades of the Revolution, and a continuing disregard by the state of racist practices on the island.

Stuart Hall's problematization of the "essential black subject" in his essay "New Ethnicities" has helped me in framing my conflicting feelings about the Cuban government, which are shared by many progressive Americans who have experienced the contradictions of Cuban society firsthand. He states, "Once you abandon essential categories, there is no place to go apart from the politics of criticism and to enter the politics of criticism in black culture is to grow up, to leave the age of critical innocence" (Hall 1996b [1989]: 448). To recognize that the Cuban Revolution has allowed for the continuation of racial discrimination and the introduction of preferential treatment for foreigners in the 1990s, is to realize that the government is not necessarily and always "right on" or "down with the cause" just because it calls itself "socialist" or opposes U.S. imperialism and hegemony; it is to "leave the age of critical innocence."

Finally, while I believe the musical practices I am examining and musicians I worked with have been subject to marginalization both in the past and the present, and that they challenge state power in certain ways, I want to follow sociologist Sujatha Fernandes' assertion that it is necessary to problematize the notion of "resistance." She states, "I am cautious about speaking of 'resistance' in the Cuban context…Notions of 'rebellion' and 'revolution,' which may stir up the imaginations and energies of citizens elsewhere, have been co-opted by the state in Cuba. Official discourse continually refers to 'resistance' to colonialism, U.S. imperialism, and global capitalism" (Fernandes 2006: 185). It is precisely because of the hegemonic nature of Revolutionary socialist discourse in Cuba that I eschew terms like "resistance" when speaking about musicians' and citizens' actions/beliefs that could be interpreted as challenging the policies of a state that is repressive in certain arenas. Moreover, it must be recognized that there has never developed in Cuba an organized and mass movement of resistance against the socialist regime. While the reasons for this continue to elude most Cuba researchers (myself included), this fact might suggest that Cubans as a population do not feel oppressed to such an extent that they are willing to risk their lives to impel a change in government – as occurred during the Revolution and the fight against Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship – and that they still recognize some basic benefits of a socialist system.

Structure of the dissertation

The organization of my chapters is meant to intersperse the more theoretical chapters that elucidate the various elements of politics of place with other chapters that are focused more on issues related to musical repertoire, sounds, and venues of performance. The various elements of the politics of place are explored in chapters one (regionalism), four (racialized discourses of place) and six (rumba innovations as processes of situated hybridity). My narrative depends a great deal on the method of "thick description" (Geertz 1973), and all chapters include substantial ethnographic details, although they also display diverse methodological approaches. Chapters two and three are particularly heavy on ethnographic description, as they focus on the larger socio-economic context in which rumba and folkloric musicians live and work, while chapters one and six rely on in-depth analyses of musical texts and sounds, respectively. Chapters one and four conduct genealogies:[34] the former traces a brief history of regionalism on the island

[34] In Foucault's elucidation of his analytic of genealogy, which he contrasts with traditional historiography, he draws on Frederich Nietzsche's notion of *wirkliche Historie*, or "effective history," which emphasizes the discontinuities and

in order to contextualize the present situation and challenge the Cuban state's narratives of national unity, and the latter examines the racialized discourses of place attached to Havana and Matanzas, arguing that they cannot account for the diversity of both cities' folkloric scenes. Finally, chapter five produces extensive biographies of the four groups with whom I conducted research in order to explore issues of and motivations for repertoire change. Following are brief summaries of each chapter.

My first chapter chronicles the pervasiveness of regionalist sentiment within contemporary Cuban society, focusing on Havana and the effects of large-scale migration from the eastern provinces to the capital, and elaborates on the ways that these regionalist tensions are performed through the lyrics of Cuban dance music and rumba. I present a genealogy of regionalist sentiment from the nineteenth century up to the contemporary period, and conduct textual analyses of several songs that explicitly comment upon this issue, inserting ethnographic details where relevant. The final part of the chapter explores the tensions entailed in the complex relationship between the unifying nationalist discourse and the regionalist sentiment expressed in popular discourse and musical performance.

My second chapter examines the entanglements of folkloric musical performance with recent economic changes effected by the Cuban state in the post-Soviet period of economic crisis (beginning in 1990) and its aftermath. I elucidate the impact of the recent growth of cultural tourism on the livelihoods of rumba and folkloric musicians, including a discussion of the racial politics of the tourism industry. The second part of the chapter examines the re-exacerbation of racialized class inequalities in the tourism era, and the ways that rumba performance and its practitioners continue to be marginalized through their association with blackness.

Chapter three outlines the various categories and contexts of rumba performance, and its audiences, in Havana and Matanzas respectively. The contexts include state-sponsored venues, community events, and "for-profit" gigs that have come about as a result of the new market-oriented economy introduced to mitigate the economic crisis. I present a contrasting picture of rumba scenes in the two cities, which correlates strongly with the politics of place vis-à-vis the tourism industry.

My fourth chapter entails a critical examination of racialized discourses of place in the academic and popular realms in Cuba, focusing on the ways that the cities of Havana and Matanzas are represented in polarized racial and cultural terms. I argue that while these discourses of place do not accurately characterize the folkloric scenes in either city, they serve an important function – particularly in the smaller and more isolated city of Matanzas – in that they impact musicians' ability to benefit financially from cultural tourism.

Chapter five explores shifts in the respective repertoires of the four rumba/folkloric groups with whom I worked, focusing specifically on the incorporation of Afro-Cuban sacred music and dance into their performance practices. I foreground the various political, economic and creative forces that have motivated each group's repertoire expansion. I also examine the repertoire changes in light of the popularization of *espectáculos* – full-fledged folkloric shows that present an array of Afro-Cuban music and dance traditions – in the post-Soviet era of tourism on the island. I ask, why are many rumba groups now finding it desirable and/or economically necessary to perform Afro-Cuban sacred music in addition to their core rumba repertoire?

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ruptures in the development of humankind (Foucault 1977: 152-53). Foucault states, "The search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself" (Foucault: 147).

The sixth chapter details two hybridizing practices within contemporary rumba performance, one in Matanzas (*batarumba*) and one in Havana (*guarapachangueo*). I employ Stuart Hall's concept of *situated hybridity* (Chen 1996) in order to argue that these innovations are informed by the histories and discourses of place attached to these two respective locales. In discussing these innovations, I employ oral histories, in-depth musical analyses of both, and a few short rhythmic transcriptions related to *guarapachangueo*. Finally, I elucidate how these particular innovations are illustrative of the different approaches towards rumba-based fusion in the two cities in general, and thus of how musicians "perform" local identity.

My conclusion does not constitute a traditional narrative encapsulating all of my theoretical points from previous chapters. Instead, it outlines both the opportunities and challenges facing rumba musicians in Cuba's post-Soviet economy centered on cultural tourism, and suggests that rumba has become increasingly relevant in and influenced by the arena of mass-mediated Cuban popular music. Finally, I recount details from a significant event that took place in May 2008, "the longest rumba in the world," arguing that it constituted an interesting commentary on the porous boundaries of the genre, which could be evidence of future directions for rumba performance.

CHAPTER ONE

"La Habana No Aguanta Más":
Regionalism in contemporary Cuban society and music

Para gozar, La Habana. Para disfrutar, La Habana	For enjoyment, Havana. For enjoyment, Havana
Está llena de emigrantes que llegan y no se van	It's full of emigrants that arrive and never leave
Siempre son bien recibidos y se les brinda amistad	They are always welcomed and offered friendship
Los encantan las mujeres y el ambiente popular y,	They are captivated by the women and the down-home atmosphere and,
Es que encuentran en La Habana el paraíso terrenal	It's that in Havana they find heaven on earth

"Para Gozar, La Habana," Clave y Guaguancó[1]

The above lyrics, from a 2006 song by Havana-based rumba group Clave y Guaguancó, get to the heart of this chapter's focus: regionalist sentiment within contemporary Cuban society and the ways it is expressed and performed through musical practice. Packed into these five lines of text are several provocative statements about regional/local pride within Cuba and the prickly issue of internal migration to the capital by *gente del campo* (literally, "people from the countryside," but also understood as backwards and poor). The lyrics of this rumba song reveal much both about Havana natives' disdain for Cubans who migrate to the capital seeking better economic opportunities, and about their assumptions concerning these migrants' intentions in moving there.

My interest in investigating the politics of place in contemporary Cuba stems from observations since my first research trip to the island in 2004 that expressions of regionalism are longstanding and pervasive.[2] Acknowledgement and examination of this issue is largely absent from both Cuban and U.S. academic scholarship, a lacuna that is surprising given the frequency of assertions of regionalist sentiment in both popular music and discourse. Such assertions are evident in several songs composed by the country's premier dance bands, including three that will be analyzed later in the chapter – Los Van Van's "La Habana No Aguanta Más," Orquesta Original de Manzanillo's "Soy Cubano y Soy de Oriente," and Adalberto Álvarez's "Un Pariente En El Campo" – and one rumba song by the popular Havana-based rumba group

[1] The transcription of the Spanish lyrics were taken from the liner notes of the group's most recent album, *La Rumba Que No Termina* (Cuba Chévere Musikproduktionen, 2006). The translations are my own. Lyrics reprinted courtesy of Cuba Chévere Musikproduktionen.

[2] I employ "regionalism" and its related terms to refer to the discourses of spatialized difference that assume a set of naturalized distinctions among Cubans from different provinces of the country. Although there is a distinction to be made between regions and provinces within Cuba, which I discuss later in the chapter, I use "regionalism" in a broader manner that sometimes glosses over the differences between the two geographical categories.

Clave y Guaguancó.[3] Based on these songs, I will argue that notions of regional identity are being negotiated and contested through Cuban dance music and rumba in ways that threaten to undermine the hegemonic nationalist discourse.[4]

Despite the Revolutionary government's official rhetoric, which stresses national unity and celebrates the population's total and ongoing dedication to socialist ideals of egalitarianism and cooperation, many Cubans cling tightly to their regional identities. This means not only a fierce loyalty to one's province of birth, but often an explicit antagonism toward people from other provinces, particularly between *Habaneros* (people from Havana) and *Orientales* (people from the eastern provinces). My analysis in this chapter foregrounds the importance of what cultural geographer Don Mitchell terms the "spatiality of identity" (Mitchell 2000: 62), which, as detailed in the Introduction, recognizes the powerful effects of space and place on the production of social identities. While concerns about regional differences within Cuba are glossed over in the unifying nationalist discourse, I demonstrate how through Cuban dance music and rumba the politics of regional identity constitute a real and very contemporary source of tension within the nation's capital. I will draw on Antonio Gramsci's theorizations of the state and hegemony, and Stuart Hall's elucidations of these notions, in my discussion of the Cuban government's attempts to project national unity onto both the domestic and world stage.[5]

A genealogy of regionalism in Cuba

Historical differences and tensions between eastern and western Cuba

Historian Ada Ferrer's *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-98* (1999) discusses the historic tensions between Havana and *Oriente* (eastern Cuba),[6] which can be traced back to the distinct social and economic conditions of the two regions under Spanish colonialism. In the mid-nineteenth century, while central and western Cuba were enjoying the economic boom produced by high levels of slave-driven sugar production, eastern Cuba was suffering from an economic downturn and the effects of harsh taxation by the colonial government (Ferrer 1999: 18-21). In contrast to the mono-crop nature of western Cuban agriculture, dominated by sugar plantations,

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[3] Expressions of local or regional pride are not uncommon in Cuban dance songs, although many do not address the regionalist tensions between Cubans of different provinces, as do the abovementioned songs. Two extremely popular examples of the former are dance band NG La Banda's early hits "La Expresiva," which shouts out and extols the virtues of many Havana neighborhoods, and "Los Sitios Entero," which includes a rumba in the middle of the song. Both songs can be found on the album *En la Calle* (Qbadisc, 1992).

[4] Although the decision to examine songs from two different musical practices – Cuban dance music and rumba – may not constitute an obvious methodological choice, the emergence of the Cuban salsa style called *timba* has highlighted and intensified the intimate and longstanding connections between these two genres. As discussed in detail by Vincenzo Perna (2005), contemporary Cuban dance music has borrowed from rumba music in many ways, most obviously in the use of the rumba *clave* pattern and the predominance of the *montuno* (call-and-response) section within *timba* songs.

[5] Gramsci's analytics seem particularly appropriate for my discussion of regionalism, as his work was thoroughly informed by his own regional identity as a Sardinian. Sardinia is one of the most marginalized provinces in Italy, both spatially in terms of its location as an island off the western Mediterranean coast, and within the imaginary of the mainstream Italian population. When I lived in Italy from 1997-98 I heard more than one person characterize Sardinians as backward "sheep-shaggers."

[6] *Oriente* is one of the three political regions of the country, the other two being *Occidente* (western Cuba) and *Centro* (central Cuba). *Oriente* is composed of the following five eastern Cuban provinces: Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo, Holguín, Granma, and Las Tunas.



Figure 1.1: Map of Cuba's fifteen provinces. Western Cuba is composed of Pinar del Río, La Habana, Ciudad de la Habana, Isla de la Juventud, and Matanzas. Central Cuba includes Cienfuegos, Villa Clara, Sancti Spíritus, Ciego de Ávila, and Camagüey. Eastern Cuba is made up of Las Tunas, Granma, Holguín, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo.

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Cuban Administrative Units, 1986.

eastern Cuba's agricultural production had always been more varied – including coffee, tobacco and cattle in addition to sugar estates. Furthermore, the eastern plantations were generally smaller and less technologically advanced, with a significant percentage of free workers of color (ibid.). These social and economic conditions contributed greatly to what Ferrer terms the "geography of insurgency" (ibid.: 17), or the fact that eastern Cuba was the site of the first rebellion in 1868 that began the 30-year struggle for independence.[7] Meanwhile, Havana and much of western Cuba remained loyal to the Spanish crown until 1895, three years before independence. The *Grito de Yara* (Cry of Yara) on October 10, 1868 in the southeastern jurisdiction of Manzanillo constituted the first call to arms against Spanish rule, thus beginning the Ten Years' War (1868-78). It was led by plantation owner Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, who freed his slaves on that day and invited them to join in the independence struggle.[8] Ferrer suggests that the initiative taken by white eastern elites in advocating abolition and armed struggle against Spain was as much about their adverse economic situation and resentment of colonial taxation laws as it was about humanitarian ideals of equality and freedom (ibid.: 17-23).

While Ferrer's book considers issues of race and nascent nation-building through the lens of the thirty-year struggle for independence, historian Aline Helg's groundbreaking work *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (1995), focuses on race, citizenship and the gulf between legal equality and equality in practice. Helg foregrounds regional differences at various moments in the book, viewing them as an important factor that hampered Afro-Cubans from presenting a united front in their demands for equality after emancipation in 1886. Like Ferrer, Helg emphasizes the distinct socio-economic conditions in different regions, illustrating the particular patterns of land ownership by blacks and *mulatos*[9] respectively in different provinces. In the western province of Matanzas and the central province of Santa Clara, the sites of the largest concentrations of slaves, Afro-Cubans owned or rented land at a much lower percentage than whites. In *Oriente*, where a large rural free population of color had been concentrated before emancipation, the two racial groups owned land at approximately equal rates (Helg 1995: 26). Correspondingly, racial barriers were stronger and more rigid in Matanzas and Santa Clara than in *Oriente*, where in addition to having a larger free population of color, slaves had been more widely distributed on smaller plantations (ibid.: 32). Support for the *mambises* (insurgents during independence struggles) was always strongest on the eastern end of the island. Not surprisingly, Cuban plantation owners in the western and central provinces were firmly opposed to abolition, and by extension the independence struggles, which were led primarily by a *mulato* native of *Oriente*, Antonio Maceo.

Arguably the most effective tactic used by the Spanish authorities to keep white Cuban planters loyal to Spain was the specter of a race war led by black Cubans, in the vein of the Haitian Revolution. In addition to conveying a racial threat, this propaganda also included crucial dimensions of regional hostility: the eastern provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo have significant populations of people of Haitian descent dating back to early nineteenth-century migrations of French planters with their slaves following the successful slave revolt in neighboring

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[7] The three wars that constituted the Cuban struggle for independence were the Ten Year's War (1868-78), the *Guerra Chiquita* (Little War, 1879-80), and the final War of Independence (1895-98).

[8] The *Grito de Yara* is considered to be the beginning of emancipation, and is still remembered with great respect and admiration in Cuba, both in political and public discourse. Rumba group Yoruba Andabo recorded a rumba-*Abakuá* hybrid called "Protesta Carabalí" on their 1993 album *El Callejón de los Rumberos* that features a verse and chorus about Carlos Manuel de Céspedes and the *Grito de Yara*.

[9] *Mulato* (a person of mixed African and European ancestry, or mulatto) is a recognized racial category in Cuba, and does not carry the negative connotations of its English equivalent.

Haiti. Whereas western Cuban provinces such as Havana and Pinar del Río had always been Spanish colonial strongholds, the east was characterized by a spirit of rebellion and independence fervor, partly due to the Afro-Haitian presence. In other words, racist colonial propaganda that conjured up the image of Haitian slaves expelling their white masters was also regionalist propaganda, the goal of which was to marginalize eastern Cuba. Helg states, "The Spanish authorities cleverly propagated the rumor that Maceo's real aim was to establish a separate black state in eastern Cuba with the support of the Liga Antillana (Caribbean League), an organization allegedly made up of blacks and mulattoes from Haiti and Santo Domingo" (Helg: 51).

The racial anxiety caused by the imagined threat of a Haitian-style black revolution ultimately succeeded in containing the major rebellions in *Oriente* for 28 years, until Antonio Maceo successfully invaded the western part of the island in early 1896. Even important Afro-Cuban intellectuals became swept up in this racist hysteria, as exemplified by the attempts by Matanzas-born Juan Gualberto Gómez to disprove parallels between Haiti and Cuba by emphasizing the different African provenances of slaves from the two respective countries. Gómez asserted that while Haitian slaves had been taken principally from warlike tribes in Senegal and Dahomey (modern-day Benin), Cuban slaves had largely come from more "submissive" and "gentle" tribes of the Congo basin (Helg: 52). Given the regionalist logic underpinning these assumptions about different African ethnic groups, not to mention the history of regional tension within the country that colonized Cuba,[10] perhaps it is not surprising that regionalist sentiment has been such a longstanding and divisive issue in Cuba.

Helg provides a fascinating breakdown by province of the racial composition of the independence rebels in the final War for Independence (1895-98): *Oriente*'s rebels were divided into two main regions, one battalion led by a wealthy white planter from northwest *Oriente*, and the other led by Guillermón Moncada, a black carpenter from Santiago, representing the poorer and blacker southeastern part of *Oriente*. In the neighboring province of Camagüey, the rebels were mostly white, and in fact throughout the war they weakened rebel unity by pitting themselves against the darker-skinned *Orientales*. The central Santa Clara province was made up by a diverse range of Cubans, including landowners and former slaves. While the Matanzas rebels were largely of rural Afro-Cuban descent, regionalist sentiment was operative here as well and divided the *mambises* (insurgents): Matanzas insurgents were hesitant to follow leaders from *Oriente* moving westward. Helg notes that despite these regional antagonisms, Maceo also fostered cross-regional unity as he moved westward across the country and gained the respect and admiration of both black and white rebels. Although Havana and Pinar del Río, the latter with a large majority of Spanish and white Cuban-born peasants, had supported Spain during the Ten Years' War, Maceo was finally successful in invading the latter in January 1896. Helg views this victory as the strategic key in winning the war that led to Cuban independence, and notes that it was only at that point that "the independence struggle had acquired a truly national dimension" (Helg: 74). She thus suggests that Cuba could have only gained independence by overcoming, albeit temporarily and only partially, the regionalist antagonisms between the eastern and western provinces.

Helg foregrounds the disillusionment faced by Afro-Cubans after Cuban independence, when they saw their disproportionately high military participation in the defeat of Spain downplayed in

[10] Spain has a centuries-long history of inter-regional/ethnic conflict that is still very pervasive today, as evidenced by the hostile relations between Madrid and independence-minded regions such as the Basque country and Cataluña, where their own languages – Basque and Catalan respectively – are used more commonly by the population than Castilian (standard) Spanish.

mainstream Cuban public and political discourse, and their hopes for full racial equality denied by continuing segregation and discrimination. The Partido Independiente de Color (Independents of Color Party, or PIC) was formed in 1908 by Afro-Cuban political leaders as a response to the continuing inequalities faced by blacks, and by 1910 had grown to constitute roughly 44% of Afro-Cuban voters (Helg: 156). An overwhelming number of party leaders were from southeastern *Oriente*, where the party had its stronghold. This regional association, in addition to the party's organization along racial lines, was identified as a threat to Havana mainstream political leaders who were opposed to the eastern provinces having a stronger influence in national politics (ibid.: 158). By 1910 a racist campaign was launched by the Havana government and the mainstream media against the PIC, resuscitating threats of a Haitian-style black revolution. This new bout of racial panic eventually led to the massacre in 1912 of thousands of blacks and *mulatos* in *Oriente*, including the vast majority of PIC leaders and many suspected sympathizers, by a combination of government forces and white militias.

As is well known, *Oriente*'s tradition of rebellion did not end with the wars of independence. The Cuban Revolution officially began on July 26, 1953 with a failed attack on the Moncada barracks in Santiago by a group of rebels led by Fidel Castro, a native of the Holguín province in northwest *Oriente*. In an homage to the failed rebellion, which led to the death or jailing of many of the conspirators, Castro named his group of revolutionaries *El Movimiento 26 de Julio* (The 26th of July Movement). After being released from jail in 1955 and spending a year in exile in Mexico gathering forces for another invasion, Castro landed in the southeastern province of Granma in late 1956. From that point on, guerilla activity against dictator Fulgencio Batista's forces was based in the Sierra Maestra mountain range in the provinces of Santiago and Granma. Thus, like the struggle for independence from Spain, the Cuban Revolution has been unequivocally linked to *Oriente*, evidenced by the fact that the city of Santiago is known as *la cuna de la Revolucíon* (the cradle of the Revolution). Political scientist Mark Sawyer asserts that during the early years of the Revolution, "Castro himself suggested that the capital be moved from Havana to Santiago de Cuba, a largely Afro-Cuban city, as a symbol of the priorities of the Revolution" (Sawyer 2006: 57).

Contemporary regionalist antagonisms in Havana

While Ferrer and Helg provide illuminating analyses of the social and economic foundations for regionalist tensions between eastern and western Cuba in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there has been almost no scholarly attention to the enduring effects of this antagonism on contemporary social relations, identity formation or popular culture in Cuba. Several scholars have broached the subject in passing (Daniel 1995; Perna 2005; Sawyer 2006), with dance scholar Yvonne Daniel asserting that "The general Cuban world view [is] also influenced by a regional outlook" (Daniel 1995: 46). However, there has not been an in-depth exploration of the ways that regional identity informs societal and individual beliefs or musical creativity in Cuba, or the ways it creates tensions between Cubans of different provinces. Moreover, it is not only the legacy of the historical strains between eastern and western Cuba that is brought to bear on the current situation, but also newer, present-day pressures that continue to fuel this regionalist sentiment.[11] The level of hostility has grown since the Special

[11] The following discussion of the contemporary manifestations and underlying causes of regionalist antagonisms in Havana is based upon my own ethnographic observations since 2004 and personal communication with many

Period[12] as a result of the marked increase in migration to Havana by Cubans from *el campo* (the countryside), particularly *Orientales*.[13] Like the natives of many capitals throughout the world, *Habaneros* consider every locale outside the capital to be the *campo*, even large cities like Santiago and Camagüey.[14] A revealing example of the enduring force of regionalism is the pervasive use in Havana of the term *Palestinos* (Palestinians) to refer to eastern Cubans, a word that not only reveals the longstanding unequal power dynamics between Havana and eastern Cuba, but also contains racialized overtones.[15] In fact, the term *Oriental* often functions as a discursive stand-in for rural and/or poor blackness, and backwardness generally. Another term utilized to refer to *Orientales* is *nagüe* (slang that translates roughly to "brother"), a regionally specific way of referring to a male friend in *Oriente*, which *Habaneros* often invoke in mocking fashion, presumably to highlight *Orientales*' backwardness.

One of the only academic discussions of regionalist sentiment is provided very briefly by historian Alejandro de la Fuente in his influential book *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (2001). In elucidating the racial inequalities and prejudices that have crept back into the Cuban public sphere since the Special Period and the expansion of the tourist sector, de la Fuente states, "…the migration of people from the eastern provinces to Havana has been frequently interpreted as a black assault on the city" (de la Fuente 2001: 327). He further highlights widespread assumptions concerning the link between race and region with a quote from a white male professional who asserts, " 'These *negros orientales* [blacks from *Oriente*] are taking over'" and who refers to them as *Palestinos* (ibid: 327-8).[16] De la Fuente also emphasizes the

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Cubans from both Havana and the outer provinces. I would like to acknowledge my husband Lázaro Moncada Merencio, whose experiences as a *Santiaguero* (Santiago native) in Havana have deeply informed my observations and knowledge about the subject, and who has provided me with a unique lens through which to view this issue.

[12] The "Special Period" was a term coined by Fidel Castro to refer to the period of severe rationing and shortages in food, gas/electricity, medicine and other products in the early 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Bloc, when Cuba's economy contracted by 35-40% (de la Fuente 2001). See chapter two for details.

[13] Historian Alejandro de la Fuente reports that an estimated 50,000 Cubans migrated to Havana in 1996, and that 92,000 people attempted to legalize their residential status in the city in early 1997, thus prompting the government to ban migration to the capital in spring 1997 (de la Fuente 2001: 328).

[14] Dance scholar Yvonne Daniel states, "Habaneros refer to any place outside of Havana as 'the interior,' as if it were a jungle" (Daniel: 175-76, n. 18).

[15] It should be made clear that this term does not refer to any actual history of Palestinian presence or ancestry in eastern Cuba, but rather constitutes some sort of imagined parallel with the political conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. I am unsure as to exactly how long this term has been in existence with this specific meaning, although some friends approximated that it came to have this connotation during the Special Period in the early 1990s, when there was a surge of eastern Cuban migration to Havana. The only published mentions of the term I have come across are in de la Fuente's book (2001) and in an article (Rodríguez Ruiz and Estévez Mezquía 2006) in *Catauro*, the biannual journal published by the anthropological research institution the Fundación Fernando Ortiz. Ben Brinner reminded me that this time period coincided with the end of the first Palestinian uprising and the forging of the Oslo accords between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and therefore that the conflict was receiving much media attention at this time. This important global event could account partly for the use of this term in response to large-scale migration from *Oriente* at roughly the same time (personal communication, March 2009).

[16] The misconception that *Oriente* is "blacker" than western Cuba in terms of racial demographics has been consistently reified in both academic and popular discourse, despite research that has suggested otherwise. I believe this notion must be revisited given the fact that the late eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century saw a much higher importation and concentration of African-born and African-descended slaves in western Cuba due to the location of the largest sugar plantations in the provinces of Matanzas, Havana, and Santa Clara. Cuban scholar Gabino La Rosa Corzo asserts that by 1778 western Cuba contained more slaves (and inhabitants) than *Oriente*, but that the proportion of slaves within the respective populations was roughly equal in both regions, about 32% (La Rosa Corzo 2003: 74). Cuban ethnographer Jesús Guanche also generalizes that the "African component" of the nation (in addition to the Spanish and Chinese populations) tended towards the central-western end of the island in

racialization and regionalization of access to dollars since they were legalized in 1993: not only are black Cubans much less likely to be the recipients of remittances sent from abroad, principally from immigrants to the U.S. who were overwhelmingly white until recent years, but the remittances are disproportionately sent to residents of the capital rather than the outer provinces (ibid).[17]

In the eyes of many *Habaneros*, *Orientales* have colonized large sections of their city, packing themselves and their large families into crumbling, colonial apartment buildings and thus contributing greatly to the deterioration of the capital's once-great architectural accomplishments. The overcrowding is especially intense in two of the principal municipalities that constitute the center of Havana, *Habana Vieja* (Old Havana) and *Centro Habana* (Central Havana).[18] Furthermore, *Habaneros* tend to paint *Orientales* as the main culprits in the increasing rates of petty theft and hustling – oriented crime targeting tourists.[19] Many *Habaneros* assume that *Orientales*' intentions in migrating to Havana are sinister, i.e. to try and make a living *jineteando* (hustling tourists, which can involve a large variety of activities in addition to exchanging sex for material goods or money), or to engage in the illicit buying and selling of goods on the black market. Political scientist Mark Sawyer quotes one of his informants thus, " 'I just bought a pair of gym shoes, Nikes. Because I am black and an Oriental, everyone will call me a hustler…I work hard for my money, but people think I am a pimp because I am black and from Santiago de Cuba'" (Sawyer: 120). *Orientales* are seen as either *jineteros* (hustlers) or *Palestinos*, refugees from a foreign country who have no real homeland. Considering the fact that Israelis occupy significant portions of Palestinian land, the use of the term *Palestino* to refer to *Orientales* is curious since they are characterized by *Habaneros* not as the occupied (the situation of Palestinians), but as the occupiers of Havana.

While it is true that the Central Havana neighborhoods of Colón and San Leopoldo are filled with high numbers of Cubans from the eastern provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo, my observations and conversations with *Habaneros* have led me to identify certain contradictory tendencies in their disdain for *Orientales*: many of these "natives" either migrated from the east to Havana with their families during childhood, or have parents from *Oriente* or other Cuban provinces. *Habaneros* do not deny this irony, and in fact often joke that there are no more "real" *Habaneros* left in Havana, that they have all left for the U.S. or Europe.[20] Thus, the term *Habanero* has become infused with many different meanings and regional subjectivities, and the line between *Habanero* and *Oriental* is sometimes quite blurry.

Another principal source of tension between eastern and western Cubans is the composition of the police force: many officers are recruited by the state from the interior and eastern provinces. A commonly held view among *Habaneros* is the notion that Fidel Castro has routinely

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general (Guanche 1996: 134). Finally, there are provinces in *Oriente*, such as Holguín, that have historically high proportions of white Cubans. It seems that in these reified notions blackness is a signifier for criminality, and that discursively blackening *Oriente* simultaneously functions to "whiten" western Cuba and signal its civility and modernity.

[17] The "dollarization" of the Cuban economy is discussed in chapter two.

[18] These neighborhoods also boast disproportionately high numbers of black and mulatto residents and consequently have a heavy police presence (de la Fuente: 313-14).

[19] This view is substantiated in de la Fuente's book and in an article written by Genevieve Howe in *Z Magazine*. Howe interviewed one Cuban academic who asserted that even Fidel Castro characterized Old Havana as full of delinquents from *Oriente* (Howe 1998: 37).

[20] Another joking commentary I've heard from different people in Havana is that when *Orientales* travel, they go to Havana, but when *Habaneros* travel, they go to *el yuma* (originally, slang referring to the U.S. but whose meaning has grown to include all Western countries). The assumption with both is that, wherever they go, they will stay.

practiced regional bias during his regime by recruiting government officials and police officers from *Oriente*, of which his natal province of Holguín is a part. Given that the police function as the main agents constricting Cubans' freedom of movement, *Orientales* represent by proxy the repressive state forces that Havana residents collide with on a daily basis. Policing technologies take on a variety of forms in contemporary Havana, the most common one being the random detention of citizens on the street to ask for identification, particularly if they are black Cubans walking with (white) foreigners. I have been party to this experience in many different circumstances, where my husband, friends, or musicians were stopped and questioned about what they were doing with me. *Habaneros* engaged in black market activities – from non-licensed taxi driving to the illicit buying and selling of goods – often rail against the "*Palestino*" cops for curtailing their economic ventures and enforcing the heavy-handed policies outlawing non-licensed, individual private enterprise. *Orientales* thus function as scapegoats for a whole range of social problems in contemporary Havana: housing shortages, the crumbling infrastructure, police repression, black market activities, petty crime, hustling, and prostitution.

The irony contained in the fact that a significant proportion of the police force is from the eastern provinces, is that the most heavily criminalized and policed population in Havana are the *Orientales* themselves. When the police randomly detain Cubans on the street, one of the first things they check is the citizen's place of residence. If the citizen does not have a Havana-based residence listed on their *carnet* (identification card), they are questioned as to the purpose of their stay in the capital, the result of a 1997 law that prohibits Cubans from the outer provinces from being in Havana without authorized permission from the local police.[21] While it has been possible in the past for Havana residents to add non-Havana residents to the registry of occupants in a given domicile, thereby providing the latter with legal residency in the capital, the state authorities have been curbing these permits in the past several years due to overpopulation within individual homes and within Havana generally.[22]

Owing to the stereotype of *Orientales* as petty criminals and hustlers, and the already large proportion of them in the capital, they are less likely to be given authorization to stay in Havana for a non-work related reason, and many do in fact stay in Havana "illegally." One Santiago native has caustically likened himself to an undocumented Mexican in the U.S., asserting that in addition to *Palestino*, the term *indocumentado* (undocumented) has recently entered the popular lexicon as a way of referring to *Orientales* (personal communication, September 2006).[23] In fact, the analogy is apt in many ways: *Orientales*, like undocumented Mexicans in the U.S., are employed disproportionately in low-paying manual labor jobs in Havana, such as construction. I have witnessed what I deem to be *regional profiling* when *Orientales* are stopped by the police;[24] not only does the officer radio in to the precinct to check if the detained citizen has a criminal record, but even if they have no prior convictions, the individual is automatically brought into the precinct in a police car and must wait several hours while the authorities conduct a more in-

[21] Non-Havana residents must have a "legitimate" reason to be in the capital, such as visiting a family member or working there temporarily through the auspices of a state agency, and must register with the local police for a finite period of time.

[22] Genevieve Howe summarizes the 1997 urban migration law thus, "This law requires that people get government permission before moving to Havana. Inspectors must verify that the new lodging in Havana affords adequate sanitary conditions and at least ten square meters of space per person. Violation of the law brings a fine of 300 pesos [roughly $12 USD or an average monthly salary] and the requirement to return immediately to the place of origin" (Howe: 37).

[23] Here, and in other chapters, I will use the abbreviation "p.c." instead of "personal communication" after the first appearance of the term.

[24] Racial profiling is also in effect, since a larger proportion of black Cubans are routinely stopped.

depth investigation. At the very least they are detained at the precinct for several hours and sometimes released after midnight. If they have had prior convictions or *advertencias* (warnings) on their record they are sometimes deported back to their province of origin and prohibited from coming back to Havana for a certain period of time.[25] In sum, it is disconcerting to recognize that the criminalization of *Orientales* in Havana is often perpetrated by their regional compatriots. On the other hand, the police officers recruited from *Oriente* and other provinces often have very few occupational options, and in the end are constrained to carry out orders.[26]

Expressions of regionalism in Cuban popular music

Cuban dance music constitutes a particularly rich terrain of interpretation for exploring contemporary expressions of regionalism.[27] The country's elite bands often combine eminently danceable music with socially relevant lyrics that issue critiques in veiled terms so as to evade censorship by state cultural officials (Perna 2005). While my interpretations of the songs discussed below are gleaned largely through textual analysis, my conclusions are deeply informed by my fieldwork experiences and the many informal discussions I have had with musicians and other Cubans about regionalism and the ways it is addressed in musical performance. Correspondingly, I have inserted quotes and other ethnographic commentaries about the songs where relevant.

"La Habana No Aguanta Más"

The title of this chapter, "La Habana No Aguanta Más" (Havana Can't Take Anymore), is borrowed from a hit song recorded in 1984 by Los Van Van, Cuba's premier dance band since its formation in 1969, whose longevity has earned them the nickname *El tren de la salsa* (the salsa train).[28] Los Van Van is beloved and critically esteemed for their unparalleled musical creativity, drawing on and combining diverse popular music influences principally from Cuban and African-American sources, and their ability to evolve through time and tap into the hippest sounds at any given moment. The band has also created a widespread and loyal fan following by utilizing their songs as vehicles for social and political commentary, sometimes explicitly and at other times through veiled messages and double entendres. Los Van Van's bandleader and

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[25] Howe asserts that government officials have denied rumors of mass deportations of *Orientales* back to their provinces of origin in the 1990s, but she also reproduces statements contradicting this assertion (Howe: 37).

[26] Some Cubans view the recruitment of police officers from outside the capital as a strategic move by the government to create a sense of division between *Habaneros* and *Orientales*, thereby helping maintain control over the population and preventing cross-regional dissent.

[27] In this chapter I use the term "Cuban dance music" to refer to Cuban-style salsa, following the trend of scholars who differentiate Cuban salsa from the genre of music that emerged from New York in the 1960s that has been associated primarily with Puerto Rico. Although there have been musical exchanges between the two styles, there are many features that differentiate them. I use the commonly accepted term *timba* to speak about Cuban dance music since the early 1990s, as it refers to specific stylistic and thematic differences from earlier styles of Cuban dance music. For details on the development of *timba* and its principal musical features, see Perna 2005 and Moore 2006.

[28] The career trajectory, musical innovations and overall significance of Los Van Van to Cuban dance music have been chronicled extensively in literature from both Cuba and the United States, including Perna 2005, Moore 2006, articles in the Cuban popular music journals *Clave* and *Salsa Cubana*, and many internet sources.

principal composer since its inception, Havana-born bassist Juan Formell, has displayed a continuous ability to pinpoint the relevant social concerns of urban Cubans at different moments in the past four decades, thus providing public legitimacy for and affirmation of the daily realities and struggles of average Cubans.

"La Habana No Aguanta Más" was recorded during a particularly fruitful period of composition for Formell and his band, the decade of the 1980s, when Los Van Van's repertoire was considered to have achieved an almost-perfect synthesis of catchy, danceable music and satirical commentary on diverse social issues and controversies.[29] The song's lyrics lament the constant influx of people migrating from other provinces to Havana in search of greater economic prospects, asserting that housing and job opportunities are available all over the country and there is no need to overcrowd the capital.[30] Following are the song's lyrics:[31]

Verse 1	
He recibido un telegrama de Cachito y Agustín,	I received a telegram from Cachito and Agustín,
Son mis primos que me dicen	They're my cousins and they tell me
(Coro) Que en La Habana quieren vivir	(Chorus) That they want to live in Havana
(Solista) Somos siete de familia	(Lead) There are seven of us in the family
Con dos perros además	With two dogs as well
Con cuidado, mis parientes,	Take it easy, my folks,
Que La Habana no aguanta más!	'Cause Havana can't take anymore!
Bridge	
(Coro) Y ya tú ves que en Cuba entera	(Chorus) And now all over Cuba
Hay condiciones para vivir,	There are good living conditions,
Y hasta se han hecho pueblos nuevos	And they've even built new towns
Por montones, de verdad	A bunch of them, it's true
Verse 2	
(Solista) Sin embargo aquí en La Habana	(Lead) Even so, here in Havana
Se me quieren colar	They're trying to intrude on me

[29] Rebecca Mauleón and Rachel Faro note in a Los Van Van compilation CD that these songs included "El Negro No Tiene Na'" (The Black Guy Doesn't Have Anything, 1984), responding to the rumors that Los Van Van's lead singer Pedro Calvo had contracted AIDS or some other STD; "La Resolución" (The Resolution, 1985), which critiqued the ungrateful behavior and gossip-mongering of Cuban party-goers who are never satisfied with the generosity of their hosts; "La Titimanía" (Young Girl Fever, 1987), exposing the trend of older men taking up with younger women; and "No Soy De La Gran Escena" (I'm Not from the Big Stage. 1989), an explicit critique of a well-known Cuban television program called "La Gran Escena" that features performances only of "high art" such as opera and ballet, while shunning Cuban popular and folkloric music and dance (Mauleón and Faro 1999).

[30] Although "La Habana No Aguanta Más" has been mentioned often in publications discussing the social relevance of Los Van Van's lyrics, it is usually interpreted in a more literal way as addressing housing shortages in the capital (Perna 2005; Moore 2006), and has not been examined through the lens of the politics of regionalism in Cuba.

[31] This song can be found on the Los Van Van compilation album *The Legendary Los Van Van: 30 Years of Cuba's Greatest Dance Band* (Ashé Records, 1999). Lyrics and translations of the verse section of the song are taken from the liner notes from the album, although I have made changes where I felt a better translation was warranted. The translation of the *montuno* section lyrics are my own. The phrases that I will discuss in my analysis are in boldface. Lyrics reproduced courtesy of Termidor Musikverlag & Timba Records.

Con cuidado, mi familia	Take it easy, my family,
Que La Habana no aguanta más!	'Cause Havana can't take anymore!
Montuno (call-and-response) section[32]	
(Coro) Qué va!	Come on!
Que va, está bueno ya!	Come on, enough already!
Que La Habana no aguanta más! (3x)	'Cause Havana can't take anymore!
(alternates with instrumental repetition of chorus)	
(Solista) Con cuidado, mi familia!	Take it easy, my family
(Coro, same until otherwise noted)	
Que La Habana no aguanta más!	Cause Havana can't take anymore!
(Solista) Mis parientes, ***vamos a ser conscientes***	My folks, **we have to be conscious**
- Que problema me voy a buscar	What problems I'll have if my sister
si viene mi hermana pastora	Pastora comes
- Con sus seis vejigos que son candela	With her six kids that are trouble
- Sin embargo aqui en mi casa se me quieren colar	Even so here in my house they're trying to intrude on me
- Y además de todo eso mi mujer quiere tener otro negrito	And besides all that my wife wants another (black) baby
(Bridge)	
(Solista, spoken) Manolo, el tumbador de la sonrisa amplia! YA!	Manolo, the conga player with a big smile! ENOUGH!
(Shortened Coro) Que La Habana no aguanta más	Cause Havana can't take anymore!
(4x, alternating with instrumental repetition of chorus)	
(Improvised flute solo)	
(Solista, spoken) Sopla Armando, sopla!	Blow Armando, blow!
(Solista) ***Bibliotecas, cines de estrenos y un buen bailable***	**Libraries, new movie theaters and a good dance club**
(Coro, same until otherwise noted)	
En toda Cuba vas a encontrar	All over Cuba you'll find
(Solista) Sí, una pizzeria y un Coppelita, mamita	**Yes, a pizzeria and a Coppelita,[33] baby**
- Apartamentos bien amueblados	**Well-furnished apartments**
- Hay que aclararle esto a mis parientes	We have to make this clear to my relatives
(Coro) Que La Habana no aguanta más	That Havana can't take anymore!

[32] In this chapter when there is an alternating chorus that repeats many times within a *montuno* section I provide only the lead's calls with a hyphen before each line to denote the alternating chorus between each call. I do not translate the words *coro* (chorus) and *solista* (lead singer) in the *montuno* section in the column of English lyrics for the sake of space.

[33] Coppelia is the name of Cuba's national brand of ice cream, established after the Revolution. There are Coppelia ice cream parlors in every major city on the island.

(Solista) Ya no sé que va a pasar si mi hermana se decide llegar	I don't know what I'll do if my sister decides to come
- Porque como yo le dije, trae seis vejigos que son de ajá	Because like I told you, she'll bring six restless kids
- Oye, ahora que en mi casa me la quieren llenar	Listen, now they want to fill up my house
- Que va, que va, no aguanta más	Come on, come on, it can't take anymore
(Coro, until fade out)	
(Solista, spoken over chorus)	
Por eso yo me quedo en La Jata,	That's why I'm staying in La Jata [Havana neighborhood]
Allí voy a hacer un doce plantas	There I'm gonna build a twelve-story building[34]
Preguntale, preguntale a Bomba, el limpiabotas	Ask, ask Bomba, shoe shiner.
Oye! Sigueme	Listen! Follow me

The song is framed as a sort of morality tale directed at the narrator's (and by extension many other Havana residents') relatives, in which he makes an appeal for them to consider the greater social good, and not just their own individual desires to move to the capital. The lead singer's "call" early in the *montuno* section borrows a word commonly used in socialist ideology, *conscientes* (meaning to be socially conscious or aware), in order to elicit a feeling of social duty in the population not to overcrowd the capital city. During his very lengthy time in power, Fidel Castro often called upon Cubans to sacrifice their individual desires for the good of the country and for the purposes of advancing socialist ideologies during periods of economic and social crisis, most recently during the Special Period. The references in the bridge and *montuno* sections to the construction of housing, educational institutions, entertainment and food venues all over the island function as an attempt both to "prove" the existence of the attractive living conditions outside Havana, and to convince people to stay in their own provinces. In many ways, this narrative technique can be interpreted as a hegemonic move, in relation to Gramsci's notion of the multi-dimensional character of hegemony, particularly the necessity of gaining popular consent in order to perpetuate hegemonic moments and configurations (Hall 1996a [1986]: 424). The fact that socialist notions – such as the importance of citizens being *consciente* – are reproduced in this song is evidence of the state's success in (to paraphrase Stuart Hall) making its hegemonic ideologies popular (ibid: 426).

The most interesting part of the song's narrative strategy is that the subject is presumably himself a non-Havana native, which seems to render the message more effective as it is an outsider addressing other outsiders. It is almost as if the regional identity of the narrator is used to forestall possible accusations of regionalism and divisiveness that could be launched at Los Van Van for defending Havana against "alien" invaders. Instead, the song appears to be making an objective argument, free from the biases of regional identity, about the ways that over-migration contributes to Havana's crumbling infrastructure and disrupts the narrator's life.

While the narrator never provides any details about which province he is from, the meanings of this message, and the probability that it is directed primarily at *Orientales*, must be inferred in light of the regional identity of lead singer Pedro Calvo, known as "Pedrito." Calvo, undeniably

[34] *Doce plantas*, literally a "twelve-story building," refers to the drab, Soviet-style apartment buildings built by the Cuban government to fill housing needs in the 1970s and 80s.

one of Los Van Van's most visible and beloved stars who played a major role in the group's popular ascent in the 1970s and 80s, is from Cuba's second-largest city and the unofficial capital of *Oriente*, Santiago de Cuba. Rebecca Mauleón and Rachel Faro state, "No visual icon represents Los Van Van's identity more than lead singer Pedro Calvo, with his broad-rimmed hat, his overwhelming sexuality (both physically and vocally), and his ebullient humor" (Mauleón and Faro 1999: 20).[35] Indeed, despite the fact that Los Van Van, as Cuba's premier salsa band, is identified primarily with the capital city, Calvo's longstanding image – with his wide-rimmed hat, bandana and long, bushy mustache – has always conjured up the image of a *campesino* (peasant or farmer from the countryside). What sort of message can be deduced from having a Santiago native, whose visual presence signifies him as an outsider to Havana, police the boundaries of the capital in this song? Whatever the intentions of Formell (a *Habanero*) in composing and Calvo (a *Santiaguero*) in interpreting this song, it is clear that the meanings are much more complex than a simple regionalist defense of one's city from overcrowding by Cubans from other provinces. Formell seems to have been prophetic in writing this song several years before the fall of the Soviet bloc and the onset of the Special Period that provoked much larger waves of migration to Havana. The liner notes for a Los Van Van compilation CD state, "In 1996 the government initiated a resolution (which may or may not have been inspired by the song) to 'thin out' the capital city by encouraging those Cubans who migrated from other provinces to return to their original homes" (Mauleón and Faro: 22).

In order to contextualize the song's multivalent meanings vis-à-vis regional identities and hostilities between different provinces, it is worth highlighting the career trajectory of Formell and the majority of the band's founding members prior to the formation of Los Van Van. Complicating the direct association of the band with the capital city is the fact that Formell, whose family has roots in Santiago, received much of his musical formation during the few years he spent with the pioneering eastern Cuban dance band Orquesta Revé. Formed in 1956 in the easternmost province of the island, Guantánamo, and led by Elio Revé until his death in 1997,[36] Orquesta Revé has drawn heavily on musical elements from the traditional *changüí* genre.[37] Before joining Orquesta Revé in the mid-1960s Formell had been drawn more towards rock and jazz rather than Cuban dance music (Perna 2005: 36). He introduced rock – oriented elements into the Orquesta Revé such as electric guitars and trap drumset, musical features he carried over into Los Van Van a few years later (Mauleón and Faro: 8). More importantly, he effectively decimated Orquesta Revé when he left to start his own band, taking at least nine core members with him to Havana, including the other principal Los Van Van composer, pianist Cesar "Pupy" Pedroso (ibid: 9).[38]

The fact that Los Van Van's founding members and most influential musicians began their professional careers with Orquesta Revé or other eastern Cuban dance bands, suggests a strong

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[35] Calvo left Los Van Van in 2000, and currently has his own dance band, Pedro Calvo y La Justicia. He still makes occasional guest appearances with Los Van Van for televised performances.

[36] The band, also known as Elio Revé y su Charangón, is currently under the direction of Revé's son, Elio Revé, Jr., or "Elito." *Timba* scholar Vincenzo Perna states "Such extensive use of coros [refrains], now a feature common to practically all contemporary MB [*música bailable*, or dance music], was spearheaded by Elio Revé, the now defunct leader of a band that has functioned as an incubator for many important names of contemporary Cuban dance music [including Formell and current *timba* star Paulito FG]" (Perna 2005: 140).

[37] *Changüí*, believed to be one of the rural eastern Cuban antecedents of *son,* is almost universally associated with the province of Guantánamo. For more on *changüí* see Lapidus 2005b.

[38] Pedroso's rhythmic innovations on the piano have been essential to the development of *timba*. He left Los Van Van in 2001 in order to form his own band, Pupy y Los Que Son Son, which has had tremendous success and is currently one of Cuba's most popular dance bands.

legacy of musical creativity that moved from east to west. In fact, *timba*, the dominant style of Cuban dance music since the early 1990s, would arguably not have developed into its current manifestation if not for the musical schooling of many of its principal innovators within eastern Cuban dance bands formed in the 1950s. Beginning their careers with Ritmo Oriental – a highly influential dance band that emerged as an offshoot from Orquesta Revé in 1958 – were Los Van Van's Pedrito Calvo and several other future *timba* stars. *Timba* scholar Vincenzo Perna states, "In the 1970s the band [Ritmo Oriental] was known in Cuba as the charanga with the best percussion, and had a powerful, spectacular presence, featuring two musicians who would become key figures of timba, David Calzado (the future leader of La Charanga Habanera) and Tony Calá (the singer of NG La Banda)" (Perna: 42). Indeed, La Charanga Habanera and NG La Banda are perhaps the two bands most intimately associated with *timba*, albeit for very different reasons: the former has enjoyed almost unparalleled mass popularity throughout Cuba since its emergence in the 1990s and the latter is widely viewed as the first band to pull together all the musical elements that define *timba* (Perna 2005; Moore 2006).[39]

"Soy Cubano, Soy de Oriente"

Addressing precisely this issue of the formative influences of eastern Cuban musical creativity, and speaking/singing back to the antagonistic rhetoric issued in "La Habana No Aguanta Más," the eastern Cuban dance band Orquesta Original de Manzanillo released "Soy Cubano y Soy de Oriente" (I'm Cuban and I'm from *Oriente*) in 1985. The discursive counter-attack was led by the Santiago-born singer Cándido Fabré, widely considered to be one of the best vocal improvisers within Cuban popular music and known for spontaneously composing songs that comment on the social issue or situation of any given moment. The song contradicts the notion that *Orientales* always travel to Havana with intentions of staying and asserts the significance of *Oriente*'s musical contributions to Cuban popular music as a whole.[40] Here I reproduce the song's lyrics in their entirety in order to illustrate the various narrative strategies used by Fabré to respond to Los Van Van, specifically to his fellow *Oriental* native, Pedrito Calvo:[41]

<u>Verse</u>

Yo que pensaba en las vacacciones	I thought I would go to Havana for my vacation,
llegar a La Habana,	
Para pasear con Pedrito, con mi familia y con Juana	To take a stroll with Pedrito, with my family and Juana
Llegarme por Tropicana, pasar por el malecón	Go to the Tropicana, walk on the *malecón*[42]

[39] The website Timba.com has been an invaluable source of information on *timba* genealogy.

[40] I thank my husband Lázaro for alerting me to the existence of this song (which seems to have been buried in the vaults of Cuban popular music history) and for providing meaningful insight concerning my reading of the song text.

[41] This song can be found on the Cuban salsa compilation *Cuban Gold: Que Se Sepa, ¡Yo Soy de La Habana!* (Qbadisc Records, 1993). Translation of the lyrics are my own. Lyrics reproduced courtesy of Tumi Music.

[42] The *malecón*, a quintessential architectural symbol of Havana, is a long promenade/boardwalk that runs for miles along the sea in the city's center. It is also a primary site of nocturnal entertainment for Cubans of all ages, classes, races and sexual orientations – who sit on top of the seawall, socializing and drinking with friends and loved ones – and for tourists.

Visitar el capitolio y escuchar al Aragón

Porque vivo convencido que en toda Cuba
hay escuelas,
Hay hospitales, trincheras, casas, mujeres y cines

Y yo por eso no vine las vacacciones pasadas

Y aunque soy del monte adentro,
nadie me puede engañar.
No existe otro capitolio, ni he visto otra catedral

Igual que no hay en La Habana
ninguna Sierra Maestra
No hay ningún Cuartel Moncada,
No hay Gran Piedra, no hay Caney,
No hay Granjita Siboney,
No hay Bayamo, no hay Glorieta.
Tampoco existe otra fiesta criolla como la mia
Que empieza por la mañana y termina al otro día

Pero como me enteré que ya La Habana
No aguanta más,
Porque no cogen al son y me lo
mandan pa'cá?
Porque no cogen al son y lo
devuelven pa'cá?

Visit the capital building and go hear the [Orquesta] Aragón[43]
Because I am convinced that all over Cuba there are schools,
There are hospitals, trenches,[44] houses, women and movie theaters
And because of this I didn't come during my last vacation
And although I'm from the boondocks,[45] no one can fool me.
There is no other capital building, nor have I seen another cathedral
Just like in Havana there is no Sierra Maestra[46]
There are no Moncada Barracks,[47]
There's no Gran Piedra, there's no Caney,[48]
There's no Granjita Siboney,[49]
There's no Bayamo, there's no Glorieta.[50]
Nor is there another creole [Cuban] party like mine, that begins in the morning and ends the next day
But since I found out that now Havana can't take anymore,
Why don't they take the [musical genre] *son* and send it to me here?
Why don't they take the *son* and return it back here [*Oriente*]?

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[43] The Orquesta Aragón is a highly esteemed dance band founded in 1939 in the central Cuban city of Cienfuegos. The band gained widespread popularity when they relocated to Havana in the early 1950s, and shifted their style from a more traditional *danzón* – oriented repertoire to focus on the hot new music/dance style of the moment, the *cha-cha-chá.* Orquesta Aragón is still performing today.

[44] The reference to trenches relates to the rhetoric of the Cuban Revolution emphasizing the importance of national defense in every corner of the island. Fidel Castro has used the expression *trincheras de ideas* (ideological trenches) in his speeches (p.c. with Lázaro Moncada, March 2008)

[45] I have translated *monte adentro* (literally, "mountain inside") as "boondocks," since it is a vernacular expression used in Cuba to refer to the middle of nowhere, a rural location very far from an industrialized urban center.

[46] The Sierra Maestra is a large mountain range in *Oriente* that extends through the provinces of Santiago and Granma, and is famed for being the base of operations for Fidel Castro and the other guerillas during the Cuban Revolution.

[47] The Moncada Barracks is a former military site in the city of Santiago where Castro staged his first attack on Cuban government forces in 1953.

[48] Gran Piedra is, as its name suggests, a famous "large rock" that sits atop a mountain outside of the city of Santiago. Caney is a town outside of Santiago where some of the best mangos in Cuba are grown.

[49] The Granjita Siboney is a farm located near Siboney beach just outside of Santiago city, where Castro hid after his failed assault on the Moncada Barracks and where the authorities caught and arrested him.

[50] Bayamo, located in the province of Granma, is one of Cuba's oldest cities and is famous for its colonial-style charm. The Glorieta, located in the city of Manzanillo in Granma province, is a unique architectural monument in terms of its strong Arabic/Moorish influence and its design reminiscent of the Alhambra in Granada, Spain.

Soy cubano, yo soy de Oriente	I'm Cuban, I'm from *Oriente*
Pero qué pasa en La Habana?	What's going on in Havana?
Qué pasa, mi gente?	What's going on, my people?
<u>*Montuno* section</u>	
(Coro, same until otherwise noted)	(Chorus)
Soy cubano, yo soy de Oriente	I'm Cuban, I'm from *Oriente*
Pero qué pasa en La Habana?	What's going in Havana?
Qué le pasa a mi gente?	What's going on with my people?
(Solista) En cualquier parte se puede vivir,	(Lead) One can live well in any place,
Lo voy a decir a gritos:	I'm going to yell it at the top of my lungs:
Cuba es la tierra más linda	Cuba is the most beautiful country
Que ojos humanos han visto!	that human eyes have ever seen!
(Coro)	(Chorus)
(Solista) Pero por eso no hay razón pa' que me digan	(Lead) So there's no reason for them to
Que ya La Habana no aguanta más	tell me that Havana can't take anymore
Mañana temprano recojo lo mio y	Tomorrow early I'll gather all my things
Con mi familia me voy pa'llá	and with my family I'll go there[51]
- Pedrito! Dale la mano al que llega,	Pedrito! Give a hand to he who arrives,
Bríndale hospitalidad	Offer him hospitality
Que cuando él vea que no cabe	Because when he sees that there's no
Solito se marchará.	room for him, he'll leave by himself.
- En Oriente tengo un humilde bohío	In *Oriente* I have a humble hut
Con un techado de guano,	with a roof made of palm leaves,
Que tiene la puerta abierta para todos los cubanos	Whose door is open for all Cubans
(Instrumental interlude)	
(Shortened Coro, same until otherwise noted)	
Soy cubano, yo soy de Oriente	I'm Cuban, I'm from *Oriente*
(Solista) Antonio Maceo nació en Majaguabo	(Lead) Antonio Maceo was born in
y fue a morir a Occidente	Majaguabo[52] and went to die in the west
(Coro)	
(Solista) José Martí que nació en La Habana	(Lead) José Martí who was born in Havana
Y vino a caer en Oriente	and fell [died in battle] in *Oriente*
- Ay, esos grandes corazones cayeron	Oh, those two brave hearts fell
en opuestas regiones!	in opposite regions!
- Ay, pero por eso le voy a cantar que venga,	Oh, because of this I'll sing for Alberto
si quiere, Alberto y Vicente	and Vicente to come if they want
- Que tengo esta rumbita, esta rumbita caliente	'Cause I have this little rumba, this hot little rumba
- Vamos a gozar, que baile toda la gente!	We're gonna have fun, everyone dance!

[51] It's not entirely clear in the song whether, by "there," Fabré is referring to Havana or to going back home, i.e., *Oriente*.

[52] Majaguabo is a small town in the rural part of the Santiago province.

(Shortened Coro, same until the end)	
Yo soy de Oriente	I'm from *Oriente*
(Solista) Hace tiempo esta es la tierra caliente	This has been the "hot land"[53] for a long time
- ***A ver, Ud., Ud., de dónde es?***	**Let's see, you, you, where are you from?**
- El sol sale por aquí, y se esconde en Occidente	**The sun rises here [in the east] and hides in the west**
(Coro, with instrumental response replacing solo voice)	
(Flute solo added on top of call-and-response)	

Fabré utilizes different narrative techniques to respond to Calvo's and Formell's assertions concerning the availability of housing and other social services all across the island. He affirms that this statement is true in both the verse and *montuno* sections, hence suggesting that one need not travel to Havana and that any Cuban city provides the necessary conditions for living well. However, by listing the unique monuments and attractions in both the capital and different locales in *Oriente*, Fabré also makes a broader statement about the natural and man-made diversity that can be found on the island. This counters Los Van Van's homogenizing rhetoric implying that all places offer more or less the same amenities. In the verse section Fabré asserts that just as the capital building, the cathedral and the seaside *malecón* (promenade) are unique to Havana, *Oriente* has unparalleled sites of natural beauty and historic importance, such as the colonial city of Bayamo or Santiago's Moncada Barracks, where the Cuban Revolution was launched in 1953. In fact the song's title, "I'm Cuban and I'm from *Oriente*," constitutes a counter-hegemonic utterance, as it discursively emplaces eastern Cuban identity at the center of national identity and thus challenges the implication that *Orientales* are not as "native" to Cuba as *Habaneros* – a notion that is currently more pervasive than ever in Havana with the term "undocumented" used to refer to eastern migrants.

With the line "Y aunque soy del monte adentro, nadie me puede engañar" (Although I'm from the boondocks, no one can fool me), Fabré wears his "countryness" and regional identity proudly. In the *montuno* section, Fabré issues a strong defense of his region and *Orientales* in general, admonishing Calvo for not acting hospitably towards other easterners in Havana. He assures *Habaneros* that *Orientales* will recognize when Havana has reached its full capacity, and have the moral sense to leave without being told to do so. He juxtaposes Calvo's (and *Habaneros*') unwelcoming behavior with his own *Oriental* hospitality, stating that although his home is humble, the doors are always open for all his countrymen.

Fabré issues perhaps his most witty and acerbic barb at the end of the verse when referencing the origins of the traditional dance music called *son*, stating, "Porqué no cogen al *son* y lo devuelven pa'cá?" (Why don't they [*Habaneros*] take the *son* and return it back here?). Here he alludes to the fact that Cuba's most influential popular musical genre originated in *Oriente*, and was subsequently brought to the capital in the first decade of the twentieth century, where it became a symbol of *Cubanidad* (Cubanness) both on the island and abroad. The implication is

[53] Santiago province is known throughout Cuba as *la tierra caliente* (the hot land) for its extreme temperatures and humidity levels as compared with Havana and the northern coast of Cuba. However, this sobriquet also has a symbolic meaning, alluding to the hospitality and openness of *Santiagueros* and their penchant for partying.

that *son*, and eastern Cuban musical creativity in general, have been appropriated by *Habaneros* and redefined as the island's quintessential musical practice.[54] Furthermore, Fabré could be interpreted as issuing a veiled critique at the many eastern Cuban musicians, such as Calvo, who have abandoned *Oriente* for the capital and apparently forgotten their regional roots. In fact, Fabré constitutes a rare case in that even after leaving the Orquesta Original de Manzanillo in 1993 to form his own band, he never relocated to Havana, preferring instead to maintain his home base in *Oriente*.

The second part of the *montuno* section, with the shortened choral refrain, reveals two very different discursive aims. The first appears to be a call for cross-regional unity, as evidenced in Fabré's invocation of the two most celebrated figures in the struggle for Cuban independence – Antonio Maceo, the military and strategic leader, and José Martí, the intellectual and philosophical leader – and the fact that both were born and died in "opposite regions" fighting for the same noble cause. The last several lines of Fabré's solo, however, are characterized by a more aggressive, critical tone that could be viewed as a *puya* (a verbal challenge within a battle of wits between two or more singers, most often seen in the rumba style called *columbia).* He sings "A ver, Ud., Ud., de dónde es?" (Let's see, you, you, where are you from?), thus challenging Calvo and other musicians from *Oriente* living in Havana to come out of the regional closet and reveal their true identity. Most interesting is the last line of the song, loaded with meaning: "El sol sale por aquí, y se esconde en Occidente" (The sun rises here [in the east] and hides in the west). Instead of singing "the sun sets in the west," Fabré substitutes the word "hides," lending a more sinister tone to the last phrase. Once again, he seems to be implying that musical creativity and brilliance (the shining sun) originate in *Oriente* and travel to *Occidente*, never to be heard from again, thus leaving the east bereft of its talent.

Lázaro Moncada Merencio, a native of Santiago, told me that the regionalist battle on wax constituted by "La Habana No Aguanta Más" and its response song, "Soy Cubano y Soy de Oriente," stirred up quite a popular controversy in the mid-1980s in Cuba, and that many *Orientales* felt vindicated by Fabré's passionate defense of his region (p.c., February 2008). However, unlike the Los Van Van song, Fabré's composition seems to have been largely forgotten in Cuban dance music historiography, a lacuna that is perhaps not surprising given the nature of Cuba's regional politics and the hegemony of Havana's cultural production vis-à-vis the rest of the island.[55]

"Un Pariente en el Campo"

Whereas these two songs suggest that overcrowding in the capital and hostilities between *Habaneros* and *Orientales* were significant concerns in the mid-1980s – during a period of relative economic and social stability within the country – regionalist sentiment has become increasingly hostile since the economic crisis of the Special Period. A recent *timba* song that addresses regionalism and eastern migration to Havana is Adalberto Álvarez's "Un Pariente en el Campo" (A Relative in the Countryside), which appears on his latest album *Mi Linda Habanera* (BIS Music,

[54] Robin Moore's *Nationalizing blackness: Afrocubanismo and artistic revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (1997) elaborates a similar argument, although he focuses on the racial politics of the nationalist appropriation of *son* rather than the regional politics.

[55] A Google search conducted on "Soy Cubano y Soy de Oriente" in March 2008 resulted in only four hits, three of which were track listings for the song on compilation albums, and the fourth of which was a brief encyclopedia entry on Cándido Fabré listing his most famous compositions.

2005). Álvarez is from the city of Camagüey, in the large province of the same name that until the Revolution constituted part of *Oriente*.[56] However, he was born "by accident" in Havana while his mother was visiting the capital.[57] During the early years of his career he helped form the dance band Son 14 in Santiago, a fact that adds Álvarez to the list of pioneering musicians who gained their musical formation with eastern Cuban dance bands. Álvarez left for Havana in 1984 to form his current group, Adalberto Álvarez y Su Son, which has come to be one of the most successful and durable dance bands in the past quarter century.[58] "Un Pariente En El Campo," a major hit from Álvarez's recent album, provides a fascinating commentary on the manifestations of regionalist sentiment in twenty-first century Havana:[59]

Verse 1	
Mira que linda es La Habana,	Look how lovely Havana is,
Como La Habana no hay	Like Havana there is no other
Verdad que se ve bonita,	It's true that it's pretty,
Por donde quiera que vas	No matter where you go
Y según cuenta la histora	According to history
Hace ya más de 100 años	More than 100 years ago
En La Habana no había tanta gente	There weren't so many people in Havana
Pero de pronto se empezó a llenar	But suddenly it began to fill up
Vinieron de todas partes	They came from all parts of the country
Porque La Habana es la capital	Because Havana is the capital
Verse 2	
Y así se fueron uniendo el campo y la capital	This is how the countryside and the capital began to come together
Y se formaron familias,	And families were formed,
Los de aquí con los de allá	Those from here with those from there
Por eso cuando te veo,	That's why when I see you,
Inocente y especulando, te digo	innocent and "speculating,"[60] I tell you
Que aquí el que más, el que menos	That here everyone, more or less,
Tiene un pariente en el campo, Ay Dios!	Has a relative in the countryside, Oh God!

[56] Before the Revolution the island was divided into two regions, *Oriente* and *Occidente* (western Cuba). After the Revolution the government added a third geographical division, called *Centro* (central Cuba), and Camagüey became the easternmost province in central Cuba.

[57] Biographical and professional information about Adalberto Álvarez is drawn from his homepage, http://www.adalbertoalvarez.cult.cu.

[58] On *Mi Linda Habanera* Álvarez re-released one of his most popular songs from the early 1990s, "Y que tú quieres que te den" (And what do you want them [the *orishas*, or Yoruba-derived deities] to give you?), and its resurgent popularity has cemented his band's current popularity in the *timba* era. During my fieldwork between August 2006 and May 2007 it was almost impossible to go to a rumba or dance music event in which the song was *not* played during an intermission. The song, which includes rapped lyrics in addition to the insertion of Yoruba-derived choruses for various *orishas*, is one of the most prominent *timba* odes to *Santería* worship. When first released in the 1990s, it helped inspire countless dance songs extolling the virtues of Afro-Cuban religious practice.

[59] The transcription and translation of all lyrics are my own. Lyrics reproduced courtesy of BIS Music.

[60] *Especulando,* literally "speculating," is used in popular discourse in contemporary Cuba to mean showing off or displaying conspicuous signs of wealth, such as a cell phone or gold chains. In this song it also refers specifically to someone from the outer provinces passing themselves off as a *Habanero*.

Montuno section

(Coro) Como se goza en La Habana,	How enjoyable is Havana,
Por eso me gusta tanto.	That's why I like it so much.
Aquí el que más, el que menos,	Here everyone, more or less,
Tiene un pariente en el campo	Has a relative in the countryside
(Solista) Que linda luce la capital	How pretty the capital
De toditos los cubanos	Of each and every Cuban looks
Cuando los veo caminar de la mano, mi compay	When I see them walking hand in hand,
De su pariente del campo	My friend, with their relative from the countryside
(Whole 4-line Coro)	
(Solista) Lo importante es la familia,	The important thing is family,
El cariño y el amor	Affection and love
Jardín que no se cultiva	[Proverb] A garden that isn't cultivated
Jamás te brinda una flor	Will never bring forth a flower
(Whole 4-line coro)	
(Solista) No, no! No importa de donde vengas,	No, no! It doesn't matter where you're
Siempre te daré mi mano	from, I'll always shake your hand
Y sacando bien la cuenta, caballero	After all, man
Toditos somos cubanos	We're all Cubans
(Instrumental interlude, then Coro)	
(Shortened Coro, 2x) Tiene un pariente en el campo	Has a relative in the countryside
(Solista) El caballo en Santa Fe	The guy in Santa Fe [Havana
hace poco se hizo santo, tú ves	neighborhood] just made *santo*,[61] you see
(Coro, same until otherwise noted)	
Tiene un pariente en el campo	Has a relative in the countryside
(Solista) Y la chica de la esquina	And the girl who lives on the corner
que me gusta tanto	who I like so much
- Michila de Centro Habana,	Michila, of Central Havana,
la que siempre está bailando	The one who's always dancing
- La mayoría de la gente	The majority of the people
que ahora a mí me está escuchando	listening to me right now
(Coro)	

[61] To "make santo" means to be initiated into *Santería*.

Solista (spoken): ***Bueno caballeros, voy a mencionar a todo El que tiene un pariente en el campo.***	**Ok guys, I'm gonna mention everyone who has a relative in the countryside.**
Voy pa'llá! Mira: *David Calzado, Manolito Simonet, Jose Luis Cortés, Elito Revé, Pachito Alonso,* *Juan Formell, Isaac Delgado, y Eduardo Pérez* *Que ahora me está grabando. Ahí!*	Here I go! Listen: David Calzado, Manolito Simonet, Jose Luis Cortés, Elito Revé, Pachito Alonso, Juan Formell, Isaac Delgado and Eduardo Pérez, who is recording me right now. Right there!
Vaya, Andrea de Baracoa	Hell, Andrea from Baracoa[62]
Por la forma en que me hablas *Ahora yo decirte quiero,* ***(New Coro) Como te gusta hacerte el habanero!*** *(Solista) Tu le vas a Los Industriales, pero eres guantanamero*	Because of the way you're speaking to me I want to tell you right now **How you like pretending you're a *Habanero*!** You root for the Industriales [Havana's baseball team], but you're from Guantánamo
(Coro, same until otherwise noted) *Como te gusta hacerte el habanero!*	How you like pretending you're a *Habanero*!
(Solista) Deja las boberías y ve a ponerte tu sombrero ***- Verdad que La Habana es linda,*** ***Pero lo tuyo primero*** *(Coro, 3x)* *(Alternating coros/refrains) Pero hay, lo hay* *Como te gusta hacerte el habanero!*	**Stop being stupid and go put on your [country] hat** **Havana really is beautiful,** **But your own [city] comes first** But they exist, they exist How you like pretending you're a *Habanero*!
(Solista) Mi gente de Camagüey! *Tu vives en Centro Habana pero eres de Niquero* *(Coro) Como te gusta hacerte el habanero!*	My people from Camagüey! You live in Central Havana but you're from Niquero[63] How you like pretending you're a *Habanero*!
(Solista) Viniste de vista y ahora, como te llevo? *(Coro)* *(Solista, spoken) Oye, La Habana, Santiago, Camagüey, Pinar del Río, Cuba!* *Que linda es Cuba!*	**You came to visit and now,** **How can I make you go back home?** Listen, Havana, Santiago, Camagüey, Pinar del Rio, Cuba! How lovely Cuba is!

[62] Baracoa is a city located on the easternmost tip of Cuba, in the province of Guantánamo.
[63] Niquero is a town on the southeastern coast of Cuba in the province of Granma.

Upon initial analysis of the song, it would be possible to interpret it as making similar declarations to those in "La Habana No Aguanta Más": the lyrics are peppered with odes to Havana's beauty and its many possibilities for entertainment; there is a recognition of the increase in migration from other provinces to the capital, albeit in a historically vague manner; there is an explicit perpetuation of the notion that there are no more "pure" *Habaneros* left in Havana; there is a complaint about relatives coming to visit and never leaving; and finally, there is a pointed critique of Cubans who affect certain styles of dress, comportment and beliefs associated with Havana natives, while denigrating or denying their own eastern Cuban and/or rural customs. Interestingly, despite his identity as a *Camagüeyano* (Camagüey native) from *el campo*, Álvarez does not proudly defend his region like Fabré does; he simply critiques non-Havana natives who do not display regional pride. However, a closer analysis of the song, paired with information concerning Adalberto Álvarez's intentions in writing it, also illustrate a different perspective than that of the Los Van Van song.

In an article reproduced on Álvarez's homepage, journalist Jorge Smith Mesa quotes the bandleader as stating that one of his main objectives with the release of the recent album *Mi linda habanera* was a "crusade against provincialism."[64] Álvarez stated that although he was born in a Havana hospital, he considers himself to be a native of Camagüey and continued, "It's funny…in my concerts [in Havana], when I ask, how many *Habaneros* are there here?, many people raise their hand, and when I investigate further, asking, how many come from the countryside?, no one speaks, they even get irritated" (my translation). Álvarez lamented the "shame" that many feel in not being "pure *Habaneros*" and the fact that they deny their homeland, stating, "True national pride begins with a love and pride for the place where one is born." The call in the *montuno* section that asserts, "Havana really is beautiful, but your own [city] comes first," correspondingly highlights the importance of the "spatiality of identity." In the *montuno* section, Álvarez effectively "outs" the most important bandleaders in *timba* as either being born in or having roots in *el campo*, including those mentioned earlier in the chapter – Calzado, Revé, and Formell – and three others, Manolito Simonet, Jose Luis Cortés, Isaac Delgado and Pachito Alonso.[65]

Although the song condemns non-Havana natives for denying their regional roots, it also advocates cross-regional relationships and "miscegenations" within the capital. This stance is evidenced in the song's second verse and in the conclusion, which "shouts out" different provinces of the country and implies that their diversity is what constitutes the beauty of Cuba. These portions of the song utilize one of the narrative strategies used by Cándido Fabré, who also invokes the beauty of Cuba, which suggests that both songs – despite their respective critiques of various people – imagine a national unity that can overcome regionalist tensions. However, while encouraging *Orientales* and Cubans from other provinces to assume their regional identity proudly, Álvarez does not address the underlying issues that result in this self-denigration, i.e, the

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[64] All quotes in this paragraph are taken from a reproduction of an article on Alvarez's homepage (http://www.adalbertoalvarez.cult.cu/main.htm).

[65] Pianist/composer Manolito Simonet, from Camagüey, currently leads one of the most popular band *timba* bands since the mid-1990s, Manolito y Su Trabuco. Flautist Jose Luis Cortés, known as "El Tosco" (the coarse guy), is the bandleader of the aforementioned pioneering *timba* band NG La Banda and is from the central province of Santa Clara. Before starting his own band, Cortés played with both Los Van Van and legendary jazz/fusion group Irakere. Singer Isaac Delgado, born in Havana but presumably with parents from *el campo*, was an original member of NG La Banda who launched his own group in 1992. Pachito Alonso is the current director of Pachito Alonso y Sus Kini Kini, a dance band begun by his father Pacho Alonso, a Santiago native and bandleader who began his career during the "golden era" of Cuban popular music, the 1940s and 50s.

pervasive prejudice *Orientales* and other Cubans encounter in the capital. Far from "singing back" to *Habaneros* like Fabré does, Álvarez fully exempts *capitalinos* (natives of the capital) from charges of regionalist transgressions in "Un Pariente en el Campo," as his principal targets of critique are non-natives who, ashamed of their heritage, try to pass as *Habaneros*.[66] Further evidence of Álvarez's oblique alliance with *Habaneros* and their perspectives in this matter can be found on the title track of the album, "Mi linda habanera." This song is an homage to the capital's beauty, symbolized by the figure of a *Habanera* (a woman from Havana), who functions as the narrator's creative muse and whom he never stops thinking about when traveling and performing far from home.

The unifying discourse represented by the song's closing lyrics, which declare that Cuba's regional diversity is what makes the country beautiful and unique, reverberate in certain ways with the nationalist hybridity discourse. Advocated by nearly all Cuban governments during the twentieth century regardless of political orientation, this discourse foregrounds racial unity over difference, and presumes that racial equality stems directly and automatically from the fact of being a nation with a long history of racial mixing.[67] In other words, whether black, white, Chinese or – like the majority of the population – of racially mixed ancestry, Cubans are all committed to the cause of anti-racism because Cuba is a hybrid nation. Similarly in Álvarez's song, whether from Havana, Santiago, Camagüey or Matanzas, everyone is Cuban, and as the capital, Havana belongs to all. This is a message that Cubans and foreigners alike are encouraged by the state to adopt, as illustrated by a prominent billboard one encounters when driving from the Havana airport towards the city center that asserts, "Welcome to Havana, capital of *all* Cubans!" Despite the realities of regional profiling within contemporary Havana and popular expressions of regionalist sentiment, the state is very invested in the notion that regional identities and differences take a backseat to national unity and are not seminal axes of identity formation.[68]

According to Lázaro, "Un Pariente en el Campo" was extremely well received in *Oriente*, as it seemed to speak a truth that many *Orientales* felt deeply and had experienced in very personal ways, i.e., the shame of being labeled a *Palestino* in Havana and the consequent obligation to suppress or at least downplay their regional identity (p.c., February 2008). However, Lázaro also emphasized that it was an extremely popular song all over Cuba, and that *Habaneros* loved it for a different reason: the song seemed to "prove" their superiority within the country by publicly acknowledging the attempts by other Cubans to imitate their customs and styles of dress. Furthermore, he added, the song gave "real" *Habaneros* an outlet to police the boundaries of local identity: Álvarez's technique of calling out the *timba* stars who had either been born or whose parents had come from *el campo* provided them with a model by which to differentiate themselves,

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[66] Interestingly, popular *timba* group Manolito y Su Trabuco's latest album in 2008, *Control* (Egrem), includes an ode song to Havana called "La Habana me llama" that seems to utilize the same tactic, albeit with less antagonistic overtones. The song begins by naming virtually all the Cuban provinces and praising them for their unique qualities, moves on to pay homage to Havana, and then, in the *montuno* section, inserts the extremely popular refrain that appears towards the end of "Un Pariente en el Campo" that admonishes non-Havana natives, "How you like pretending you're a *Habanero!*" This sampling gives an indication of the huge success of the Adalberto Álvarez song, and, I believe, of the pervasiveness of regionalist sentiment in contemporary popular discourse.

[67] See Introduction and chapter six for critiques of the nationalist hybridity discourse. This celebration of hybridity is also evident in Brazilian nationalist rhetoric, which has long referred to the country as a "racial democracy."

[68] Mark Sawyer (2006) asserts that the socialist government has also used the same tactic to downplay issues of racial difference and discrimination within the population, i.e., they argue that any open, public debates about racism in contemporary Cuban society threaten to create dissent at a time when the country needs national unity in order to confront the recent economic problems and resist the neo-imperialist designs of the U.S.

as native-born *Habaneros*, from their neighbors who perhaps moved to Havana from *Oriente* ten years ago and were now identifying as *capitalinos*.

A casual conversation I had with a young man in Camagüey in May 2008 provided another interesting perspective concerning Álvarez's assertions, both in his song and in his statements, regarding the importance of regional identity. In speaking about Álvarez, I was surprised to hear the young man express feelings of disillusionment toward his fellow *Camagüeyano*. He stated that Álvarez does not return often to his hometown to perform, and when he does the concert never lasts for more than 30 to 60 minutes. He asserted that many *Camagüeyanos* view Álvarez as a traitor to his province. Thus, ironically, much like his own singling out and critique of non-Havana natives for abandoning their roots in "Un Pariente en el Campo," some of Álvarez's fellow *Camagüeyanos* seem to accuse him of the same thing. Even more fascinating was the young man's subsequent statement that, in Camagüey people love Cándido Fabré for his legendary propensity to perform long concerts that last into the early hours of the morning.[69] I believe the admiration and respect displayed for Fabré by this young man also has partly to do with the singer's brazen displays of regional pride, and his reputation as someone who discursively "stood up" to Havana. Finally, it is not irrelevant that Camagüey was part of *Oriente* until the Revolution, in that older generations of *Camagüeyanos* may still consider themselves to be *Orientales*.

Expressions of regionalism in rumba music and performance

Expressions of regionalism in rumba performance are generally harder to document, largely because rumba does not enjoy the amount of mass mediation, specifically radio circulation and recording opportunities, available to Cuban dance music. In addition, the themes of rumba songs, while varying widely, are often quite distinct from those of dance music. Although there are many rumba songs that address contemporary social issues, they tend much more than dance music to pay tribute or homage to certain people, places or things, including the genre of rumba itself, past *rumberos* (rumba participants, which primarily refer to musicians and dancers, but can also include audience members), and different aspects of Afro-Cuban culture, history, and/or religion. Other common themes include boasting about one's own skills as a *rumbero* and recounting important events within Cuba's history. One prevalent theme among "tribute" songs is extolling the virtues of one's city/province of birth, or of another Cuban city that has a distinguished history in some aspect of national culture. Famed Matanzas rumba group Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, for example, recorded an ode to the revolutionary history of Santiago de Cuba on their rumba *guaguancó*[70] called "Inspiración a Santiago" (Ode to Santiago).[71] The first phrase is as follows: "Santiago, fuiste rebelde ayer, hospitalaria hoy, serás heróica siempre" (Santiago, you were rebellious yesterday [in the past], hospitable today, you will always be heroic). The lyrics link the eastern city to the heroic activities of independence war protagonists José Martí[72] and Antonio Maceo, and suggest that this ode to Santiago constitutes the fulfillment of their duty as Cubans to support and remember the origins of the Cuban Revolution.

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[69] In fact there is a popular saying about Fabré among *Orientales*: *la gente amanece con Cándido* (people "wake up," or party until dawn with Cándido).

[70] *Guaguancó* is the most popular of the three main styles of rumba performed in contemporary Cuba.

[71] This song can be found on the album *Congo Yambumba* (Qbadisc, 1994).

[72] Considered to be the philosophical and intellectual leader of the independence struggle, José Martí was born in Havana and spent many years in exile in New York City before returning to the island in 1895 to fight in the war. He was killed in combat that same year during one of the first battles.

While Los Muñequitos de Matanzas' song seemingly goes against the grain of regionalist sentiment (which does not necessarily imply anything about the personal views of the group members vis-à-vis regionalism), the rumba song "Para Gozar, La Habana" (For Enjoyment, Havana) by Havana-based rumba group Clave y Guaguancó, is reminiscent of the attitudes underlying "La Habana No Aguanta Más."[73] The lyrics of the second verse, which open this chapter, refer to the endless stream of internal migrants arriving in Havana with intentions of staying indefinitely. They assert that these non-natives are always treated with hospitality and welcomed with open arms by *Habaneros*. The song extols the virtues of the capital, emphasizing the principal attractions for other Cubans – beautiful women and *el ambiente popular* (the down-home atmosphere)[74] – and characterizing Havana as "heaven on earth." As opposed to the narrative strategy of Los Van Van's song, which attempts to convince possible migrants that living conditions are just as good in their home provinces, this song lists some reasons why people might want to migrate to Havana. As in the previous songs discussed, the *montuno* section of "Para Gozar, La Habana" contains many of the most provocative statements regarding regionalist sentiment. Here are the transcribed lyrics:[75]

<u>*Montuno* section [I provide only the lead's calls as the alternating chorus is the same each time]</u>

(Coro) Para gozar, La Habana	For enjoyment, Havana
(Solista) No mandan ni un telegrama	They don't even send me a telegram
- Llegan sin saberlo yo	They arrive without me knowing it
- Se alojan en el Vedado	They stay in the Vedado [neighborhood]
- Se alojan en Luyanó	They stay in Luyanó [neighborhood]
- Trajeron la barbacoa	**They brought the *barbacoa*[76]**
- Caballero, que familia!	Man, what a [big] family!
- No me mandan ni un recado	They don't even send me a message
- De dónde sale tanta gente?	Where do all these people come from?
- Que cosa más grande, negra!	It's unbelievable, (black) girl!

(*Woman's voice with an exaggerated Oriental accent, spoken over call-and-response singing*)
[The woman is speaking to a relative, and preparing for a trip to Havana. She uses eastern Cuban slang and tries to convince her relative to accompany her to Havana, stating that so-and-so's husband is going to send money for them to travel and they'll have a room ready in El Cerro

[73] This song can be found on their 2006 album *La Rumba Que No Termina* (The Never-ending Rumba). The album was put out in 2006 by the German recording company Cuba Chévere Musikproduktionen, but apparently was not released in Cuba at the same time, creating the strange situation whereby I was able to buy the recording in the U.S. before the musicians in the group had even heard it. It was released in Cuba in 2007.
[74] As I discussed in the Introduction, the Spanish adjective *popular* has multivalent meanings, and is a false cognate in some senses. In this case it is used to mean something belonging or corresponding to "the people" or "the masses." Thus, I have translated it here to "down-home" to give a connotation of something that appeals to working-class or poor people. In Cuba an *ambiente popular* would imply activities such as drinking, dancing and/or playing dominos.
[75] The translation of the *montuno* section lyrics are my own.
[76] *Barbacoa*, literally meaning "barbeque," refers to the division of a high-ceilinged domicile into two levels/floors where only one existed previously. It is a housing solution associated with eastern migrants in Havana trying to create more living space, but is now quite common among *Habaneros*. It is not clear what this meaning of the term has to do with barbeques, although a website dedicated to this Cuban phenomenon, Barbacoas.org, has a link to an article stating that the word *barbacoa* is an indigenous word meaning "elevated platform" (http://www.barbacoas.org/ingrown%20disorders.htm).

(a Havana neighborhood). She says they'll have to bring their ox with them on the train and lists several relatives who they can bring to Havana once they're settled. Then she tells the girl to hurry and run, not to miss the train, and to bring a snack and a bottle of water since there's no food on the train.]

(Solista) Para que choques con la verdad	So that you come face to face with the truth
(Coro) Para gozar, La Habana	For enjoyment, Havana
(Solista) La Habana tiene sus cosas	Havana has its distinctiveness
- La Habana tiene misterios	Havana has mysteries/enchantments
- Oye, La Habana no aguanta más!	**Listen, Havana can't take anymore!**
- Pero, vienen de Pinar del Río	Oh, they come from Pinar del Río
- Oye, vienen desde Camagüey	Listen, they come from Camagüey
- También de Santiago de Cuba	From Santiago de Cuba too
- Y todos son bien recibidos	And all are welcomed
- Los encantan las mujeres	They are captivated by the women
- En La Habana son muy lindas	In Havana they're very pretty
(Fade out)	

As is evident from many of the lead singer's alternating calls during the *montuno* section, Clave y Guaguancó's song explicitly references the Los Van Van hit recorded more than twenty years earlier. Not only does the rumba song directly quote "La Habana No Aguanta Más," but it also includes references to the stereotypical large family migrating from the outer provinces and the resultant overcrowding of Havana neighborhoods, and emphasizes the inconvenience and irritation this causes to the Havana native. However, this song also includes updated, post-Special Period cultural references such as the architectural phenomenon of the *barbacoa*. The notion that Havana constitutes a terrestrial paradise for *Orientales* and other migrants, but not for *Habaneros* themselves who are forced to cohabitate with them, betrays the attitudes of superiority held by many *capitalinos*. The stance put forth by this narrative suggests that these migrants could not possibly wish to stay in their home province, even if there existed economic and entertainment opportunities equal to those found in Havana. The narrative thus ultimately obscures the primary reason for such large increases in migration to the capital since the Special Period, i.e, the inability of these Cubans to survive economically in their home provinces.

My summary of the spoken interlude inserted in the middle of the *montuno* section cannot adequately describe what I consider to be the inflammatory nature of this parody of eastern Cubans. Although there are no direct references to specific regions or cities in Cuba, the woman's exaggerated accent screams out "*Oriental*!" and the song's target of critique immediately becomes explicit to all Cubans and foreigners with a good working knowledge of regional dialects within the country. This brief dramatization of the politics of regionalism in contemporary Cuba presents a sharp contradiction to the assertion in both the verse and in the one of the lead singer's calls that all migrants enjoy a warm welcome when they arrive in the capital.

I do not presume to know how a migrant from *Oriente* might feel upon hearing his/her accent and dialect parodied in this manner by a Cuban from a different province, much less by a Havana-based rumba group. I recognize that what I may interpret as offensive might not be perceived as such by a Cuban or someone from a different cultural background. I have observed, for example, that Cubans often find hilarious jokes and statements that many westerners would find insulting or not "politically correct" – for example, racialized humor that perpetuates

hypersexualized and denigrating stereotypes about black people is extremely pervasive on the island.[77] In this vein, I asked Lázaro to listen to the song and describe to me his reaction. In fact, this vignette did not provoke the same feelings of indignation that it incited in me. He stated, "La letra es fuerte, pero no hiere" (The lyrics are strong/provocative, but they don't wound; p.c., February 2008). He did not view the song as a major affront because, as he emphasized, this type of parody of *Orientales*' manner of speaking has become completely normalized in the popular media in contemporary Cuba – one can frequently hear and view similar caricatures of *Orientales* on radio and TV programs. He noted that if the song had come out in the 1980s, around the same time as "La Habana No Aguanta Más" and before the Special Period, there would have been more of an outcry on the part of *Orientales*; they would have defended themselves more vigorously, and perhaps there would have even appeared a response song such as the one composed by Candido Fabré. Lázaro thus framed his reaction in relation to the different, respective economic situations in *Oriente* before and after the Special Period: during the era of Soviet patronage eastern Cubans were not as anxious to leave their homes for the capital, and when they did go to Havana, it was for a visit and not to migrate. Since the Special Period however, *Orientales* have found themselves in desperate situations, and their regional pride has taken a backseat to their economic needs.

Regionalist antagonisms between *Habaneros and Matanceros*

The amount and degree of hostility between *Habaneros* and *Matanceros* (people from Matanzas) is generally much less pronounced than the condescending attitude displayed by *Habaneros* towards *Orientales*. In fact, Havana-based musicians and religious practitioners often express reverence both in conversation and in song for "the cradle of Afro-Cuban culture," as Matanzas is known.[78] For example, the 1980 Los Van Van song "De La Habana a Matanzas" (From Havana to Matanzas) is an ode to Matanzas' rich tradition of Afro-Cuban culture that begins with a rumba clave rhythm and rumba-style vocals punctuated by guitar harmonics, thus signifying Matanzas as the birthplace of rumba.[79]

One of the main reasons why *Habaneros* show less hostility towards *Matanceros* than *Orientales* concerns the micro-politics of regionalism's manifestations in Cuba. Although I use regionalism as a more generalized phenomenon that at times conflates the differences between region and province, there is a distinction to be made between one's regional identity and one's provincial identity. Cuba is divided up into three main regions or areas of the country: *Occidente* (the west), *Centro* (the central region) and *Oriente* (the east), each of which is constituted by several provinces. *Occidente* includes the provinces of Ciudad de la Habana (Havana City), La Habana (the rural province surrounding the capital city), Matanzas (east of La Habana province), Pinar del Río (west of La Habana province) and the small island called La Isla de la Juventud (The Island of Youth, south of Pinar del Río). Thus, although people from the city of Havana have a different provincial identity than *Matanceros*, at the level of regional identification both groups are

[77] De la Fuente (2001) and Sawyer (2006) also make reference to the pervasiveness of racialized/racist humor in Cuba.

[78] I consider this notion to be a significant example of the pervasive racialized discourses of place that circulate on the island, which I discuss in depth in chapter four.

[79] This song can be found on the Los Van Van compilation album *The Legendary Los Van Van: 30 Years of Cuba's Greatest Dance Band* (Ashé Records, 1999).

Occidentales (westerners).[80] One particularly poignant example of this intraregional solidarity between *Habaneros* and *Matanceros* is the fact that the latter also use the derisive term *Palestino*s to refer to *Orientales*, of which there is a substantial population in Matanzas. Furthermore, Havana and Matanzas share many Afro-Cuban religious and musical traditions, owing to their physical proximity to one another (a little over an hour by car). Finally, both have historically been important port cities and *Matanceros* have had a long history of migration to the capital since emancipation.

However, while *Habaneros* display respect and admiration for Matanzas as the birthplace of Afro-Cuban religious and musical traditions, they often speak about Matanzas in terms of an orientation towards the past, and as a culturally conservative and even backwards place. Ethnomusicologist Katherine Hagedorn states that *Matanceros* are "considered to be Havana's 'country cousins' – sweet and well meaning, but out of step, and a little 'behind the time'" (Hagedorn 2003: 101). Despite Matanzas' identity as a rich fount of Afro-Cuban culture, in the end *Matanceros* are still *gente del campo* with antiquated customs and beliefs, an issue I discuss in more depth in chapter four. Furthermore, while *Orientales* function as the main objects of ridicule within the Clave y Guaguancó song, *Pinareños* (people from Pinar del Río, another western province) are also singled out as frequent migrants who contribute to overcrowding in the capital.[81] In other words, notwithstanding their common regional identity with *Habaneros* as western Cubans, people from the other provinces in western Cuba are subject to the reification of the urban/rural binary and essentialized notions about the anti-modern and provincial nature of their customs and beliefs.

In my last month of dissertation research in May 2007 I witnessed a significant example of regionalist sentiment on the part of *Habaneros* vis-à-vis their regional counterparts during a rumba event that celebrated the 55th anniversary of the founding of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. The anniversary celebration was held at one of capital's most well-known dance music venues in Central Havana, La Casa de la Música (The House of Music),[82] and scheduled to perform in addition to Los Muñequitos, was the Havana rumba group that currently enjoys the greatest popularity in the capital, Yoruba Andabo. Regionalist sentiment was most obviously displayed by the Havana audience members, many of whom were not even paying attention to Los Muñequitos' inspired performance and whose response was lukewarm at best. When Yoruba Andabo began their performance, on the other hand, the audience promptly rushed to the edge of the stage as if their favorite pop star was about to perform and danced vigorously throughout the set, singing along with the choral refrains. Despite the fact that Los Muñequitos have garnered unparalleled critical acclaim within the rumba sphere over a period of five decades, and the fact that they do not perform in Havana very often, the young *Habaneros* did not accord them the level of respect and attention they are used to getting from audiences all over the world. Apparently their Matanzas-style rumba, which is admittedly slower and more exhibition-

[80] This regional solidarity between people from different provinces often comes into play during the National Baseball Championships. During 2007's championship Havana's team was pitted against Santiago's team, a rivalry that, needless to say, has a long history. Most *Orientales*, no matter whether they were from Santiago, Guantánamo, or Las Tunas, rooted for Santiago. Many *Habaneros* stated that if their team hadn't made it to the finals, they would have thrown their support behind Pinar del Río's team.

[81] *Pinareños* are very frequently the butt of nationwide jokes that stereotype them as dumb, country hicks completely inexperienced in the ways of the modern world, although, unlike *Orientales*, they are usually racialized as white.

[82] La Casa de la Música is a frequent stop on the Havana tourist circuit. The venue caters mostly to foreigners eager to see the country's best dance bands live, as evidenced by the price of a Los Van Van show, $25 CUC, which is more than an average Cuban earns in a month. The venue is also a principal site of sex tourism, where foreigners go to pick up *jineteros/as* (male and female hustlers) and vice-versa.

oriented, could not hold the attention of the young *Habaneros*, used to Yoruba Andabo's more flashy style that often incorporates choral refrains from reggaetón songs.[83] One couple in their mid-forties seated next to me at the show commented on the excessive localism displayed by the Havana audience and their inability to provide a warm welcome to a non-local rumba group, even one as distinguished as Los Muñequitos de Matanzas.

While *Habaneros* at times express condescension towards their "country cousins," *Matanceros* display as much regionalist sentiment, if not more, towards *Habaneros*. *Matanceros* are very proud of being *Matanceros*. This provincial pride arguably has much to do with the discursive value attached to the Afro-Cuban religious and musical traditions that are thought to have emerged from Matanzas. Folkloric musicians from Matanzas city, the provincial capital, generally conceive of their Afro-Cuban cultural practices as unique and special. Although many concede that they may not be the sole proprietors of these traditions, most of which have long histories in Havana, they do feel that their manifestations are the closest to the "originals" (p.c. with various musicians, 2005-2007). Conversely, their evaluations of Havana's manifestations of these same cultural practices – whether *Santería* religious worship or rumba performance – tend to be negative. They often express the view that Havana folkloric musicians are largely responsible for the increasing commercialization of Afro-Cuban culture and religion, especially *Santería*. In the eyes of *Matanceros*, *Habaneros* are always *inventando*, or making things up, to render Afro-Cuban cultural practices more appealing to foreign tourists.

Beyond *Matanceros*' opinions of Havana-based folkloric or religious practices, many natives of Matanzas seem to take pains to differentiate themselves from *Habaneros* in more fundamental ways. One Matanzas-based folkloric percussionist spoke of *Habaneros* as completely distinct from *Matanceros* in every way. He stated, "The *Habanero* speaks very differently from the *Matancero*, even though both speak the same language, Spanish…the *Habanero* can be distinguished from the *Matancero*, their way of being, their way of walking, their way of carrying themselves, in everything" (p.c., February 2007).[84] The image of *Habaneros* that predominates in Matanzas is that of an arrogant, loud, presumptuous person with a superiority complex who is always *especulando* (displaying wealth conspicuously). Thus, although *Matanceros* may look down upon *Orientales* much as *Habaneros* do, they do not display the same hostility towards the former as they do towards the latter. Perhaps more importantly, *Matanceros* do not feel like they have anything to prove in distinguishing themselves from *Orientales*, whom they already view as completely different. Instead, it is the *capitalinos* from whom *Matanceros* wish to set themselves apart, asserting that Matanzas breeds people who are more considerate and genuine. Two veteran members of the folkloric group Afrocuba de Matanzas expressed concern, independently of each other, about the preservation of a *Matancero* identity in the face of Havana's cultural hegemony on the island, and felt it was important to continue distinguishing themselves from *Habaneros* (p.c., February 2007). In chapter four I elaborate on views expressed to me by folkloric musicians in both Havana and Matanzas regarding the complex relationship between the two cities and their respective folkloric scenes.

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[83] Reggaetón is a popular music genre that emerged in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean in the early 1990s – there are ongoing debates about whether it emerged first in Panama or Puerto Rico. It is influenced heavily by musical aesthetics from hip hop, Jamaican dancehall and Latin American popular musics like salsa and *bachata*. Reggaetón enjoys near universal appeal among Latin America and Latino youth, and has in the past few years made major inroads in pop music markets oriented towards non-Latino youth in the U.S.

[84] "El habanero habla muy diferente del Matancero, y hablamos español…Hasta en eso, el habanero se diferencia del matancero, la forma de ser, la forma de andar, la forma de manifestarse, en todo."

Tensions between the nationalist discourse and popular regionalist sentiment

The articulations of regionalist sentiment I have examined in this chapter, whether expressed through musical performance or in everyday vernacular discourse, present a challenge to the official nationalist discourse put forth by the Cuban state. The Revolutionary government has always projected a picture of absolute national unity to the world, largely in order to combat the tremendous ongoing political threat to the island's sovereignty that is represented by the United States and western capitalism in general. This unifying discourse is symbolized by the large billboard mentioned earlier in the chapter asserting that Havana is the "capital of *all* Cubans." Fidel Castro consistently utilized this discourse of national unity to shore up support for the state's political system, arguing that socialism's principles better address and conform to the needs and desires of the majority of the Cuban population. While serving as a declaration to the international community, this unifying rhetoric was also directed at Cuban citizens, and displayed the "educative and formative," as opposed to merely the coercive, role of the state in establishing and maintaining hegemony (Gramsci 1971). Stuart Hall notes that this formulation of the state targets "the ethical, the cultural, the moral" (Hall 1996a [1986]: 428-9). Much of Castro's staying power can be explained by his ability to generate popular consent, through the use of his formidable rhetorical skills and hyperbolic discourses, which were designed to convince the national population and the rest of the world of Cuba's unimpeachable morality, and that all of Cuba's internal social problems could be attributed to the half-century old U.S. economic embargo.

The expressions of regionalist sentiment that I have detailed here betray the cracks in the wall of Cuban national unity and socialist egalitarianism, and illuminate how regional provenance is an influential axis of identity formation that can foster divisiveness. While the recent unstable economic conditions and constantly shifting state solutions to these problems have certainly deepened regionalist hostilities since the Special Period, as the songs by Los Van Van and Orquesta Original de Manzanillo attest, these tensions existed at the height of Cuban socialism's success and are not exclusively the result of economic crisis. Many scholars have productively examined the contradictions contained in the gap between the nationalist hybridity discourse, sometimes referred to as the "myth of racial equality" (Helg 1995), and the realities of inequality faced by Cubans of African descent since independence in 1898. I argue that expressions of regionalist sentiment further contest the notion of a unified nation proclaimed by all Cuban governments during the twentieth century, but particularly by the Castro regime. Moreover, as detailed above, the state's own policies that restrict and criminalize internal migration to Havana belie this unifying rhetoric.

Folklore studies in Cuba have been dedicated for the last seventy years to parsing the racial and cultural attributes of different regions, documenting the predominance of African and European ethnic groups respectively in each province, and the regional provenance of various cultural traditions.[85] While this academic tendency to seek out and celebrate the unique cultural attributes of each region in the country seems to present an incongruous juxtaposition with the unifying rhetoric characteristic of the Cuban Revolution, the two have gone hand in hand to

[85] The most recent Cuban publication dedicated to the systematic categorization of musical instruments on the island, *Atlas de los Instrumentos de la Música Folclórico-Popular de Cuba* (Atlas of Folkloric and Popular Musical Instruments in Cuba, 1997), was a monumental project conducted by dozens of music researchers over a period of a decade. It includes incredibly detailed maps illustrating the incidence of different instruments and folkloric and popular musical traditions in each province.

function as a sort of "unity-in-diversity" discourse. Far from constituting a phenomenon unique to Cuba, this nationalist promotion of the cultural distinctiveness of particular regions has been pervasive during periods of nation-building throughout Latin America, as evidenced by ethnographic research conducted in Colombia (Wade 2000) and Venezuela (Guss 2000). There has also been a propensity for associating Latin American musical traditions with particular regions or cities within their respective countries (Manuel et al. 1995). Correspondingly, Cuban folklore research has consistently linked rumba to the cities of Havana and Matanzas, *son* to Santiago, *changüí* to Guantánamo, *punto guajiro* (Spanish-derived "country music") to Pinar del Río and the countryside, and *danzón* to Matanzas. Thus, despite the state's fixation with promulgating a sense of national unity within the population since the Revolution, state-funded folklorists and ethnographers have been simultaneously interested in "locating" cultural traditions and ethnic groups in particular regions of the country.

While recognizing the distinctiveness of each region/province, the nationalist unity discourse obscures the privileging of certain regions and cities that are constructed as sites of racial and cultural authenticity.[86] For example, while both Matanzas and Santiago are coded within popular discourse as "black" provinces, the former's designation as "the cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" functions to authenticate the types of blackness associated with Matanzas. Conversely, *Orientales* from the provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo are associated with a criminal blackness, evidenced by the racial and regional profiling they are subjected to by state police on the streets of Havana. As a result, when people talk about Matanzas and blackness they are referring to a cultural blackness – represented by rumba and *Santería* practice – and not to the racial blackness of the population. In contrast, social/racial blackness is projected onto all of *Oriente* and its population regardless of skin color, as a way of implying inherent inferiority, poverty, and/or criminality. I discuss this issue in more depth in chapter four.

In terms of cultural representations of blackness, the Afro-Cuban religious and musical practices most associated with western Cuba – including *Santería*, *Abakuá* and rumba – have been constructed by generations of folklorists as the hegemonic traditions on the island. Their cultural counterparts that hail from *Oriente* – including Afro-Haitian musical practices such as *gagá* and *tumba francesa*, and various religious practices such as *Vodou* and *Espiritismo*[87] – are not valorized discursively to the same extent as the western Cuban traditions, nor are they discussed as representing the nation as a whole. In fact, despite the fact that they have been practiced in Cuba since the nineteenth century, Afro-Haitian-derived musical and religious practices are still not considered to be part of national culture, as illustrated by the fact that they are still referred to as "Afro-Haitian."[88] Perhaps because these traditions were "always already" hybrid when they

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[86] I acknowledge the graduate students who participated in the UC Berkeley Center for Race and Gender's 2007 dissertation workshop, entitled "Tangled Strands," whose questions provoked this formulation. Caribbeanist scholars have emphasized, in a parallel argument, that hybridity discourses often mask the privileging of whiteness (Hintzen 2002; Puri 2004).

[87] See chapter three, note 3 for an explanation of *Espiritismo*. Although it is not an Afro-Haitian religious practice as such, it is practiced widely in and associated with *Oriente*.

[88] One exception to this tendency is the ample scholarship discussing the early Haitian influences on Cuban music (Averill 1989, 1997; Hill 1998; Carpentier 2001; Sublette 2004; Lapidus 2005a). In the early 19th century a creolized version of the French *contredanse* (country dance) was introduced by French planters and their slaves fleeing to eastern Cuba after the Haitian Revolution. The slaves also brought a drumming tradition to Cuba called *tumba francesa* (French drum), whose dancing imitates the French elites' *contredanse* pair dancing and whose lyrics are in Creole. There are still a few extant *tumba francesa* societies in the cities of Santiago and Guantánamo, but it is widely considered to be practiced only in folkloric (not their original, popular) contexts. The *contredanse* plays a prominent role in Cuban music history, as it led to a Cubanized version, *contradanza*, which spawned the following popular

arrived in Cuba, in contrast to the "pure" African traditions that reached western Cuba with the slaves, they do not fit into the neat, binary formulation of *Cubanidad* that is composed of *lo afro* (the African ancestry) and *lo español* (the Spanish ancestry). Furthermore, whiteness/Europeanness is so marginal in Haiti in terms of the population (although not necessarily in terms of the national imaginary projected by Haitian elites and their desire to align themselves with the privileges of whiteness; see Hintzen 2002), that the mainly African ancestry of most Haitian immigrants in Cuba could jeopardize the "perfect" racial mixture (i.e., ratio of white/Spanish and black/African) contained within *Cubanidad*.[89] In other words, the Haitian element of eastern Cuban ancestry threatens to upset the racial balance and tip the scales in favor of blackness. Needless to say, the long history of prejudice against Haitians in Cuba and the threat they were thought to represent both before and after the independence struggles, has contributed to the marginalization of their cultural and religious traditions. Unlike rumba and *Santería*, Afro-Haitian traditions have never been incorporated fully into national culture or universalized, but instead have continued to be ghettoized and largely confined to the eastern end of the island.

In sum, although the unifying nationalist rhetoric in Cuba, as in many Latin American nations, tends to celebrate regional cultural diversity discursively and theoretically as enriching national culture, it does not valorize all regional traditions equally. More importantly, it disregards the on-the-ground regionalist sentiment and tensions among the populace that are influential in shaping daily social relations in the nation's capital. One of the motivations for the state's apparent unwillingness to publicly address this problem – despite the recent restrictions on migration to Havana that speak louder than words – may lie in the crucial distinction between Cuba and the rest of Latin America: Cuba is still, at least in name if not purely in terms of its economic system, a socialist nation. In a country that has faced longstanding political isolation and repeated threats to its sovereignty by the United States, and that has strived almost single-handedly to rescue socialism from the onslaught of neo-liberal capitalism, admitting to any form of difference within the population may open the door to dissension and political unrest. Thus, perhaps more than the vast majority of countries in the world, the stakes are higher for Cuba in terms of maintaining national unity, or at least in projecting this image to the world.

Conclusion

In the absence of an official recognition of the divisiveness that regionalist sentiment can incite, dance bands and rumba groups have taken it upon themselves to address this thorny issue in their lyrics. In *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis* (2005), Vincenzo Perna details the crafty textual strategies used by Cuban *timba* musicians to comment upon and stimulate popular debate about topics in post-Soviet Cuba that are considered to be subversive by the government, such as state

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genres: *habanera* (Cuba's first musical export in the mid-19th century), *danza*, and *danzón*, the latter of which came to be considered the Cuban national dance for several decades after its emergence in 1879. In his book *Music in Cuba* (2001), prominent Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier states, "The 'French blacks' would also play an important role in the formation of Cuban music – made from inherited and transformed elements – with a fundamental rhythmic element to be slowly incorporated into many of the island's folkloric genres: the *cinquillo*…The *cinquillo* is of obvious African origin" (Carpentier 2001: 148-9). Notwithstanding this academic recognition, the Haitian influences on Cuban music tend to be discussed only in historical terms, while the post-19th century, more contemporary influences are overlooked.

[89] Lapidus (2008) asserts that there have been important Afro-Haitian contributions to the emergence of *son*, which have been ignored, and which is interesting considering the fact that *son* is widely discussed as being the island's quintessential musical representation due to its "perfect" synthesis of African and Spanish elements.

censorship, increasing racialized class inequalities, and sex tourism. In a similar manner, the dance music and rumba songs discussed in this chapter unearth a popular debate about regionalism that simmers just beneath the surface of the capital. These narratives can be interpreted as implicitly challenging the unifying nationalist discourse that remains silent on the matter.

The songs analyzed above present contesting claims about regionalism and migration to Havana in contemporary Cuba. "La Habana No Aguanta Más" and "Para Gozar, La Habana" effectively police the boundaries of the capital, assuming a defensive stance against "foreign" invaders. Nonetheless, the two songs utilize different narrative strategies that seem to be determined by the subject positions inhabited by the two respective lead singers. In other words, while Clave y Guaguancó's song represents the subjectivity of the Havana native through the voice of the leader of the group, Amado Dedeu Hernández, Los Van Van's song constitutes a more complex utterance due to the eastern Cuban identity of the lead singer, Pedrito Calvo. Both "Un Pariente en el Campo" and "Soy Cubano y Soy de Oriente" represent perspectives that contrast with both of the aforementioned songs. Similar to the narrative position of Calvo, Adalberto Álvarez's song departs from the point of view of an outsider, albeit one who has been accepted into *Habaneros*' hearts and minds because of his compositional creativity and superior musicianship.[90] Therefore, he has earned a certain amount of clout that allows him to critique the regionalist antagonism between *Habaneros* and Cubans from *el campo*. However, while certainly advocating a more tolerant attitude towards regional difference, it should be reiterated that the main targets in the song are not *Habaneros*, but, like the previous two songs, *gente del campo*. The Álvarez song indicts migrants to Havana for attempting to pass themselves off as *Habaneros* and not wearing their regional identity with pride in the capital, and simultaneously acquits *Habaneros* of any responsibility for the hostile attitudes faced by these migrants. Ultimately, "Soy Cubano y Soy de Oriente" represents a much more forceful counter-claim to "La Habana No Aguanta Más." It derives from the perspective of a proud *Oriental*, Cándido Fabré, who unapologetically and unabashedly asserts eastern Cuban identity as central to *Cubanidad* and who rejects the notion that Havana is a universally desired location of residence for all Cubans.

Finally, it must be emphasized that although expressions of regionalist sentiment and hostility towards *Orientales* in particular are pervasive in contemporary Havana, there are many *Habaneros* who do not display prejudicial or disparaging attitudes towards Cubans from the outer provinces. While the lyrics of the songs I have discussed foreground the tensions that exist between Cubans of different provinces, particularly within the diverse matrix of the capital, it is also crucial to note that the three Havana-based music groups discussed above – Los Van Van, Adalberto Álvarez y Su Son, and Clave y Guaguancó – boast regionally diverse memberships. This fact suggests that regional differences do not always result in discord, and that musical competence and performance charisma may trump regionalist antagonisms. Nonetheless, what this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, is that regionalist sentiment in contemporary Cuban society and musical performance is a pressing issue that has not been given voice and that has yet to receive the scholarly attention it warrants.

[90] Some *Habaneros* might even consider him to be one of their own, as the capital has been his professional home for years.

CHAPTER TWO

The political economy of rumba performance since the Special Period

This chapter will examine the ways that rumba performance, and cultural work in general, is heavily informed by the material conditions of contemporary socialist Cuba. I explore the state of professional rumba performance in the context of the major economic changes instituted by the Cuban state since the Special Period – the period of extreme economic crisis beginning in 1990 following the collapse of the Soviet Union. After detailing the micro-politics of the new hybrid economic system in Cuba, I elucidate the effects of the growth of cultural tourism on the livelihoods of rumba/folkloric musicians. Here I draw on ethnographic observations and interviews from my fieldwork in Havana and Matanzas, and literature that has addressed the economic situation of Cuba and/or Cuban musicians both before and after the Special Period. Although not directly addressing the politics of place, this chapter paves the way for my discussion in subsequent chapters of the importance of location when considering the uneven dynamics of the post-Soviet market-oriented economy, specifically the ways that Havana-based musicians have disproportionately benefited from the expansion of the tourism industry, as compared with musicians from Matanzas and other locales.

One of the main theoretical points guiding this chapter is the notion that musical performance is imbricated with the political economic system and does not operate outside or apart from it in its own separate and "untainted" sphere. Here I take my cue from cultural studies scholars such as Raymond Williams, Edward Said and Stuart Hall, all of whom argue convincingly against the discursive separation of the "cultural" and the "economic" or "political" realms (Williams 1977; Said 1993; Hall 1996c [1989]). Hall states, "Culture has ceased (if it ever was – which I doubt) to be a decorative addendum to the 'hard world' of production and things, the icing on the cake of the material world…Modern culture is relentlessly material in its practices and modes of production. And the material world of commodities and technologies is profoundly cultural" (Hall 1996c [1989]: 233). This constructed dichotomy between the domains of culture and politics does not correspond to the daily realities of most musicians in the world, and the entanglements between the two are even more transparent in a modern socialist state such as Cuba, where the hegemonic discourse posits that art and culture should be made to serve the political goals of the government (Fernández Retamar 1989; Moore 2006). My dissertation fieldwork has taught me that economic concerns are of tremendous importance to rumba and folkloric musicians in post-Soviet Cuba, a fact that highlights the paradoxical situation of creative artists in a socialist regime. As will be discussed in the chapter, artists are paid by the state to pursue their creative endeavors, but their salaries do not provide them with enough money to support themselves or their families.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the legacies of racism and its more recent re-exacerbations within the context of post-Soviet Cuba as a point of entry for highlighting the ways that rumba, as a racialized performance practice, suffers from continuing prejudice within mainstream Cuban society. I discuss the racial politics of the new market-oriented economy and tourist industry, citing recent publications by social scientists who have conducted research in Cuba. Then I provide ethnographic vignettes from my fieldwork in order to illustrate some of the challenges that rumba and folkloric performers face in terms of concrete governmental support,

impediments that seem to contradict the discursive promotion of Afro-Cuban culture by the Castro regimes during the past several decades. The many difficulties encountered by folkloric musicians as compared with performers of other musical practices suggest that the racialized associations and stereotypes surrounding rumba performance have tangible negative effects.

The material conditions of socialist Cuba before and after the Special Period

The Special Period

> Until the end of the 1980s, Cuba was a rather isolated country. Frozen in the geography of the Cold War, it had a centralized, planned socialist economy based on trade with the East European bloc. Its citizens were seldom allowed to travel abroad, and had minimal contacts with foreigners. Foreign tourism was scarce, and represented mainly by East Europeans and a few Westerners. In comparison to the rest of Latin America, Cuban society was remarkably egalitarian, with work, housing, education and health care provided for free by the state to all its citizens. The economic and social situation of pre-1990s Cuba, however, was not idyllic. On the foreign front, the island had to contend with long-standing US hostility and the US trade embargo, and a high foreign debt. Internally, Cuba experienced difficulties similar to other socialist countries, such as economic inefficiency, corruption and chronic shortage of housing and consumer goods, coupled with political repression and social problems such as racial discrimination, youth disaffection and an increasing crime rate (Perna 2005: 56).

> Havana in 1992 existed in an odd, becalmed quiet: No gasoline meant no traffic. No trading partners meant no food. No movement or trade meant no trash; the city looked as if it had been picked clean. From the outside, stores appeared closed, but in fact, clerks stood in the dark behind nearly empty counters. Everywhere, Cubans waited – at bus stops, in front of bare government stalls, or in front of Coppelia, the downtown ice cream store that my father and I saw open only once during our week-long visit. Stories circulated about the ways in which Cubans subsisted. A Cuban steak? The fried skin of one of the grapefruits that used to be exported to the Soviet bloc. Breakfast? A couple of tablespoons of sugar (Chávez 2005: 2).

It is difficult to overemphasize the significance of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 and the resultant economic and social havoc that was wreaked upon this small island nation in the wake of losing its principal patron and trade partner. The decade of the 1990s is commonly referred to as the "Special Period," owing to the proclamation by Fidel Castro in 1990 of a *período especial en tiempo de paz* (special period in time of peace) in order to respond to the extreme economic crisis precipitated by the withdrawal of Soviet subsidization. The early 1990s witnessed the Cuban economy contract by 40% owing to the loss of trade relationships with the Eastern European Socialist bloc countries (de la Fuente 2001: 317), which had accounted for 80% of Cuba's foreign trade (Perna: 56). This period was characterized by drastic shortages of basic food and toiletry products, medicine and gas/electricity; soaring inflation on staple items; frequent

blackouts; and dramatic decreases in public transportation. Although the Castro government's term "Special Period" was intended to minimize the expected duration of the crisis (Fernandes 2006: 34), it is thought to have lasted until the late 1990s when the economy began to recover with the expansion of the tourist industry and other market-oriented measures. In fact, even after the economic recovery, many Cubans still feel they are living in the Special Period when they compare their current living standards to those before the 1990s.

The lengthy quote reproduced above from journalism scholar Lydia Chávez's *Capitalism, God, and a Good Cigar: Cuba Enters the Twenty-First Century* (2005), echoes many of the stories I was told by Cuban friends and musicians about the enormous clefts that appeared in Cuban society with regards to the standard of living, food prices, earning power of the average monthly salary, and access to a variety of products before and after the Special Period respectively. One thing I found striking about these narratives was the consistency, almost uniformity, of the stories and opinions expressed by Cubans of different social classes and political views. Independently of whether they considered themselves to be supportive of the Castro regime or not, I heard people reminisce about how much easier and happier life was in Cuba *con los rusos* (with the Russians). Before the Special Period, meat, considered to be the linchpin of any Cuban meal, was inexpensive and available in abundance, and most people had the luxury of "throwing away" eggs, which since the 1990s have become the principal and only affordable source of protein for many Cuban families. The average Cuban salary of 200 pesos (approximately $8 USD) was more than enough to allow for a comfortable standard of living with disposable income available for entertainment and vacations. Friends have reminisced about how it was possible for a family of four to eat at El Polinesio, one of Havana's most exclusive restaurants, for 50 Cuban pesos (about $2 USD). Cubans could stay at five-star hotels such as the Hotel Nacional and the Habana Libre for 15 pesos/person (less than one dollar!) – a far cry from the current $120/night rate – and for 100 pesos (roughly $4 USD) could afford to take vacations in the best resorts in Varadero and Viñales (Fernandes: 154).

One of the most poignant examples of the extreme contrasts in daily life before and after the Special Period was the soaring inflation of staple food products during the early 1990s, when the black market price of rice leapt from less than one peso to 35 pesos/lb (personal communication with Lázaro Moncada, June 2008). People still recount stories about being forced to eat fried banana and plantain peels as a substitute for meat protein, and remember hearing rumors about pizza vendors trying to make a quick buck by substituting condoms for cheese on their pizzas.[1] Photos of people before, during and after the Special Period tell a forceful story about the miseries of that time: corpulent men and women reduced to stick-thin proportions.

As has been well-documented, the Castro government quickly realized that market-oriented measures, particularly opening up the island to foreign tourism and investment, were the only options for salvaging the socialist system and state subsidization of education, health care and staple food products for the population. Ethnomusicologist Robin Moore notes that foreign tourism steadily increased during the mid-late 1990s – principally from Italy, Spain, Canada and Mexico – and peaked in 2003 with 1.9 million tourists visiting the island (Moore 2006: 230). In order to accommodate the influx of foreigners, which also included an increase in visits from the Cuban-American community, the government expanded Havana's airport and invested in new hotel resorts, restaurants and clubs beyond the major tourist destinations of Havana and Varadero. In 1995 the government relaxed restrictions on foreign investment, permitting

[1] While I clearly cannot comment on the veracity of this outlandish rumor, it was repeated to me by several different people.

foreigners to own more than a 50% share in joint business venture (Lardner 2005: 194). Spain has been Cuba's closest business partner since the mid-1990s, with Spanish firms constituting 25% of total foreign investment (mainly in the form of tourist hotels) and 40% of all European Union trade with the island (ibid). In an ironic twist, Havana's most famous hotel, the Habana Libre (Free Havana), is owned by Spaniards.

In order to curb the flourishing trade in dollars on the black market and the soaring inflation, between 1993 and 1994 the Castro government decriminalized the possession of foreign currency, sanctioned self-employment (with the requirement to solicit a license from and pay heavy taxes to the state), and introduced private agricultural markets (Perna: 57). One of the biggest changes involved a "dollarization" of the economy – or the legalization of the U.S. dollar, which had previously circulated only on the black market – and the establishment of a dual currency system and "dollar stores." Since 1993, the two circulating currencies in Cuba are *moneda nacional* (national currency, or MN), represented by the Cuban peso, and *divisa* (hard currency), which until recent years could be paid either in U.S. dollars or Cuban convertible pesos (CUC), referred to as *chavitos* in Cuban vernacular. The exchange rate of the peso to the dollar has been 24:1 for several years now, although sociologist Sujatha Fernandes reports that at the height of the Special Period in 1994 inflation resulted in an extreme devaluation of the peso and a rate of 150:1, which gradually returned to about 21:1 by 2000 (Fernandes: 154). *Chavitos* were initially equivalent to the value of the U.S. dollar, but in late 2004 Castro "de-dollarized" the economy as a response to the Bush administration's hardening of the embargo against Cuba. All state entities in Cuba stopped accepting U.S. dollars and instituted a 20% commission charge for exchanging them for *chavitos*; thus, the *chavito* is now worth $1.20 USD. Although one cannot fault the Cuban government for attempting to defend itself against the tactics of economic strangulation imposed by the Bush administration, it is difficult to comprehend how a policy that is designed to have immediate negative effects only on the Cuban and American populations, could succeed in punishing its declared target, the U.S. government.[2] Instead, the primary victims of this ongoing *batalla de ideas* (ideological battle) are average Cubans who, when exchanging the remittances sent from their relatives living in the U.S., receive only $0.80 CUC for every U.S. dollar.

Although dollar stores were created primarily to serve the needs of increasing numbers of foreigners in Cuba, with the assumption that they would pay for goods and services in *divisa* and Cubans would continue to pay in *moneda nacional*, the institutionalization of this two-tier currency system has resulted in increasing economic inequality and class stratification among Cubans. Dollar stores offer a noticeably superior quality and quantity of goods as compared to the stores that sell in *moneda nacional*, and during the 1990s certain food and hygiene items became available for purchase only in dollar stores.[3] The salaries provided to all Cuban workers in state jobs, which average around 300 pesos (or $12.50 CUC) a month, are insufficient to pay for these products, many of which could be classified as "staple" rather than "luxury" items.[4] Cubans who

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[2] One could argue that this policy could function indirectly, i.e., American citizens being made to pay a 20% commission would pressure their government to ease the restrictions on Cuba. However, because the number of Americans who (are allowed to) travel to the island is so small, their lobbying power is greatly diminished.

[3] Robin Moore also notes that during the 1990s many of the island's best cabarets and clubs became exclusively "dollar zones." He states, "The result is a sort of musical apartheid system in which many concerts cannot be heard by the island's own residents simply because they cost too much" (Moore 2006: 230).

[4] All Cubans are given *libretas*, ration books that allow them to purchase basic food and hygiene items in pesos at low, government-subsidized prices. However, since the Special Period, the amount of food allotted per person per month – e.g. 6 ounces of chicken and 2/3 cup of cooking oil – is inadequate to satisfy the needs of an average Cuban

work in the tourist sector, where it is possible to earn part of one's income in *divisa*, or those who are sent regular remittances from relatives abroad, are able to afford the exorbitant prices of products in dollar stores. However, the majority of Cubans, who earn in pesos only, are forced to *inventar* (invent, or find a way) to supplement their meager incomes by robbing merchandise or material from their state jobs in order to sell on the black market at a price reduced from that charged in the state-run dollar stores. It is commonly acknowledged that most employees, no matter what their occupation, pilfer from their state jobs in order to supplement their income, a phenomenon that even government officials have recognized (Sawyer 2006: 112-13). Waiters who work in hotels have access to meat, cheese, shellfish and other expensive food products; carpenters and construction workers often make away with *materia prima* (raw materials) to sell to Cubans undertaking home repairs or remodeling projects; and cigar factory employees often steal boxes of cigars to sell to foreigners at less than half their price in state stores.

Political and economic changes in the new Castro regime

In early August 2006, it was announced that Fidel Castro Ruz, leader of Cuba for the past forty-seven years, was suffering from an undisclosed illness and would be temporarily stepping down and handing off his duties as president to his brother Raúl Castro Ruz. I arrived in Cuba for my nine-month fieldwork stay just a few weeks later, accompanied by the predictions of many American friends and family members that I would witness a very interesting and unique time of change in the island's history. However, as I soon discovered, and as many Cuban friends and musicians already knew, there was to be no substantial change in political or economic policy in the near future. In fact, things seemed to be worse than ever when I arrived: the tourist industry was in a notable slump compared to the previous three years I had traveled to the island, perhaps related to the major incidences of dengue fever in various parts of the island exacerbated by the indefatigable heat and humidity;[5] the prices of staple food products were rising; and there was an increase in petty crime and theft-related violence due to the scarcity of dollars circulating on the street and in the hands of Cubans.[6] One knowledgeable Cuban friend and intellectual analyzed the downturn in tourism, asserting that many tourists were discouraged from coming by the bad exchange rate resulting from the 20% commission charged for exchanging U.S. dollars for CUC (p.c., September 2006). He further posited that because of the hardening of U.S.-Cuba relations

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kitchen. Cubans are forced to buy the rest of their cooking oil at the dollar store for around $2.50 CUC per liter (or in pesos on the black market for a little less), which can eat up as much as one-fourth of an average monthly salary. "Non-necessary" items like chicken and the highly coveted beef (which is not legally sold in pesos at all), are sold at the extravagant price of $2.50 CUC per pound. In late 2009, under Raúl Castro's government, there was discussion of eliminating *libretas* all together, which would be catastrophic for the average Cuban in that it would take away one of the principal benefits of a socialist system – the ability to buy staple products like rice and beans at subsidized prices. However, prominent Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez reported in January 2010 – in a sardonic blog entry addressing Cubans' conflicted feelings about the *libreta* – that she and her family received a new ration book for the year (http://www.desdecuba.com/generationy/).

[5] Although my Cuban friends and I knew people who had contracted dengue, I never heard a public acknowledgement by the government about the high incidences of the disease during the summer and fall of 2006. However the daily hum of the fumigation guns wielded by state employees circulating constantly around different neighborhoods of the capital suggested a tacit recognition of the problem.

[6] The impoverished economic situation of average Cubans seemed to be due principally to the increased hostility between the U.S. and Cuban governments. See the Introduction, footnote 28 for a discussion of the specific policies of the Bush administration that limited the remittances sent by relatives abroad, which provoked the imposition of a 20% commission charge by the Cuban government to exchange USD for CUC.

and the U.S. immigration crackdown on illegal travel to Cuba, there were less Americans and Cuban-Americans traveling to the island. Moreover, because many Europeans opted for package deals with tourist agencies that included a hotel, he suggested, the dollars were not making it into the hands of Cubans who rent rooms in their homes.

On February 18, 2008, after an 18-month period of seclusion from public and political life in order to attend to his recovery, Fidel Castro officially stepped down and ceded the presidency to his brother Raúl.[7] Despite the fact that the economic problems have continued – and, in fact, have worsened owing to the global economic crisis[8] – there do seem to be small signs of change in the past two years. Raúl Castro has made a series of policy decisions that paint him as a different, more pragmatic and democratic leader than his ideologically-oriented brother, and he has been explicit about critiquing the inefficiency within state bureaucracies and advocating decentralization of the economy. The most dramatic change was his dismissal of eight ministers in early March 2009, including two of the most influential political leaders and protégés of Fidel Castro within the state apparatus: foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque, a relatively young politician who was rumored to be an eventual replacement for Raúl, and cabinet chief Carlos Lage Dávila. The reasons for their removal have not yet been publicized, although a few days after their dismissal Fidel Castro wrote a column in the state's newspaper, *El Granma*, calling the two "unworthy" and stating that they had been seduced by the "honey of power," thus suggesting that corruption was involved. Both Pérez Roque and Lage released letters days after their dismissal apologizing for "errors that had been committed," and resigning from their leadership posts in the Communist Party and all other state apparatuses.[9] Raúl replaced the eight ministers principally with former officers from the military, commonly known as the FAR (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias or Revolutionary Armed Forces), of which he has been the head since the beginning of the Revolution.

In terms of Raúl's policy changes, in March 2008 the government removed restrictions that had prevented Cubans from accessing a number of services and amenities previously available only to foreigners. These included the right to buy DVD players and computers, the right to stay in hotels in "tourist zones," the right to rent cars, and the right to open cellular phone accounts.[10] The government also began decentralizing agricultural production, handing over farmland that has lain idle for years to private farmers and increasing their payments in an attempt to boost internal food production. In a similar vein, the state lifted restrictions on state employees' wages in order to encourage productivity, a policy that could undermine the egalitarian ethos of Cuban socialism. In fact, *Reuters* reporter Marc Frank quoted Raúl as stating that "Egalitarianism…had encouraged sloth" (Frank 2009a). There were signs early on in Raúl's presidency that the government was considering lifting restrictions on foreign travel for Cuban citizens[11] – considered

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[7] My use of President Castro's first name is intentional, in order to avoid confusion as to which Castro brother I am speaking about at any given moment.

[8] Due to the crisis, the Cuban government enforced austerity measures in June 2009 that were very reminiscent of those taken in the Special Period, such as cutting electricity, reducing bus service, and reducing state-subsidized meals for workers (Frank 2009b).

[9] Fidel's "reflections," as his near-daily columns in *El Granma* are called, and the letters from Pérez Roque and Lage Dávila dated March 3, 2009 can be accessed through a search on the newspaper's website, <http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu>.

[10] Cubans had previously circumvented the restriction on opening cellular phone accounts by getting foreign friends or family members to open an account in their own name.

[11] To access the BBC article discussing the possible lifting of this restriction, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7306250.stm>. I want to acknowledge the work of applied

by many to be one of the most onerous laws restricting personal freedom on the island – but this important change has not yet taken place. Quite the reverse, several critics of the government have been denied visas to travel abroad since Raúl took power, such as renowned Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez, who was invited to Columbia University to receive a journalism award in October 2009. Finally, the longstanding, severe transportation problems in Havana have begun to be effectively addressed by the new Castro regime: they have retired the infamous *camellos* (literally "camels," the long, hump-backed buses that were introduced during the Special Period in Havana that became notorious for high incidences of theft and groping of women) and replaced them with modern buses. It was immediately apparent to me during my three-week research trip to Cuba in May 2008 that the new buses, many of which were imported from China, ran with greater frequency and that the level of overcrowding had decreased.[12]

While these changes can certainly be viewed as democratizing measures, and leftists in the United States are welcoming the news as evidence that the Cuban state is not inherently totalitarian, it is also important to underscore the limited nature of these reforms from the perspective of the average Cuban citizen. Referring to the legalization of sales of DVD players and computers, Reuters reporter Marc Frank writes, "Now Cubans will be able to buy them freely, paying for them in hard currency CUCs, or convertible pesos, worth 24 times more than the Cuban pesos state wages are paid in" (Frank 2008).[13] This quote perfectly illustrates the ironic and somewhat hollow nature of these liberalizing measures (although this was not necessarily the intention of the article's author): Cubans are now "free" to pay heavily inflated prices for consumer electronics that are worth one third of that amount outside Cuba, in a currency worth 24 times the currency in which they are paid. In a similar fashion, it is almost impossible for me to imagine that any of my friends or family members could take advantage of their new freedom to open a cell phone line (which costs $120 CUC, or $144 USD),[14] to stay in a top-notch hotel (at least $100 CUC/night), or to rent a car ($40-50 CUC/day). The one thing that has not changed is in reality the most important issue for every Cuban: their salaries. State wages, even when they include small monthly bonuses in dollars, still represent a fraction of the amount of money needed to feed and clothe the average Cuban family, and are still paid in a currency that is heavily devalued. When asked by American friends about the recent changes made since Raúl took over, one Cuban friend provided an apt analogy, stating that allowing Cubans these new consumer freedoms is like the president of the United States proclaiming that all Americans are now free to buy $5 million mansions (p.c., March 2008). Without the economic resources, these new freedoms are hollow pronouncements for most Cubans and will not result in any change in their standard of living.

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ethnomusicologist and renowned Cuban music scholar Ned Sublette, whose email list-serve "Nedslist" has served as an invaluable source of information for news articles related to Cuban politics and culture.

[12] The situation of public transportation in Havana has clearly changed with the onset of the global economic crisis, but I have not been back to Cuba since May 2008 and cannot report on specifics. The importation of Chinese buses, called *Yutongs*, is a sign of the warm relationship between the two socialist countries currently and the fact that China has become perhaps Cuba's most important trading partner in recent years. During my research in 2006-07 there was talk in Havana about the government encouraging Chinese tourism. The Cuban state seems to be pursuing many of the same strategies instituted by the Chinese government in moving toward a hybrid economic system.

[13] For the full article, see http://www.reuters.com/article/technologyNews/idUSN1329909720080313?feedType=RSS&feedName=technologyNews&rpc=22&sp=true.

[14] According to various news articles I accessed on the web, and information from my husband's family, the Cuban government lowered the cost of opening a cell phone account sometime in 2009. I have heard different accounts of the current price, ranging anywhere from $30 to $65 CUC.

The political economy of professional cultural work in socialist Cuba

Professional artists in socialist Cuba have long been considered by outsiders to have a sweet deal – since the beginning of the Revolution and the creation of the National Culture Advisory in 1961 (subsequently transformed into the Ministry of Culture in 1976), a cultural infrastructure was created that has allowed them to engage in paid creative activities full-time. However, in his comprehensive book *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba* (2006), Robin Moore discusses both the advantages and disadvantages for artists in the context of Marxist-Leninist socialism in general, and in the Cuban context in particular. He notes that state centralization generally results in the allocation of more resources to the arts and provides more forums for artistic performance than in capitalist societies. Socialist states also provide training for musicians and encourage them "to become politically active and to write works that foster socialist consciousness. By the same token, the importance of art means that authorities have a greater interest in regulating their content and that they tend to be less tolerant of views that contradict or threaten the legitimacy of their endeavors" (Moore: 9). Moore writes that Fidel Castro adopted the absolutist Trotskian notion of "for the revolution or against the revolution" (ibid.: 16), advising artists "to avoid controversial art of their own volition, and to create art that directly contributed to revolutionary initiatives" (ibid.: 17). Thus, the Cuban government's subsidization of its cultural workers has meant that their actions and creations are inevitably imbricated with political ideology, whether that is their intention or not, and that they are constrained by the hegemonic notion that culture should be made to serve the political goals of the government (Fernandez Retamar 1989[1971]; Moore 2006).

Many artists have suffered from direct censorship and even punishment by the government, most acutely during the *quinquenio gris*, the five-year "grey stretch" that began in the early 1970s and constituted an era of extreme repression.[15] During this time, many musicians, artists and writers suffered loss of employment and Communist Party membership, and others were interned in labor "reeducation" camps (Moore: 104). Even those artists and musicians who were not subjected to direct state repression were nevertheless susceptible to a form of disciplinary power, as theorized by Michel Foucault.[16] For example, Moore states, "Self-censorship should also be mentioned as an important factor affecting artistic creation…Put simply, the tendency of the state to marginalize those believed to espouse controversial ideas creates fear in the artistic community and elsewhere…many choose to restrict the content of their own work and 'play it safe.'" (ibid).

Government-imposed cultural censorship has decreased in the post-Soviet era, in conjunction with the government's decision to open up the island's economy to Canadian and Western European tourism and foreign investment as a remedy for the economic crisis of the Special

[15] Moore dates the *quinquenio gris* between 1968-1973, but an interview with Cuban Minister of Culture Abel Prieto in the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada* defines the period as between 1971-76 (García Hernandez 2007). In early 2007, there was an unearthing and reexamination of the *quinquenio gris* within the Cuban intellectual establishment, which began with comments made by three former functionaries who had been involved in the severe artistic repression and censorship. This debate culminated in a direct address and critique of that repressive era by Abel Prieto in February 2007.

[16] Paul Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus discuss Foucault's theorization of disciplinary power, which uses surveillance and hierarchical observation as central techniques, and the primary goal of which is to produce a "docile body" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 135). They state, "Now, it is power itself which seeks invisibility and the objects of power – those on whom it operates – are made the most visible. It is this fact of surveillance, constant visibility, which is the key to disciplinary technology" (ibid.: 159).

Period. One could argue that the increased foreign presence has also resulted in more public international critique of the Castro regime's suppression of civil liberties and freedom of dissent, which has compelled the government to institute more liberal policies.

In 1968 the state subsidization and employment of all professional cultural workers was fully centralized, and *empresas* (artistic agencies) were instituted in order to coordinate all performances, professional evaluations and salaries.[17] A rating system was introduced in order to evaluate musicians and dancers and decide whether they merited professional status or not. Moore writes "If performers passed, panelists assigned them an overall skill classification level of A, B, or C. each letter corresponded to a fixed monthly salary, with A-level performers receiving the most and C-level performers the least" (Moore: 91). Moore is critical of the ways that art and culture were handled in the formative years following the Revolution, noting that Castro and the most active revolutionaries were not directly involved in creating cultural policies. Instead, this task was left to the more hard-line Communist Party leaders, which resulted in cultural biases against folkloric music and musicians, and elitist requirements in terms of what constituted musical training, i.e., a curriculum consisting almost exclusively of Western art music. Consequently there were inherent biases within the rating system, which favored musicians who had more formal (classical music) training and required aspiring professional musicians to graduate from conservatory programs.[18] Folkloric musicians often received lower scores due to their inability to read Western notation (ibid.), despite the fact that the capability to read music is irrelevant for evaluating competence within their musical practices.

While state subsidization of professional musicians meant that they were paid a monthly wage that, until the Special Period, allowed them a comfortable standard of living while being able to dedicate themselves full-time to composition, rehearsal and performance, there are certain drawbacks to the *empresa* system. *Plantilla* (full-time salaried) performers receive a fixed monthly wage in exchange for a set quota of performances, which contains another manifestation of the implicit over-valorization of classical music: recitalists must play only six gigs a month, as compared to the nineteen required for musicians who play popular dance music (Robbins 1989: 383).[19] Moore discusses the difficulty of obtaining work as a *plantilla* musician, whether due to a lack of formal training, not being a conservatory graduate, or the scarcity of openings within *empresas*. Conversely, many musicians that have acquired *plantilla* status become complacent due to their guaranteed monthly salary and a lack of incentive to keep striving for artistic excellence. Moore states, "The *plantilla* system has created situations in which musicians sabotage their

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[17] For more information on the *empresa* system see Robbins 1989 and Moore 2006. Ethnomusicologist James Robbins defines *empresas* as "individually budgeted organizations whose function resembles a cross between a musicians' union and a talent agency. Empresas are responsible for correlating musical services, pay scales, work quotas, and musicians' ratings" (Robbins 1989: 381).

[18] See Moore 2006 for a detailed discussion of the state music education system in Cuba. He also discusses the *Movimiento de Aficionados*, or Amateurs' Movement, a government-sponsored initiative beginning in the 1960s designed to encourage aspiring performing artists to engage in community music-making and dancing. *Casas de cultura* (community cultural centers) provided, and still provide, spaces for aspiring musicians to rehearse and perform.

[19] My percussion teacher Daniel Rodríguez also pointed out to me that there is a distinction between professional rumba/folkloric groups that are *grupos subvencionados* (subsidized groups), who earn a fixed salary each month in exchange for performing a certain number of events, and other groups such as his own, in which the musicians and dancers have professional status but get paid per gig instead of having a regular monthly salary. This classification, which is more in line with the situation of musicians in capitalist societies, puts more responsibility on the group's director and representative to drum up performance opportunities in order to make a living. Daniel told me that the other two Havana-based groups with whom I was conducting research, Yoruba Andabo and Clave y Guaugancó, were *grupos subvencionados* (p.c., September 2006).

instruments or invent excuses in order not to travel to small, out-of-the-way towns, knowing that in any case they will make the same amount of money" (Moore: 99).[20] Professional musicians and groups also experience frustration due to the micro-managing nature of the *empresas*, illustrated by the fact that until the onset of the new hybrid economy, music employers were not allowed to directly contract groups for gigs, but had to go through the *empresa* bureaucracy (Perna 2005).

While the *empresa* system has remained in place since the economic shifts of the Special Period, there have been unavoidable changes associated with the legalization of the possession of foreign currency in 1993. *Timba* scholar Vincenzo Perna notes that popular musicians and groups were soon allowed to negotiate directly with foreigners seeking to organize tours and recording deals. He states, "The reforms put an end to the egalitarianism of the old quota system, which limited the number of gigs and the earnings of musicians, and allowed them to charge fees according to demand. Musicians could now choose which *empresa* would best represent them, arrange their work contacts personally and, most importantly, retain between 70 and 80 per cent of their foreign earnings, provided they paid a percentage to their *empresa* and income taxes to the state" (Perna: 77). Robin Moore adds, "Since the late 1990s [*empresas*] serve more as agencies of taxation than service providers. Music groups now have more freedom to determine their own work schedules and fees" (Moore: 100).[21] While I do not have any personal knowledge about popular musicians' experiences with *empresas*, the director of a professional rumba group complained to me about his *empresa* taking 30% of the group's earnings and then not following through on their logistical responsibility to provide transportation for gigs. In light of these inconsistencies, it should be emphasized that the new economic freedoms and opportunities granted to the country's elite *timba* groups have not necessarily been extended to other genres of Cuban music such as rumba and Afro-Cuban folkloric music. The government has come to understand that Cuban *timba* bands constitute a significant source of state income, because of several factors: their widespread dissemination abroad that draws tourists to the island, the percentage of revenue generated by their foreign tours that is collected by the *empresas*, and income taxes paid by musicians on their foreign currency earnings (Perna: 77). Perna's interviews and sources state that in 1999 – at a time when Cuban tourism was booming, Cuban music was enjoying immense foreign popularity, and when Cuban musicians were regularly being issued visas to perform in the U.S. – the top dance bandleaders were earning anywhere between $10,000 and $40,000 U.S. dollars/year, an extravagant income compared with the roughly $150-200 dollars/year earned by the average Cuban.[22] Folkloric groups and musicians, on the

[20] I have experienced this type of lack of motivation by folkloric groups who have particularly demanding performance and rehearsal schedules. Several times I witnessed the relief of performers when transportation problems resulted in a cancellation of a performances, as it gave them a little time off from their demanding schedule.

[21] Moore's statistics regarding the percentage of fees retained by the musicians is much lower than Perna's; Moore cites a musician informant who claims that the *empresa* requires him to surrender 65% (Moore: 100).

[22] During the Bush years, Cuban musicians were basically prohibited from performing in the U.S., as the administration denied all visa requests. Since summer 2009, Cuban musicians and artists have been given visas to enter and perform in the U.S., a sign that the Obama administration will revert back to Clinton-era policies regarding artistic visas and that cultural exchanges between the two countries, if not diplomatic relations, have been partially restored. A significant concert took place in September 2009, called *Paz Sin Fronteras* (Peace without Borders) and organized by Colombian pop star Juanes, in order to promote musical and cultural exchange between Cuba and the rest of the western hemisphere across the political divide. He and several major Cuban and Latin American popular musicians played to an unprecedented Cuban crowd of more than one million people in the historic Plaza de la Revolución. Before the concert, however, he received death threats from right-wing Cuban exiles in Miami, where he resides.

other hand, have never possessed the same degree of earning power, mass media dissemination or foreign popularity.

The effects of cultural tourism on folkloric musicians' livelihood

Folkloric musicians have not been able to capitalize on the material benefits of the new market-oriented economy to the same degree as *timba* groups and even some traditional popular music groups like the Buena Vista Social Club or the Afro-Cuban All-Stars, who have enjoyed worldwide media dissemination since the later 1990s. Nonetheless, the Cuban government's recognition of Afro-Cuban culture as a significant attraction for foreigners has created new performance and financial opportunities for folkloric musicians, both those who have professional status and those who play *en la calle* (literally "in the street," or without an *empresa* affiliation). Several scholars have written about the central role that rumba and Afro-Cuban religious traditions have played in the cultural tourism sector since the 1990s (Pacini Hernandez 1998; Hagedorn 2001; Knauer 2005; Perna 2005; Moore 2006).[23] Katherine Hagedorn discusses the creation of new *Santería*-related tourist packages, called "Ochaturs" or *santurismo*. She highlights the irony entailed in a Marxist government's sponsoring of religious initiations now that *Santería* has become a tourist attraction and source of income, a seemingly contradictory move by a statethat regularly harassed and imprisoned Afro-Cuban religious practitioners in the 1970s and 80s (Hagedorn 2001: 9). Cuba scholars Alejandro de la Fuente and Mark Sawyer also underscore the contradiction inherent in the fact that while Afro-Cuban culture, music and religion almost single-handedly nourish the cultural tourism industry, black Cubans – and many times the religious and musical practitioners themselves – have seen the least economic gains from the influx of tourist dollars and many are worse off materially than before the Special Period. One of Sawyer's informants wryly states about the contradictory racial politics of the market-oriented economy, " 'They have sought to make the country appear more 'European' [by hiring primarily light-skinned Cubans within the tourist industry] and at the same time utilize Afro-Cuban culture as an exotic allure'" (Sawyer: 110).

The primary ways in which Afro-Cuban music practitioners engage directly with the tourist economy are through professional performances (if their group has an *empresa* affiliation) and through teaching private music and dance lessons to foreigners, which technically constitute illegal activities because the musicians are not licensed by the government and do not pay taxes on their earnings. In her dissertation on transnational relationships between rumba and *Santería* religious practitioners in Havana and New York (2005), anthropologist Lisa Knauer notes that most professional folkloric musicians in Cuba teach *clases particulares* ("unofficial" private lessons) to foreign students, even those within the prestigious Conjunto Folkórico Nacional (National Folkloric Group, or CFN). She characterizes this activity as a sort of open secret, where everyone knows that it's happening, but as long as private lessons do not interfere with the musicians' professional duties, they are allowed to conduct them without being harassed. Foreigners are encouraged to enroll in official packaged tours/workshops organized by cultural organisms of the government, which are the only legal way of taking percussion, song and/or dance classes. The

[23] Ethnomusicologist Deborah Pacini Hernandez (1998) discusses the worldwide Afro-Cuban percussion renaissance during the 1990s, stating that folkloric groups like Afrocuba de Matanzas and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas were granted visas to tour in the U.S. more often than the more well-known dance bands like Los Van Van or NG La Banda, considered to be commercial groups.

CFN, for example, offers annual percussion and dance workshops called "FolkCuba."[24] Many Afro-Cuban music and dance workshops are organized by foreign cultural tour operators or companies, who gather a group of tourists from their home country and contract a particular folkloric group to give two-week courses.[25] Some of the foreigners take the legal route, going through the official Cuban channels in order to organize the music and dance courses, and others have more informal financial agreements with the directors of the folkloric groups with which they are interested in working. Many foreigners interested in cultural tourism may decide to take their first trip to Cuba with an organized group, but they often return to the island as individual tourists in order to seek out percussion, song and/or dance lessons with particular teachers.

My trajectory is a common one for cultural tourists: I first traveled to Cuba in summer 2003 as a participant in a percussion and dance workshop organized by the Northern California-based humanitarian tour operator Global Exchange.[26] It was through this program that I met my Havana percussion and song teacher, Daniel Rodríguez Morales, who is the principal percussion accompanist for the Teatro América dance company and whose group Los Ibellis was one of the rumba groups with whom I conducted research.[27] When I traveled to Cuba on my own the following summer to conduct preliminary research on rumba, I immediately contacted Daniel for private percussion lessons. During that summer our lessons took place in the Teatro América, although most private teachers hold lessons in their homes (or in relatives' homes if they do not live in a central neighborhood of Havana), to avoid alerting authorities about their non-licensed professional activities.[28] In fact, on all of my other research trips to Havana, my lessons with Daniel were conducted in private homes.

Musicians who give *clases particulares* in rumba and Afro-Cuban folkloric music and dance generally charge $10 CUC/lesson, and depending on the generosity of the teacher, the classes can last anywhere from an hour on the dot to two, or more rarely three, hours.[29] This rate is mutually beneficial for the foreigner and the Cuban teacher: it is quite inexpensive compared to the price of private lessons in the foreigner's home country, and it allows the Cuban to earn the

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[24] Rumba scholars Yvonne Daniel and Lisa Knauer both highlight one unfortunate consequence of the state-initiated commoditization of Afro-Cuban music and dance: in workshops conducted by professional dance companies such as the CFN, almost all foreign students are accepted regardless of their proficiency level because of the economic need to fill the programs, and many are able to argue their way into higher levels (Daniel 1995: 127; Knauer: 109).

[25] These foreign-organized percussion and dance workshops are not always organized by foreigners, but sometimes by Cuban émigrés. For example, I know a Cuban dancer living in the Bay Area who brings Americans to Cuba at least once a year for these types of workshops.

[26] Programs promoting "cultural exchange" between Cubans and Americans were prohibited with the Bush administration's additional restrictions on travel to the island by Americans in 2003, and this trip was the last time Global Exchange could offer this type of program. It is likely that with the Obama administration's relaxed policies towards Cuba, Global Exchange's cultural exchange programs will be reinstated.

[27] The Teatro (or Theater) América is located in the heart of Centro Habana on Avenida Galliano, and the dance company's repertoire focuses on cabaret-style set pieces that mix various styles of dance, namely classical (ballet), popular and folkloric. The dancers take technical classes in ballet and folkloric styles.

[28] Many teachers who use friends' or relatives' homes to teach private lessons also end up giving a portion of their earnings to the homeowner, either of their own accord as a token of gratitude for the use of the home and a desire to help that person financially, or because there is an unspoken expectation for remuneration on the part of the homeowner.

[29] The most famous master percussionists and dancers most likely charge more, but I have always been charged the same rate of $10 CUC, independently of whether I was taking lessons in Havana, Matanzas or Santiago. In all three locations I took lessons with respected members of well-known professional folkloric groups and not musicians *en la calle* (i.e., non-professionals), who probably charge less.

equivalent of a monthly salary in a few hours, thus alleviating some of the economic pressures of the dual currency economy. Knauer discusses the long-term relationship that is often established, where the foreign student helps the Cuban teacher survive in a difficult economy and in turn the teacher provides access to religious ceremonies. *Clases particulares* also open up important opportunities for folkloric musicians: foreigners often recommend them to friends wishing to take music lessons in Cuba, or, in rarer cases, the foreign student is able to arrange for the teacher to get a visa to perform or teach classes abroad. In addition, while not a primary motivation for folkloric musicians, *clases particulares* sometimes lead to the initiation of a romantic relationship with a foreign student that could result in being able to leave Cuba on a marriage or fiancé visa.

In addition to paying for private lessons in dollars, foreigners often buy teachers gifts, such as food, rum or clothes, bring them gifts from their home country, or leave behind supplies that are hard to come by like batteries, blank CDs and cassettes, and sometimes small electronics like digital cameras or portable music players. While the relationship between Cuban teachers of folkloric traditions and foreign students can be characterized as mutually beneficial, and often blossoms into affectionate friendships, the economic foundation of the relationship cannot be overlooked within the context of post-Soviet Cuba. As I discussed in the Introduction, there is no way to escape the fact of economic inequality between Cubans and foreigners (even those considered to be "poor" by the standards of their own country), and this situation sometimes leads to uncomfortable moments and uninformed expectations on the parts of Cubans concerning the amount of financial help the foreigner can provide.

Knauer speaks of a particular phenomenon that has arisen due to the intense competition among practitioners of Cuban folkloric music and dance to secure foreign students and the economic benefits they bring: the appearance of what she terms *jineteros folclóricos* (folkloric hustlers), who congregate at rumba events in order to meet foreigners (Knauer: 481). I should note that folkloric hustling is much more common in Havana than in Matanzas, an issue related to the politics of place vis-à-vis the tourism industry, which I discuss in chapter three. Although Knauer's description of the modus operandi of these "folkloric hustlers" coincides with my own experience as a foreigner who has spent many hours conducting research at rumba events, I find the term "folkloric hustler" to be somewhat problematic, as there is at times a fine line between these "hustlers" and professional folkloric musicians. There are distinctions between the two. For example, the former – almost invariably male – may feign in-depth knowledge about rumba and Afro-Cuban religious music when in reality he only knows how to play a few rhythms. However, some professional musicians engage in behavior associated with *jineteros*, such as circulating through the crowd (when they are not performing) to sell burned CD's of the group's recordings to tourists.

Notwithstanding the ambiguity in defining who is or isn't a "folkloric hustler," Knauer's dissertation offers a nuanced discussion of this phenomenon, particularly her point that while foreigners and even Cuban émigrés lament the ubiquitous nature of hustling in contemporary Cuba, for some Cubans on the island, it is the only way they can *resolver* (resolve, or find a solution to their economic problems) (Knauer: 483). Drawing on the experiences of several informants, she highlights the crucial role folkloric hustlers play within the cultural tourism industry: "For the tourist or visitor who wants to go beyond what is marketed in the official tourist arena, the hustlers play an invaluable role as cultural broker" (ibid.). One of the musicians interviewed in her study speaks about the symbiotic relationship between himself and the *jinetero*: the former can provide services to foreigners but perhaps does not speak English or does not come into regular contact with them; thus the *jinetero* brings the foreigner to the musician in

exchange for a percentage of the fees.[30] Knauer presents a profile of her husband, a folkloric drummer, who, although he doesn't consider himself a *jinetero*, does not consider the entanglement of folklore or religion with *negocios* (informal economy activities) to be any different from other aspects of social life in which Cubans must find a way to earn dollars. Many Cubans do not view the relationship between a *jinetero* and tourist as necessarily exploitative, for ultimately, both parties are getting what they want and need.

The legacies of colonial racism, its recent manifestations, and the racialization of rumba performance

The appearance of folkloric hustling within a space of blackness – rumba and Afro-Cuban folkloric performance – foregrounds the ways that racial difference has become an increasingly significant factor in the post-Soviet economy, particularly in terms of access to dollars and lucrative employment opportunities. The second part of this chapter elaborates on the racial politics of the new hybrid economy and the ways these dynamics, and the legacy of longstanding racialized notions about rumba, create challenges for rumba and folkloric musicians.

The re-exacerbation of racialized class inequalities in the post-Soviet economy

> Arturo, a white Cuban, explained to me in stark and basically racist terms, 'Look, Chico, I am a businessman. I sell gasoline, bread, and other goods. While it is illegal, I think it is legitimate. I work out of my home and operate a small business. The blacks are the ones who are out on the streets selling counterfeit cigars to tourists. They are lazy and are just as likely to rob you as they are to do real business. It takes time and commitment to build a small business here, even an illegal one. The police harass blacks because they are more criminal and violent; it is simply their nature. I am not racist; this is a matter of proven, social scientific fact' (Sawyer: 114).

Several Cuba scholars have written about the mixed effects of the changes ushered in by the Special Period, particularly the adoption of a hybrid economic system that retained major features of Soviet-style socialism while opening up to tourism, foreign investment and limited private enterprise by Cuban citizens. With the expansion of the tourist industry in the early-mid 1990s, it became increasingly challenging for the government to control ideological and cultural discourses circulating on the island and to limit Cubans' access to information disseminated internationally. Despite the regime's continuing attempts to curtail interaction between Cubans and foreigners by instituting policies deemed by many to be "tourist apartheid,"[31] there has been

[30] Interestingly, one informant who talks about the entanglements between folkloric hustling and the increasing popularity and commercialization of *Santería* practice frames his discussion in religious terms. He posits that *jineteros* are sons of Eleguá (the *orisha*, or Yoruba-derived deity of the crossroads), who open doors and opportunities for folkloric musicians (Knauer: 488), but who is also a trickster figure.

[31] These policies constitute a strict policing of Cuban nationals in tourist areas. Mark Sawyer notes that the term "tourist apartheid" was coined in the early 1990s, before Cubans could legally own and trade in dollars and when they could enter a dollar store only if accompanied by a foreigner (Sawyer: 108). Other restrictions included not

an inevitable aperture in the exchange of ideas, opinions, and popular culture since the 1990s. With increased international exposure concerning the conditions of daily life on the island an unavoidable result of opening up the economy to Western tourism and investment, the Cuban government has also been obligated to curb or at least modify many of their most repressive practices related to the treatment of political dissidents and censorship of artistic expression. Sujatha Fernandes has posited an interesting thesis concerning the ability of the Cuban government to incorporate critical artistic expression into Revolutionary discourse in the wake of the Special Period. She states, "The Cuban state tolerates counterhegemonic cultural practices such as critical art because they can be reincorporated in official institutions, traditions, and discourses in ways that bolster the state's popularity, delineate the boundaries and limits of contestation, and promote national unity in the face of increasing ideological polarization and growing racial and economic disparities in Cuban society during the special period" (Fernandes: 12).

Notwithstanding the democratizing measures that have come about as a result of the response to the Special Period crisis, the economic changes have also seriously undermined the philosophies of egalitarianism and collectivism that are at the heart of Cuban Revolutionary ideology. Several Cuba scholars have written about the re-exacerbation[32] of race and class inequalities since the Special Period that can be directly correlated to three phenomena that have facilitated access to dollars: the expansion of the tourism sector, the legalization of foreign currency, and the authorization of individual private enterprise. Mark Sawyer states, "What remains [since 1996, after the worst of the economic crisis was over] is a new social and economic inequality based upon access to dollars…Cuba today has not one population, but two: those with dollars and those without" (Sawyer: 76, 108). Of the three avenues for gaining access to dollars, the tourism industry has been the sector in which racial prejudice has been explicitly observed. However, as I discuss below, race has also made a difference in terms of who has access to foreign remittance dollars and who has the financial capital to start up private businesses. Furthermore, "tourist apartheid" policies, or the policing of Cubans in tourist zones, are often implemented through racial profiling: while in theory all Cubans have been subject to harassment by the police, skin color is often taken as a primary signifier of Cuban nationality, and whites are much less likely to be stopped than blacks because they can "pass" as foreigners.[33]

Scholars have pinpointed the tourism industry as the principal sector in which racist hiring practices are operative, in that there appears to be an explicit preference for employing lighter-skinned Cubans (de la Fuente 2001; Chávez 2005; Sawyer 2006). Alejandro de la Fuente discusses the covert ways in which racism operates in terms of job discrimination, stating that

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allowing Cubans access to certain beaches and resorts, particularly in the exclusive coastal resort town of Varadero; prohibiting Cubans from staying with or accompanying foreigners up to their hotel rooms unless they could show proof of legal marriage; regular harassment and questioning in hotel lobbies; and, as detailed in chapter one, detaining citizens in the street if they were walking with foreigners. There was also a series of measures designed to limit Cuban citizens' access to news/information beyond the island and to discourage materialism by allowing only foreigners to open internet and cellular phone accounts. As detailed earlier, there has been a loosening of cell phone restrictions since Raúl Castro officially assumed the presidency in February 2008, although the state has continued to attempt to block citizens from accessing the internet.

[32] Although many scholars use the term "reintroduction," I choose to use the term "re-exacerbation" in order to emphasize the fact that racial discrimination, while greatly reduced in the public sphere and particularly in state employment, was never completely eradicated during the pre-Special Period decades of the Cuban Revolution.

[33] Mark Sawyer (2006) describes his personal experience with the opposite phenomenon – non-Cuban blacks, such as African-Americans, are often stopped and questioned because they are assumed to be Cuban. I have heard similar accounts from other black scholars.

rather than rejecting black applicants outright because of their skin color, "some 'aesthetic' and cultural factors are frequently noted to justify the exclusion of blacks on the ground that they lack the physical and educational attributes needed to interact with tourists. These factors are usually incorporated in the concept of 'good presence,' a racialized construct that is based on the belief that blackness is ugly and that blacks – their formal schooling notwithstanding – lack proper manners, 'cultural level,' and education in their social relationships" (de la Fuente: 320). In 1995 the Spanish-owned Habana Libre hotel was accused of attempting to "whiten" its staff, using the excuse that light-skinned foreigners would not feel comfortable dealing with black Cuban employees (Lardner: 194). Thus, racist hiring practices have often been justified by invoking the perceived discriminatory and prejudicial attitudes of the foreign, Spanish management and European and Canadian tourists.

It is in these rationalizations that one can comprehend the enduring currency of the "myth of racial democracy" – the idea that racially hybrid nations and their citizens are inherently anti-racist – which tends to project the problem of societal racism onto "neo-colonial" or capitalist powers or influences. De la Fuente writes, "As in Brazil, whites in Cuba blame anything (history, slavery) or anyone (foreign influence) but themselves for racism and discrimination" (de la Fuente: 324). Indeed, my own experience on the island corresponds to the widespread opinion among foreign scholars that racism is a homegrown product that is alive and well in Cuba today, particularly in the private sphere and not only among white Cubans. It can be evidenced in everyday references to *pelo malo* (literally, "bad hair," meaning kinky hair associated with blacks), and in comments like, *Ella es negra pero con pelo bueno* (She's black but has good/straight hair), euphemisms suggesting that this (white) physical trait automatically enhances or offsets the assumed unattractiveness that her skin color signifies. Also illustrative of societal racism in Cuba is the pervasiveness of racist jokes that invoke stereotypes of black hypersexuality or criminality,[34] and the widespread assumption that all blacks and *mulatos* have the desire to *adelantar* (literally meaning "to advance" or to "move forward") or whiten their offspring by marrying a white or light-skinned Cuban.[35] The perpetuation of these notions suggests an unconscious reinscription of the twin beliefs in white superiority and black inferiority, which is masked by the nationalist celebration of hybridity. The "desire for whiteness" inherent in the notion of *adelantar* – particularly when expressed by mixed race or black Cubans – can be viewed as an example of what anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff term "nonagentive power" (Comaroff and Comaroff: 1991), where there is an unconscious acceptance of hegemonic ideologies; in this case, the privileging of whiteness.[36] Unfortunately, with the new barriers faced by Afro-Cubans[37] to

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[34] De la Fuente states, "Visitors to the island are often puzzled by the fact that, while most Cubans feel adamant about denying that they are racist, they tell racist jokes and use derogatory aphorisms quite freely. Supposedly harmless, these jokes constantly reproduce the image of blacks as foul-smelling, dirty, lazy, and criminally oriented" (de la Fuente: 325).

[35] Mark Sawyer presents statistics from a 1998 survey conducted at the University of Havana showing that 68% of white Cuban respondents felt that interracial marriage was inappropriate, compared to 25% of black respondents and 29% of racially mixed respondents (Sawyer: 126).

[36] Drawing from Marx, Gramsci, and other neo-Marxtists, the Comaroffs theorize nonagentive power as being equivalent to hegemony and agentive power as the equivalent of ideology. They assert that hegemony entails the naturalization and thus invisibilization of a particular ideology, that of the dominant or ruling group, and thus operates "outside the realm of institutional politics, saturating things such as aesthetics and ethics, built form and bodily representation…" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 22-25).

[37] Here and in the following pages I use the term "Afro-Cuban" as a racial signifier in order to refer to both blacks and mixed-race people with varying degrees of African ancestry. As I discussed in the Introduction, Cubans do not

lucrative employment in tourism, "These ideas…are no longer confined to 'people's heads'" (de la Fuente: 326). That is, Cubans have become less inhibited about expressing racist and essentialist ideas openly and in public – as evident in the lengthy quote from Mark Sawyer's research that I reproduced at the beginning of this section – and these notions are being utilized to justify discriminatory practices in the public sphere.

As a result of the economic liberalization following the Special Period, a class of *nouveau riche* Cubans has emerged in the past fifteen years, constituting those who have access to dollars through at least one of the three main avenues, namely jobs in tourism, remittances from family members living in the U.S., and/or private enterprise.[38] In addition to the disadvantages Afro-Cubans face due to employment discrimination in the tourism sector, they also tend to be underrepresented within the other two avenues that facilitate access to dollars (de la Fuente 2001; Sawyer 2006; Blue 2007). Remittances have become a particularly important source of dollars for two reasons: not only do they allow Cubans on the island to buy essential food and hygiene products that are virtually unavailable in *moneda nacional*, as well as expensive consumer electronics and other household items; they also provide the initial financial investment needed to engage in entrepreneurial activities. The following quote from one of Sawyer's informants illustrates the inextricable relationship between remittances and the other avenues for access to dollars: " 'If you get remittances you can start a business, have nice things, and occasionally it takes money to pay to get a job at a big hotel. Some jobs cost money if you want them. The people who make the hiring decisions often take dollars in exchange for aid getting the job'" (Sawyer: 111).

Owing to the demographics of Cuban immigration to the U.S., remittances are characterized by acute racial disparities in terms of the recipients of dollars on the island. In the 1990 U.S. census, 92% of Cuban-Americans were reported as white (Sawyer: 111),[39] and while the more recent waves of migration to the U.S. have been much more racially diverse, in the 2000 census the number of self-identified white immigrants still constituted the overwhelming majority, 84% (Blue 2007: 57). Furthermore, Afro-Cuban immigrants are less able to send regular remittances to their families on the island because they tend to be more recent immigrants to the U.S. and are still in the process of becoming financially stable.[40] Finally, Afro-Cubans' historic economic

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use this term to identify themselves racially, preferring to use more specific terms like black and *mulato*, but "Afro-Cuban" is a useful signifier for encompassing both groups.

[38] One of the most distressing outcomes of the new economic order in Cuba is that now waiters and taxi drivers and other service-sector employees are much better compensated than professionals such as teachers, doctors and engineers, because the former have easy access to dollars while the latter are faced with stagnant wages in a devalued currency. As a result, higher education and the attainment of professional degrees have completely lost their allure for young Cubans. While there is evidence that racial parity has been achieved within secondary and higher education, and that it does not seem to have been lost during the Special Period (Blue 2007), Afro-Cubans can no longer depend on education as a means of upward mobility.

[39] De la Fuente provides a lower percentage of self-identified white Cuban immigrants, 83.5% (de la Fuente: 319).

[40] Geographer Sarah Blue states that 83% of emigrants from black Cuban households left the island between 1980 and 2000 (Blue: 58). The first significant wave of non-whites arrived with the *Marielitos*, the name for the approximately 125,000 Cubans who left the island between April and October 1980 during the Mariel boatlifts. After a riot by thousands of Cuban dissidents, Fidel Castro announced that any Cuban who wished to leave the island would be allowed to do so, but the government also took advantage of the situation to send off thousands of "undesirables" (Castro's term) to Miami. Sawyer states, "Word soon got out that Fidel Castro had used the flotilla as a means of ridding his country of 'social deviants,' including dissidents, homosexuals, the mentally ill, drug addicts, and felons" (Sawyer: 159). This criminality associated with the *Marielitos* was immortalized in the famous gangster movie *Scarface*, whose protagonist was a Mariel immigrant. The next large group of immigrants, called the *balseros* (people who came on *balsas*, or homemade rafts), left in 1994 as a result of the economic crisis of the Special Period

disadvantages also factor into their current situation vis-à-vis private enterprise. Two of the most lucrative *negocios* (businesses) in contemporary Cuba are renting out rooms to tourists and driving taxis, both of which require state licenses and are heavily taxed.[41] Unlike many white Cubans, before the Revolution few blacks owned cars or lived in large colonial homes with extra rooms in tourist-friendly neighborhoods like Vedado. Hence, most do not have access to the material conditions that would allow them to convert a possession into a livelihood.

Given the relative lack of access to jobs in the tourist sector, dollar remittances, and resources to start up private businesses, many Afro-Cubans are forced to try and drum up dollars "illegally," in the informal economy. Sawyer states, "I define the informal economy as being constituted by economic activity that is officially illegal, occurring without the sanction of government licensing or outside the official channels of a state enterprise. Such activity is known colloquially in Cuba as 'business'" (Sawyer: 112). The informal economy is made up of a wide range of activities, including more "innocuous" ones – such as selling clothes or food on the black market, providing services (carpentry, manicures, cleaning, etc.), or using one's car as a taxi – and riskier, more socially unacceptable ones, such as stealing, hustling and prostitution. Geographer Sarah Blue discusses the common misconception that black Cubans are more likely than whites to participate in the informal economy, despite her findings that black and white households reported earning informal income at very similar rates, 40% and 38% respectively (Blue: 50). In fact, Blue's study found that whites are more likely to participate full-time in the informal economy, while blacks and *mulatos* often engage in these activities part-time, as supplementary income to their state wages (ibid.: 51). More telling are her statistics concerning the ways that race and access to foreign remittances delimit the types of activities available to Afro-Cubans: "whites appeared to engage more frequently in 'tolerated' informal (unlicensed) activities…while blacks and mulattos were slightly more likely to engage in riskier (illegal) activities, such as selling misappropriated goods or hustling" (ibid). Notwithstanding Blue's findings, de la Fuente quotes statistics from a 1996 Cuban study finding that "the majority of the *jineteras* [female prostitutes] are 'mestizas' [women of mixed race] who would be considered white in other scenarios. Prostitution has become an element in the current definition of social blackness" (de la Fuente: 327). These statistics point to one of the primary reasons for the overrepresentation of black men in folkloric hustling, i.e., most do not have access to other avenues, whether legal (tourist jobs) or illegal (renting rooms or driving taxis), that can provide them with dollars. In fact, rather than reproducing stereotypes, one could argue that these men are shrewdly exploiting one of the few advantages provided by their skin color – the veneer of authenticity within cultural spaces of blackness such as rumba or folkloric shows.

In my experience, the majority of Cubans seem to agree with the official state stance that the suffering of the Special Period did not discriminate on the basis of race, that all sectors of society experienced extreme deprivation. Others, however, feel that "the Special Period was more *special* for some than others,"[42] a wry, oblique reference to the ways that the economic crisis hit blacks hardest due to their relative lack of access to dollars. No matter what one believes about who suffered the most under the Special Period, it is almost universally acknowledged by scholars and

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(i.e., they were not political dissidents). There were about 33,0000 *balseros*, who were again permitted to leave at their own risk and brave the shark-infested waters, and they included a large proportion of Afro-Cubans.

[41] Unsurprisingly, many Cubans engage in these activities illegally, i.e. without a license, to get around the burdensome taxes. They prefer to risk getting caught and being heavily fined (and in some cases having one's car or house decommissioned), than not to engage in these activities at all and have to subsist on state wages.

[42] I cannot recall if I heard this memorable quote from someone in Cuba, or if I read it in a published academic source. I have scoured my sources looking for the citation, but have not been able to find it.

Cubans that the solutions posed by the government to counteract the crisis – the expansion of tourism, institutionalization of a dual currency system, and authorization of private enterprise – have had the effect of aggravating racialized economic inequalities on the island. De la Fuente posits, "Most of these racially differentiated effects are clearly unintended and escape government control. Government policies to cope with the crisis have provoked social polarization – including a fast-growing income gap – but they are racial only in their consequences, not in their design" (de la Fuente: 321). Sawyer presents a more critical perspective concerning the government's role, arguing that the crisis of the Special Period and the increasing need for the socialist regime to project national unity to the capitalist world, have served as excuses for inaction concerning growing racial inequalities and biases in hiring. He states, "The problem of race is frequently cast as an issue of 'special interest' that cannot be part of a program of improving Cuban society in the context of hardship" (Sawyer: 129).

Continuing racial prejudice directed toward rumba performance and musicians

Dance scholar Yvonne Daniel states, "Since the Revolution of 1959, rumba has emerged as a symbol of what Cuba stands for among its own people and what Cubans want the world to understand when the international community envisions Cuba and Cubans" (Daniel 1995: 7). She presents an optimistic assessment of the socialist government's valorization and elevation of rumba to the status of a national dance, positing that rumba was chosen as a symbol to represent "the member of Cuban society who is most venerated ideologically, the worker…*los humildes, los jíbaros, los negros pobres, los trabajadores* [the humble, the rural peasants, the poor blacks, the workers]" (ibid: 114). However, my fieldwork experience has taught me that rumba is still a racialized cultural practice that not all Cubans care to identify with, a fact that Daniel acknowledges when she states that rumba musicians, dancers, and audiences are largely Afro-Cuban (ibid.: 17, 62). I have one Cuban friend who has continually derided my choice of research subject, often with a veneer of joking around, by asking me why an educated woman born in a first-world country was so interested in learning about such a lowly, "uncultured" musical practice. He posed this question to me with such frequency that I came to view his comments as representative of deeply ingrained racial prejudices toward black Cubans and their cultural expressions. Even Rogelio Martínez Furé, founder of the CFN and one of the country's most prominent academics and folklorists since the Revolution, admits that the discursive valorization of rumba does not necessarily represent the attitudes of a majority of Cubans. He states, "Currently, rumba 'in the abstract' has in fact been taken up as one of the symbols of 'the national'; but rumba 'in its concrete manifestations', that which is still played in urban slums, or in small rural towns, is not totally accepted by many Cubans, who still continue to reject it, considering it to be 'vulgar', 'a black thing'" (Martínez Furé 2004: 142, my translation).[43]

Lisa Knauer's narrative emphasizes the Revolutionary government's ambivalent stance towards rumba, or the fact that despite the discursive valorization of rumba by cultural officials, rumba performance venues have always been sites of police harassment. In the early decades of the Revolution, police often broke up rumba parties and Afro-Cuban religious ceremonies in private homes (Vélez 2000; Knauer 2005). In the 1970s when the CFN established their weekly

[43] "En la actualidad, la rumba 'en abstracto' sí se asume como uno de los símbolos de 'lo nacional'; pero la rumba 'en concreto', la que se sigue tocando en los solares y accesorias, o en pequeños poblados rurales, no es asimilada totalmente por muchos cubanos, quienes hasta continuan rechazándola por considerarla 'vulgar', 'cosa de negros'."

Sábado de la Rumba (Saturday Rumba) event, they faced opposition from the residents of the historically affluent Vedado neighborhood, who complained about the noise and expressed concern about the event attracting large numbers of poor Afro-Cubans. Black Cuban poet Eloy Machado faced similar struggles in the 1980s when starting the bi-monthly rumba event at the Unión de Escritores y Artistas Cubanos (Union of Cuban Writers and Artists, known to everyone as the UNEAC), also in Vedado (Knauer: 542-3). The director of Havana rumba group Yoruba Andabo, Geovani del Pino, informed me that members of the UNEAC forced a temporary closure of the rumba event for a period of time in 1987, two years after the event had begun. He referred to the initiators of the closure as the "enemies of rumba," those who held discriminatory and racist attitudes towards rumba and its participants and followers (p.c., December 2006). The majority of *rumberos* (rumba participants) with whom I conducted research felt that rumba still suffers from widespread racialized prejudice within Cuban society, and that the discursive valorization of Afro-Cuban traditions by state cultural officials rarely translated into practice. There are, however, *rumberos* who see progress in terms of defeating racially prejudicial attitudes surrounding rumba. In Stephen Foehr's *Dancing with Fidel,* Amado Dedeu Hernández, director of rumba group Clave y Guaguancó, is quoted as follows: " 'Now the rumba has lost its racial connotation. After the Revolution, there have been greater open possibilities in accepting the rumba. The government has gone to the rescue of all culture heritages, and the rumba has been given more space'" (Foehr 2001: 127).[44]

Since the Special Period and the much higher presence of foreigners on the island, rumba performance has been subjected to increased surveillance by the authorities, whose principal objective has become to protect tourists and prevent theft and solicitation by Cubans. Knauer writes about a rumba event in Old Havana that was organized in the late 1990s by community members and that began to have problems with the police once foreigners began to attend. This event, which was not sponsored by an official institution, had a more open, spontaneous format (there was no regular group who played there), leading to a more raucous atmosphere. However, in another classic display of disciplinary power, the organizers, keenly aware of the stereotypes surrounding rumba events – heavy drinking and violence – often encouraged the audience "to counteract the negative image of rumba and Afrocuban culture by behaving properly" (Knauer: 554). Knauer reports that after one temporary closure in 2002 and a reopening a few months later, the event was closed again in 2004 and to my knowledge has not operated since then.

I also witnessed, during my own fieldwork, an example of *rumberos* engaging in self-disciplining strategies to counteract negative stereotypes about blacks' behavior at public events. In March 2007 I traveled with Afrocuba de Matanzas to a performance at a folkloric festival in Cárdenas, a port city in the Matanzas province. The event got very crowded, people were drinking heavily, and during the course of the performance a fight broke out. The performers asked for calm in order to continue with their performance, and one of the dancers alluded to the stereotype of blacks as undisciplined and badly behaved, and implored the audience to prove this notion wrong. These anecdotes illustrate that rumba performance is still heavily imbricated with racialized notions of good/bad comportment.

[44] It is not clear whether the translations of musicians' quotes in this book, which include many grammatical and spelling errors, are those of the author (a travel writer) or of an assistant/translator. It is possible that Amado was painting an overly optimistic portrait of the situation because he was being interviewed by a foreigner and did not want to be cited as critiquing the government.

The racialization of rumba performance and its tangible effects

Since I began conducting fieldwork in 2004, I have come to understand the difficult place that rumba and Afro-Cuban folkloric performers occupy within the Cuban cultural apparatus. I have had numerous experiences with rumba groups in both Havana and Matanzas that lead me to believe that the cultural practices associated with black Cubans are not given the same amount of structural and economic support from state cultural institutions as other musical genres, such as *timba*, that enjoy more widespread popularity within the Cuban population and in which the musicians are much more racially diverse. Many times I witnessed the frustration of rumba and folkloric performers at the logistical failures and mishaps they were forced to endure in terms of faulty transportation or inadequate performing conditions. Often the transportation supposedly guaranteed by the *empresa* failed to show up even remotely on time (or at all), or the venues in which the groups were sent to perform did not have the necessary conditions for folkloric performance, such as a changing room. This can present a major problem for full-fledged folkloric dance troupes such as CFN, Afrocuba de Matanzas, and the Havana-based Raíces Profundas, whose shows often include five or six folkloric dances from different Afro-Cuban traditions, necessitating several costume changes.[45] While a discussion of the state of folkloric groups' transportation to and from their gigs may seem like an indulgent gesture on my part –as transportation is usually conceived of as such a minor detail in relation to musical performance – getting from place to place is a serious problem in Cuba that is magnified when taking into account costumes and percussion instruments.

On Thanksgiving day (November 23, 2006), I left my apartment in Cayo Hueso (a neighborhood in Central Havana) and headed to the rehearsal location of the highly esteemed Havana folkloric dance troupe Raíces Profundas.[46] I planned to travel with the group to their performance in the outlying municipality of Guanabacoa for the annual Wemilere Festival, which celebrates the African roots of Cuban culture and is dedicated each year to a different African country.[47] The bus sent by the *empresa* to transport the group to Guanabacoa was scheduled to arrive at 5pm, which would allow plenty of time to make the approximately 30-minute trip from Havana and for the performers to get dressed in time for their 9pm performance. We waited and waited, with Juan de Dios Ramos, the group's director, calling the *empresa* several times to ask when the bus would arrive and being told that it was on its way. Despite the group members' grumblings after a few hours that they should be allowed to go home, and that this was just another example of a folkloric performance being cancelled due to transportation problems, de Dios was determined to keep waiting. Finally the bus arrived, roughly four hours after its scheduled time and fifteen minutes after the group was scheduled to begin performing!

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[45] This is less of an issue for rumba groups who perform Afro-Cuban folkloric dances, but whose performances are more rumba-heavy, as opposed to folkloric troupes whose shows are more oriented towards choreographed group dances. The three rumba groups that I worked with in Havana – Yoruba Andabo, Clave y Guaguancó and Los Ibellis – often have a Yoruba set within their shows, but the *orisha* dances are all performed by a solo dancer instead of a choreographed group of dancers.

[46] The group was founded and is still led by Juan de Dios Ramos, master folkloric dancer and one of the founders of the CFN in 1962.

[47] Guanabacoa has historically been an important site of Afro-Cuban religious practice, particularly of *Regla de Ocha* (*Santería*) and *Abakuá*, the male secret society that has its origins in the Calabar region of southeastern Nigeria.

When we arrived the dancers were quickly shooed into a makeshift dressing room (the bathroom of a municipal building in Guanabacoa that was ripe with the odor of urine). Raíces Profundas ended up performing a few numbers, less than a half hour in total. To add insult to injury, for the return trip to Havana the *empresa* sent a smaller bus than the one in which we had arrived, and it did not have enough seats to accommodate all the members of the group – roughly 25 dancers and six or seven musicians – and the percussion instruments. In addition, there were a few people who were not members of the group also riding on the bus, including myself and a few sound engineers who were friends of musicians, and who needed a ride back to Havana.[48] This situation resulted in a heated argument between the local *jefa de transporte* (transportation chief) – who stopped the bus and insisted that "only the 25 dancers of Raices Profundas" could ride on it – and members of the group, who tried to explain that the group was larger than 25 people. By this time it was after midnight and the musicians and dancers were frustrated with what they deemed to be the *falta de respeto* (display of disrespect) on the part of the organizers of the Wemilere. The bus had arrived four hours late, the performers were not given a snack or even any water when they arrived, the group was not received in a welcoming fashion, and the transportation back to Havana was inadequate for a group of their size. The larger point of this vignette is to demonstrate that folkloric musicians and dancers realize that, despite the high-handed rhetoric that is commonly heard at folkloric events and festivals about the importance of folklore as the roots of national culture, it is precisely the performers of these traditional practices who are treated with the least respect and consideration.

Another *falta de respeto* (in my mind) displayed towards rumba performers and audiences took place in late May 2007 in Havana, during a performance at the Teatro América honoring the work of the highly acclaimed group Rumberos de Cuba. Although the group was billed as the main event, they performed only two songs, one of which was accompanied by the Teatro América cabaret dancers performing highly stylized choreography that had little to do with rumba dance.[49] In fact, the majority of the show featured the cabaret dancers and recorded music, and the event was hosted by two MC's who continually traded sexual innuendo jokes back and forth and occasionally engaged in rhetoric about how wonderful Rumberos de Cuba are, and how important rumba is to the nation. The disregard for rumba and Afro-Cuban folkloric music generally was being propagated during the same week in the academic sphere, at the principal annual music conference in Cuba called the Simposio Cubadisco (Cubadisco Symposium). The Rumberos de Cuba show was actually one of the performance events sponsored by the annual Feria de Cubadisco, a recording industry-sponsored music fair and awards presentation, similar to the Grammys, that always includes a scholarly component (the Symposium). I attended the Symposium for almost the entire week, and noted that Afro-Cuban

[48] It is common for a few non-group members – such as musicians' spouses, children or friends, or foreign researchers – to tag along on the buses provided for folkloric groups traveling to a performance site. Due to widespread transportation shortages across the island, when the event is over, and if there is room on the bus, drivers often allow people not affiliated with the group (i.e., regular citizens) to board the bus and catch a ride.

[49] As discussed by Robin Moore (1995, 1997), cabaret-style rumba has a long history dating back to the early twentieth century when the traditional rumba was appropriated and stylized for consumption by national audiences on the stages of the *teatro bufo/vernáculo* (comic/vernacular theater), where actors often performed in blackface. This was the style of rumba that was exported to the world in the late 1920s and early '30s, and led to the generalized misconception in the United States and elsewhere that rumba (spelled "rhumba" in the U.S.) was a style of ballroom dance.

folkloric music was completely absent from the academic presentations and the general conversation.[50]

In addition to the logistical challenges that rumba and folkloric groups face when they have a gig in a venue for which they must rely on a shoddy system of subsidized transportation, rumba performance is in a relatively precarious position within the new market-oriented economy, particularly in Havana. During the fall of 2006, I came to understand the fickle nature of the political economy of rumba performance as I observed how *peñas de rumba* (regular rumba events/gatherings) could be cancelled from one day to the next, with almost no notice. This instability is characteristic principally at what I deem to be "for-profit" gigs that take place in cabarets, where the rumba groups generally get to take home the door earnings minus the percentage solicited by the *empresa* (see chapter three for more details).

One experience in Havana highlighted to me not only the instability rumba performance faces in the post-Soviet economy, but also the psychological effects that a lack of institutional support can have on musicians. When I arrived in Havana in late August 2006, the Karabalí Club, located on the very central Calle 23 (23rd Street) in the Vedado neighborhood, was offering two rumba *peñas* every week: my percussion teacher's group, Los Ibellis, occupied the Tuesday slot from 4-8pm and Rumberos de Cuba performed on Thursdays at the same time.[51] In late September Los Ibellis' then representative, Luis Lucas Rodríguez, informed me that Karabalí had stopped hosting Rumberos de Cuba and that they were thinking of suspending their rumba events indefinitely because the head of the *empresa* representing the club disliked rumba and did not want it performed there (p.c., September 2006). In early October, Los Ibellis' *peña* was cancelled indefinitely, although it was not clear why. Later in the week I found out that a new rumba event at a cabaret called Trastevere featuring Clave y Guaguancó was cancelled after just a few shows. Los Ibellis' director, Daniel, and his representative discussed the fact that the two cabarets were managed by the same *empresa* official mentioned above who had expressed hostility towards rumba performance, likely because of what rumba represents to many Cubans: *la mala vida* (an immoral life), rum, fighting, and most of all, blackness. Furthermore, it was announced that the Sunday rumba at the Callejón de Hamel would be cancelled for the entire month of October so that the organizers could effect internal repairs. All of these cancellations and suspensions meant that rumba performance in Havana suffered a major hit during October 2006. Fortunately, several weeks later Trastevere had reinstated Clave y Guaguancó's *peña*, and Los Ibellis and Rumberos de Cuba were back performing at a newly remodeled Karabalí. It seems that the latter had closed for remodeling and not necessarily (or not solely) due to the whims of an *empresa* official.[52] Thus, although this particular instance did not in the end involve a

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[50] The themes for the 2007 Symposium were music and film, and Venezuelan music and its connections with Cuban music, the latter no doubt influenced by the warm relationship between the Cuban and Hugo Chávez-led Venezuelan governments. Nevertheless, there were presentations on various Cuban music genres, so the theme of the conference did not preclude the possibility of papers on Afro-Cuban folkloric genres.

[51] Rumba events in Havana almost invariably begin in the late afternoon (4 or 5pm) and end around 8pm. The only exceptions are the Sunday rumba at the Callejón de Hamel, which goes from 12-3pm and the Saturday rumba sponsored by the CFN, which goes from 3-6pm. This scheduling may have partly to do with the racialized prejudices against rumba and its participants: holding rumbas in the late afternoon/early evening allows the authorities to police rumba performances more effectively, and it is a way of avoiding noise complaints by local residents about percussion instruments being played late into the night.

[52] Whether the rumor about the *empresa* official not liking rumba was true or not, this instance of misinformation illustrates the power of *chisme* (gossip) in Cuban society. "Radio Bemba" (which literally translates to "Big Mouth Radio, as the rumor mill is popularly called) is a favorite pastime in Cuba, and rumors often substitute for accurate

falta de respeto towards rumba performers, the fact that musicians interpreted it in this way is telling: it suggests a widespread suspicion on their part toward the state cultural apparatus and its rhetoric about the importance of Afro-Cuban culture. This distrust, which entails a realization on musicians' parts of a contradiction between discourse and practice, may signal that the hegemonic power of the hybridity discourse is weakening, i.e., that musicians (and other Cubans) no longer believe (if they ever did) in the myth of racial democracy, and understand that blackness is not valorized to the same extent as whiteness within the national racial mix.

A few weeks after the temporary closure of the Karabalí, Daniel was informed that Los Ibellis' other, more popular *peña* at the Asosación Cultural Yoruba (Yoruba Cultural Association or ACY), would be suspended indefinitely because a government official told the manager they wanted to use the space for other types of events on Sunday afternoons. The decision to cancel a highly popular rumba and folkloric event – Los Ibellis always performed one set of folkloric music and dance, usually Yoruba-derived *orisha* dances, and two rumba sets – at the ACY, which is a state-sponsored religious institution representing African-derived *Santería* worship, seemed inexplicable. However, Daniel's account of the history of this *peña* shed some light onto this decision. He stated that Los Ibellis had begun performing at the ACY almost two years prior, in early 2005, and had originally been scheduled for Saturdays at 8 pm. At some point the *peña* was shifted to Sunday afternoons, a decision that he feels was designed to attract fewer (black) people and minimize the possibility of fights associated with heavy drinking (p.c., October 2006). Thus, Daniel viewed the most recent suspension of Los Ibellis' event as part of the larger process of marginalization of rumba and folkloric performance. A month later, Daniel informed me that despite the cancellation of his group's Sunday *peña* at the ACY, they were still calling him when they needed a folkloric group to perform for a group of foreigners. In other words, notwithstanding the disregard shown to Los Ibellis by the ACY, the group is still considered to be their "house band" for special performances. This suggests that the cancellation had nothing to do with the quality of the group's performance or a lack of popularity, but instead had everything to do with the ways that rumba groups are subjected to the whims of cultural officials and institutions.[53] While I often felt frustrated and disillusioned thinking about the unstable nature of professional *rumberos*' livelihoods, Daniel offered a more detached view concerning the matter that is not uncommon for Cuban folkloric musicians: he felt that whenever one door was shut on his group, another opportunity opened up.[54]

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information in everyday conversation, a trend that some Cubans defensively attribute to the lack of information provided to them by state-run media.

[53] Knauer states that in 2002 the Ministry of Culture announced plans to build a "Palacio de la Rumba" (Rumba Palace) in the Central Havana neighborhood of Cayo Hueso, considered to be a rumba stronghold, but that two years later nothing had been done to actualize this plan (Knauer: 558). I lived in Cayo Hueso during the majority of my 2006-07 research trip, and never heard about these plans, and thus assumed that this was another example of hollow rhetoric from the government valorizing rumba performance. However, in January 2010, I was informed by my sister-in-law, who lives in Cayo Hueso, that the Palacio de la Rumba had just opened, and learned from a fellow rumba scholar that Afrocuba de Matanzas will be performing a bi-monthly gig there. It appears that the plans had not been canceled completely, but merely subjected to long delays.

[54] This statement can be interpreted through an Afro-diasporic lens, as it exemplifies philosophies common to many African societies, such as the following Swahili proverb quoted in Samuel Floyd's *The Power of Black Music:* "When God shuts a door for us, he will open another door" (Floyd 1995: 58).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have elaborated on the many changes in Cuban society since the early 1990s, when the government was forced to reintroduce elements of capitalism into the socialist economic system in order to combat the crisis of the Special Period. While opening up the island to foreign tourism and investment has meant a greater exchange of ideas and material culture between the island and the rest of the world and a reduction in state political repression of Cuban citizens, it has also resulted in a notable decrease in standard of living for the large majority of Cubans. As was detailed in the chapter, the increasing social and economic stratification between Cubans since the 1990s that had been largely leveled in the previous three decades, is a racialized phenomenon that is informed by the legacies of colonial and postcolonial racism, historic class inequalities between whites and blacks, and the demographics of Cuban migration to the U.S. In short, the hybrid economy has in many ways erased the relative material equality gained by black Cubans during the Revolution. Correspondingly, while folkloric musicians and dancers – most of whom are Afro-Cuban – are absolutely central to Cuba's cultural tourism industry, they are not the primary beneficiaries of the influx of foreign dollars. Furthermore, they are not treated with the accordant respect and consideration that is assumed to accompany the high-minded nationalist rhetoric emphasizing the importance of Afro-Cuban folklore to the nation's identity. This chapter has focused on the macro-politics of rumba performance, elucidating the ways that social issues such as racial prejudice and economic inequality structure the livelihoods and experiences of *rumberos*. The following chapter turns to the micro-politics of rumba performance, detailing the various contexts and venues in which rumba is performed, the different audiences that attend these events, and the ways that the politics of place intersect with the cultural tourism industry.

CHAPTER THREE

The micro-practices of rumba performance in Havana and Matanzas

Following last chapter's discussion of the political economy of contemporary rumba performance, I narrow my focus in this chapter to examine the micro-practices of rumba performance in Havana and Matanzas. By "micro-practices," I refer to the on-the-ground details of rumba performance, such as the different contexts and venues in which rumba is performed in the two cities, and the audiences that attend the various events. Here I continue to stress the entanglements between the political economy and cultural performance, an analytical framework that will be evident in my discussion of how audience demographics are constrained not only by one's access to dollars, but also by the different statuses within the tourism industry held respectively by my two research sites, Havana and Matanzas. Another recurring theme carried over from the previous chapter is the racialization of rumba performance both in relation to the politics of place, i.e the neighborhoods in Havana and Matanzas that have been historically linked to this practice, and in terms of the composition of its audiences today. In discussing the different rumba audiences in the two cities, I touch on issues of nationality, class, generation, and gender, This chapter draws on data obtained mainly through my own fieldwork, supplemented by the research on rumba performance published by both Cuban and foreign scholars.

The various types and contexts of rumba performance in Havana

Rumba is performed in a variety of contexts in contemporary Cuba, with some performances involving professional musicians and dancers and others involving amateur performers and/or participants from the community. In her book *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba* (1995), Yvonne Daniel presents three distinct categories of rumba performance: "spontaneous rumba" (equivalent to *rumba tradicional*, traditional rumba), "prepared rumba" (equivalent to *rumba profesional,* professional rumba), and "prepared spontaneous rumba" (equivalent to *rumba extendida*, extended rumba, which starts off as a prepared performance and evolves into a spontaneous one) (Daniel 1995: 101-05). Daniel also makes a distinction between professional dance companies and traditional rumba groups, who also have professional status but, in contrast with the larger companies, usually have two or three dance pairs, are not trained in dance technique, and put less emphasis on theatrical elements of the performance such as costumes (ibid: 98-99). The groups with whom I conducted research in Havana (Yoruba Andabo, Clave y Guaguancó and Los Ibellis) and Matanzas (Afrocuba de Matanzas), would all be considered traditional rumba groups according to Daniel's criteria, and also because the majority of the members are "culture bearers" who grew up practicing these traditions.[1] While it is important to outline the distinctions between "spontaneous" and "prepared" types of rumba, Daniel's categories and terms seem somewhat rigid when examined in relation to contemporary

[1] Although she considers Afrocuba de Matanzas to be a traditional rumba group, the group also contains elements of a larger dance company, including nine or ten dancers and a propensity for choreographed, prepared dances. In recent years rumba generally makes up less than half of their repertoire performed at any given show.

performance practice. Her classification is likely a product of the era in which she conducted her fieldwork, the 1980s, and does not correspond as well to the current context. For example, many of the groups with whom I conducted research can be characterized as both "traditional rumba" and "professional rumba": although they are professionals and their shows are often prepared in terms of the sequence of songs, their performances also contain a high degree of spontaneity and improvisation.

In an attempt to highlight the prevalence of rumba performance in non-professional contexts, Dutch scholar Paul Van Nispen presents his own classification of rumba performance in Havana, which includes *rumba de barrio*, *rumba de concierto*, *rumba religiosa* and *rumba turística* (Van Nispen 2003: 35-38). *Rumba de barrio* (neighborhood rumba) is his equivalent of Daniel's "spontaneous rumba," and has the following characteristics: it constitutes the oldest and most traditional context for rumba, it is usually performed in socially marginalized Afro-Cuban neighborhoods –either on the street, in a private home, or in *solares*[2] – and there are no fixed roles in terms of who can play or sing, nor major distinctions between musicians and the audience. Van Nispen theorizes *rumba de concierto* (concert rumba) much in the same way as Daniel's "prepared rumba," as an organized event that can be performed on a theater stage or in a hotel, nightclub/cabaret, discoteca, or museum, where there is a clear distinction between the professional/semi-professional performers and the audience, most of whom are Cubans. *Rumba religiosa* (religious rumba), a less common variant, takes place within the context of religious ceremonies – usually those associated with Yoruba-derived *Santería* or *Espiritismo*[3] – which are usually held in a private home. At these events the majority of the public is Cuban and initiated into at least one Afro-Cuban religion, and the musicians are usually hired through the informal economy (they may or may not be professional musicians). Finally, Van Nispen's fourth category is *rumba turística* (tourist-oriented rumba), which he describes as similar to *rumba de concierto* in that the professional groups who play in the former category also tend to play in the latter, and the venues are often the same for both types of rumba – hotels, nightclubs, *distotecas*, museums, etc. The main distinctions between the two categories concern the audience, which in *rumba turística* is made up primarily of foreign tourists, and the entrance fee charged to see each type of performance. While *rumba de concierto* usually costs between $10-40 *moneda nacional* (national currency or MN, which is

[2] *Solares* are small urban housing complexes with a group of small houses/shacks arranged around a central, common patio area. See the Introduction, footnote 5 for more details.

[3] *Espiritismo* (Spiritism) is a religious movement stemming from traditional Christianity that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, and is practiced widely in Cuba and other parts of the Spanish Caribbean. It is based on the idea of communicating with the souls/spirits of the dead through a medium, similar to what we might call, in American popular culture, a séance. Although the origins of Spiritism are often attributed to a French academic, Allan Kardec (for example, see Van Nispen), ethnomusicologist Nolan Warden reveals that in fact, what Kardec called "Spiritism" was actually a codification of a practice called Spiritualism that developed in upstate New York in 1848 (Nolan 2006: 22). Warden asserts that Kardecian Spiritism arrived in Cuba via the United States in the 1850s, and cites Cuban scholars who claim that it is the most widely practiced religion in Cuba, although it has been studied very little as compared to the African-derived Cuban religions (ibid.: 25-26). There are several Cubanized types of *Espiritismo* practiced across the island, one of which is called *Espiritismo cruzado* ("crossed" or mixed *Espiritismo*) because of its heavy influence from the Bantu-derived religion *Regla de Palo*. The most common religious ceremony in *Espiritismo cruzado* is the *cajón de muertos* (ceremony for dead ancestors, in which the principal musical accompaniment is provided by *cajones*, or wooden boxes of various sizes used as percussion instruments), a practice that has grown in popularity since the late 20th century. *Santería* practitioners are often instructed to give a *cajón de muertos* to honor their particular *orisha*. In these ceremonies *rumba de cajón* (*cajón*-based rumba) is a central part of the musical accompaniment for religious-based texts. Van Nispen emphasizes that despite the existence of *rumba religiosa*, rumba is still a secular festivity that is borrowed for use in a sacred context in this case (Van Nispen: 38).

equivalent to $0.50-1.50 Cuban convertible dollars or CUC) for Cubans and $1-5 CUC for foreigners, *rumba turística* can cost up to $15 CUC (ibid.).

I appreciate Van Nispen's expansion of Daniel's categories and his consideration of rumba performed in religious and tourist-oriented contexts, which can be explained at least in part by the fact that their respective fieldworks were conducted in very different social and economic contexts. Daniel's was conducted in the later 1980s when there was little Western tourism on the island and when religious practice was still heavily marginalized by the socialist state's ideology of scientific atheism. In contrast, Van Nispen's fieldwork was conducted in 2002, in the context of a hybrid economy and in an environment of much greater official religious tolerance. However, in my experience, the distinction Van Nispen makes between *rumba de concierto* as primarily for Cuban audiences and *rumba turística* as primarily for tourists is in fact quite hazy, for I have witnessed much more audience crossover than is suggested by his classification. For instance, the event he uses as an example of *rumba turística* is the Saturday Rumba sponsored by the CFN (National Folkloric Group), which is currently patronized by many more Cubans than tourists. Although it is a frequent stop on the cultural tourism circuit in Havana, I would estimate that the ratio of Cubans to tourists on any given Saturday in the four years that I conducted my research, 2004 to 2007, was 70 to 30%. It is possible that in 2002, when Van Nispen conducted his research, the percentage of tourists at this event was higher than it is currently. However, the entrance fee at this event is also at odds with his criteria for *rumba turística*, as has historically been the cheapest for Cubans of any of the rumba events for which a fee is charged: $5 MN ($0.25 CUC). If the CFN truly viewed their event as exclusively *rumba turística*, they would charge a much higher entrance fee for Cubans.

More representative of *rumba turística* would be the folkloric shows organized specifically for tourist groups and set up through Cuban tour operators. I attended a number of these private events performed by groups with which I was conducting research. In Havana, Los Ibellis generally performed a few shows for tourist groups each month at the Casa de África (House of Africa, a small museum that displays African instruments and art) in Habana Vieja (Old Havana),[4] and Afrocuba de Matanzas performed several times for private tourist groups during my ten weeks of research in Matanzas. Also representative of this category would be rumba shows performed in hotels, which, due to the longstanding rules prohibiting or severely restricting Cubans' access to tourist hotels, necessarily delimit the audience to foreign tourists.[5]

Rumba venues in Havana

While Daniel and Van Nispen distinguish different types of rumba performance based upon their function and the professional status of the musicians, I believe it is also important to consider the different venues in which rumba is performed on a regular basis in Havana (i.e., not for isolated events like private parties, religious ceremonies, or shows performed for a particular group of tourists), and the agents who sponsor them. In Havana, there is a diversity of rumba venues that is not found in other Cuban cities, mostly because there are many more groups in the capital than anywhere else. I divide Havana rumba events/venues into three basic categories that

[4] The Casa de África was established in 1986 and houses some of the Afro-Cuban ritual objects collected by Fernando Ortiz during his ethnographic research from the 1920s-50s (Knauer 2005: 101).

[5] Given the changes since Raúl Castro assumed the presidency in early 2008, which included allowing Cubans to rent rooms in tourist hotels, this situation may have shifted since then.

I feel have constituted the large majority of professional and semi-professional performance over the past decade: community-initiated events, state-sponsored rumba events and "for-profit" gigs at cabarets and nightclubs.

Community rumba events

Community rumba events are generally free and open to the public, and none of the groups that perform are paid, regardless of their professional status. The principal event in this category is the *Domingo de Rumba* (Sunday Rumba) from 12-3pm at the Callejón de Hamel (Hamel Alley) in the Cayo Hueso neighborhood of Centro Habana.[6] The rumba at the Callejón has gained much international fame and scholarly attention since the event was founded in the early 1990s by local artist Salvador González, and it is mentioned in every tour guide as *the place* to go if you want to experience "authentic" Afro-Cuban music and culture.[7] The vivid, bright colors of the Afro-Cuban religious-themed murals painted on the walls of the buildings that enclose the alley are a tourist attraction in themselves that seem to create a perfectly appropriate backdrop for rumba performance.

[6] The now-defunct community event in Habana Vieja that was discussed by Knauer in her dissertation (see chapter two), would also fall into this category.

[7] Some of the published sources that mention or discuss the Callejón de Hamel, its now-famous founder Salvador González, and/or the rumba event itself include Foehr 2001, Farr 2003, Knauer 2005, Perna 2005, and Moore 2006. I have not been able to ascertain its exact date of foundation, but several sources assert that González painted the initial mural in 1990. Lisa Knauer states that local, non-professional rumba groups began "supporting" González's project by playing for free in the early 1990s (Knauer: 562).



Figure 3.1: Entrance to the Callejón de Hamel

As is the case for many foreigners, the first rumba performance I experienced in Cuba was the Callejón event, which I attended the day after I arrived on my first (non-research) trip to the island in July 2003. The midday heat at the Callejón is often unbearable during the majority of the year. While the small makeshift performance area (about eight square feet) is shaded by a tin roof and some foliage, under which a small proportion of spectators can fit and/or sit in chairs, there is little relief for the bulk of the audience (see Figure 3.2). In addition, because there is no entrance fee for the event, the Callejón is almost always intensely crowded with a diverse mix of locals and tourists, professional musicians and those who work *en la calle* (in the informal economy), plenty of *jineteros* (hustlers) attempting to establish relationships with foreigners, and often a few policemen who circulate through the alley during the course of the performance. Drinking is a customary part of every rumba event, but since the Callejón event is free, Cubans are able to spend more on alcohol than they normally would. Many pool funds with friends to buy a bottle of rum, which can be found for as little as $40 MN ($1.75 CUC), although the quality and purity of the rum is questionable. Others have more access to dollars and the luxury of buying several beers at $1 CUC each, or attending the event with foreign friends who buy beer or rum for them.



Figure 3.2: Callejón crowd facing the small performance area

Lisa Knauer discusses the Callejón as a "contact zone" between cultural tourists and Cuban musicians, noting that the latter often attend the Sunday rumba even if they're not performing that day in the hopes of drumming up work opportunities or making a few dollars selling CD's (Knauer 2005: 479) or, I would add, VCD's.[8] Musicians can often find employment not only with foreigners seeking private lessons, but also with other Cuban folkloric musicians who might have a gig for a private religious ceremony and not enough musicians to play.[9] Knauer states that many of the folkloric musicians with whom she worked express ambivalence towards the Callejón, feeling that it is too touristy, but recognizing that it is the only source of free entertainment on Sundays in the neighborhood (and in Havana generally). She states, "Hanging around the fringes of the rumba, talking, joking and drinking with one's colleagues, is part of 'representing' oneself as part of this community of folkloric performers. It is a way of defining oneself, and identifying oneself, with a particular version of blackness, and also black masculinity" (ibid: 516-7). As I became a regular at the Callejón I often joined these groups of

[8] "VCD" stands for "video compact discs," an inexpensive medium that approximates a DVD, but can also be read by many compact disc players as well as DVD players. In the last few years VCD's have become a very widespread medium in Cuba, related to the booming underground economy revolving around burning, renting and selling pirated CD's and DVD's. Many people cannot afford DVD players, which are extremely overpriced in state dollar stores and were until recently illegal to bring into the country from abroad. Combination Discman/VCD/MP3 players, on the other hand, are sold cheaply on the black market, and are thus much more accessible. Even those who do have DVD players in their homes generally rent or buy VCDs because they are cheaper than burned DVDs. During my fieldwork period, one could rent VCDs in Havana for about $5 MN ($0.25 USD) a night and buy them for $3 CUC ($3.60 USD).

[9] I know several folkloric musicians who at one time in their career had professional status and an *empresa* affiliation, but who chose to leave their professional group in order to concentrate on playing in religious ceremonies because they can earn much more than a professional musician's average monthly salary. Depending on the economic resources of the person hosting the ceremony, a musician can make from $4 to $10 CUC per ceremony versus an average salary of $15 to 30 CUC/month.

musicians and/or knowledgeable spectators to comment on, and often critique, that day's performance, and to discuss other happenings in the Havana rumba scene.

The musical line-up at the Sunday rumba usually includes a performance from the house rumba group(s) and an invited group, either from Havana, another province of the country, or occasionally, a foreign music group that does not necessarily play rumba.[10] Although the Callejón event appears to many outsiders to be informal and spontaneous, there is a significant degree of planning and control by González and his wife Martiza, who determine which groups will play and the order of performance (Knauer: 562-3). Havana super-group Yoruba Andabo was the original house rumba group invited by González to perform with legendary folkloric singer Merceditas Valdes when the Callejón event was founded, although the group later moved on to more profitable gigs (personal communication with Geovani del Pino, December 2006).[11] Since I began attending the Callejón event, the principal house band has been Iroso Obbá, a group that has gained quite a bit of international attention since forming around 1999.[12] By the time I arrived in Cuba in August 2006, an all-female group called Rumba Morena had been added to the line-up as a second house group, and as their popularity grew, they began to be offered gigs outside of the Callejón. Most often, Iroso Obbá played the opening set, Rumba Morena played the middle set, and the invited group played the last set, with Iroso Obbá returning for the third set on the Sundays when there was no invited group. Although groups are technically playing for free at the Callejón event, members of Iroso Obbá and Rumba Morena always circulate after their respective performances soliciting tips from tourists.

[10] On one Sunday in January 2007, a Mexican folkloric troupe was invited to perform at the Callejón, which provided quite a contrast in terms of the style of music and dance.

[11] The title of their first CD, *El Callejón de los Rumberos* (Rumberos' Alley), reflects their history with this venue. In my interview with Yoruba Andabo's director I was not able to ascertain the exact year that the group stopped playing at the Callejón. The group's career trajectory will be discussed in depth in chapter five.

[12] I originally planned to work with Iroso Obbá as one of the three Havana-based rumba groups I was researching. However, in the last few years the group has been beset with internal problems. When I arrived in late August 2006, many members had left for other groups to pursue a more viable career, although Iroso Obbá still maintained their gig at the Callejón, often with an ever-changing group of musicians sitting in each week.



Figure 3.3: Rumba Morena playing at the Callejón de Hamel

State-sponsored rumba events

The two events that fall into my second category, state-sponsored rumba events, are the Wednesday rumba at the UNEAC (Union of Cuban Writers and Artists) from 5-8pm and the Saturday rumba from 3-6pm at the CFN's rehearsal and performance site, called El Gran Palenque. These events were organized under the auspices of prestigious cultural institutions, although, as is illustrated from the anecdotes presented in chapter two, they have not always enjoyed unilateral support from officials within these institutions and/or local residents. The CFN was founded in 1962 by musicologists Argeliers León and Maria Teresa Linares, who recruited traditional musicians to provide empirical knowledge (Knauer: 83-4). It quickly became one of the most important cultural institutions in Cuba and the island's official performing representative of Afro-Cuban sacred and secular dance and music traditions. Thus, its events can still be considered to be state-sponsored. For rumba/folkloric groups that are deemed to be *grupos subvencionados* (subsidized groups) by their *empresa*, and whose members earn a fixed salary each month in exchange for performing a certain number of events, these performances are considered to be part of their monthly quota. In the case of non-subsidized professional groups such as Los Ibellis – whose members do not have a regular monthly salary but get paid per gig – there is no payment received for these events; instead, the publicity and promotion generated by performing at these esteemed cultural institutions is viewed as a type of compensation (p.c. with Luis Lucas Rodríguez, July 2008).

Both the UNEAC and CFN rumba events charge admission in accordance with the dual currency system, where Cubans are charged in *moneda nacional* and foreigners are charged in *divisa*. However, while the CFN charges a very nominal fee for Cubans ($5 MN or $0.25 CUC), the UNEAC entrance fee is quite prohibitive ($40 MN or $1.67 CUC); both charge foreigners $5 CUC. As noted earlier, the CFN rumba attracts many locals owing to its low entrance fee and the fact that it takes place on Saturday afternoon. Despite the relatively high cost of admission at

the UNEAC event, I would estimate the Cuban-foreigner ratio to be roughly the same for both the UNEAC and CFN rumba events, 70 to 30%. The UNEAC is a very popular *peña* among Cubans due to the high quality of rumba groups who perform there and the fact that it takes place on alternating Wednesdays (meaning Cubans can "save up" to attend every other week).

The venues that sponsor these events are quite different from the Callejón physically – both have rather ample outside performance spaces with much more seating capacity than at the Callejón, and allow for more separation between performer and audience. Nevertheless, it is quite easy and common for a spectator to enter the "stage area" of both events. The CFN's stage consists of a large patio, around which seats are set up for viewing the performance, and many times the host of the *peña* (event) explicitly requests audience participation for dancing.[13]



Figure 3.4: Afrocuba de Matanzas performing a dance for the *orisha* Oyá at the CFN

Meanwhile, the UNEAC "stage" is the landing outside the main entrance to the building, which is at the top of the steps leading to a patio used by the dancers. Tables and chairs are clustered around the patio for audience seating. In both spaces the folkloric and rumba dancing is performed at the same level as the spectators, which encourages audience participation (at least for the un-choreographed rumba dancing).

[13] I have observed a sort of spatial apartheid between tourists and Cubans at the CFN event. There is a woman whose unofficial job is to reserve one side of the patio exclusively for foreigners (and to go get drinks for them at the bar), and I have had the experience of being allowed to sit there while the Cuban with whom I was attending was denied access. The opposite side of the patio is almost always exclusively populated by Cubans, either seated or standing (as can be seen in Figure 3.4). The seating on the side "in the middle" directly facing the performers is often reserved for special guests of the choreographer or artistic directors of the CFN, either Cuban or foreign, and standing behind them is usually a mix of locals and foreigners.



Figure 3.5: Los Ibellis performing on the landing of the UNEAC

Notwithstanding the physical differences between the Callejón and the state-sponsored *peñas*, the three have a similar feel in the sense that the UNEAC and CFN events also serve as "contact zones" between tourists/foreigners and Cubans.[14] In my experience, the "folkloric hustling" is more pronounced at the CFN because of the low entrance fee and the fact that the crowd usually far exceeds the number of chairs set up, resulting in more people circulating. At the UNEAC, on the other hand, the majority of the seating is around the tables set up on either side of the patio (see Figure 3.6 below), and *jineteros* are less likely to approach foreigners seated at tables. The price of the UNEAC event is a crucial factor in determining the types of Cubans who can attend: those who can afford $40 MN are likely to have foreign friends and/or romantic partner(s), or have a job or *negocio* (business) that gives them access to dollars, and do not need to hustle tourists.

Yvonne Daniel (1995) and Katherine Hagedorn (2001) have provided in-depth narratives concerning the CFN's history, repertoire and the Saturday rumba event in their monographs, although they highlight different parts of the group's repertoire: Daniel focuses on the CFN's rumba performance and Hagedorn on its representations of *Santería* music and dance.[15] Therefore, it is more productive to highlight the UNEAC rumba event here, particularly because its history is intertwined with the career trajectories of two of the Havana-based rumba groups

[14] Knauer posits that the Callejón is an example of Mary Louise Pratt's notion of "contact zones," which entail "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today" (Pratt 1992: 4). Knauer employs the notion in a different fashion as Pratt, highlighting not the exploitation suffered by Cubans at the hands of foreign tourists, but instead the mutually beneficial relationships that are often created within these "contact zones."

[15] Robin Moore also provides a fairly detailed discussion of the CFN in his book *Music and Revolution* (2006), which gives a more recent, and, like Hagedorn's book, critical, perspective on this cultural institution that corresponds closely to my own observations.

with which I conducted my research. The *Peña del Ambia* (Ambia's gathering/event), sponsored by the UNEAC, is the brainchild of the country's most famous contemporary black poet, Eloy Machado, known as "El Ambia" (see Figure 3.6). The valorization of Afro-Cuban culture is a recurring theme in El Ambia's poetry, as exemplified in his well-known treatise on the virtues of practicing various Afro-Cuban religions called "Soy Todo" (I Am Everything), which was famously converted into a *timba* classic by Los Van Van in the mid-1990s. According to his wife and representative Graciela, El Ambia initiated his Wednesday *peña* in 1985 (p.c., October 2006), and it has come to represent one of the most prestigious regular rumba events in Havana, housed as it is in the stately, colonial-style site of the UNEAC.



Figure 3.6: El Ambia and *rumbera* dancing at the UNEAC while Yoruba Andabo performs

Knauer asserts that El Ambia began the *peña* with the explicit intention of legitimizing rumba performance and black cultural expression by bringing it into a prominent cultural institution (Knauer: 102). As with the Callejón event, the first rumba group invited to serve as the house band at the UNEAC was Yoruba Andabo, and the event was the main catalyst for their transformation from an *aficionado* (amateur) group to professional status. Graciela recounts that at one point in the 1990s, Yoruba Andabo and their principal rival rumba group Clave y Guaguancó shared duties as the house band at the UNEAC event, performing on alternating Wednesdays, and also alternating with other rumba groups from Havana and other Cuban provinces.[16]

[16] Yoruba Andabo director Geovani del Pino asserted that they stopped performing regularly at the UNEAC in 1987, and he did not mention a time in the 1990s when they shared performing duties with Clave y Guaguancó (p.c., December 2006). Amado Dedeu, director of Clave y Guaguancó, estimates that his group became the principal house band around 1991 (p.c., October 2006).

In the past few years the *Peña del Ambia* has moved in the direction of presenting *espectáculos* (folkloric shows),[17] where the first half of the event is dedicated to *música folklórica* (folkloric music), understood as Afro-Cuban religious traditions, and the second half consists of rumba performance. Around mid-2006 Clave y Guaguancó began performing the folkloric section of the *peña* as well as the rumba part, which signaled a turn for the group towards *espectáculo*-based, rather than only rumba-based performance.[18] The group abruptly ceased to be the house band of the *Peña del Ambia* in January 2007 for reasons I was not able to discover, and since then the event has not had a regular rumba group in residence (to my knowledge). Instead, El Ambia invites different local and extra-local rumba/folkloric groups to perform for each Wednesday rumba *peña*.[19]

"For-profit" rumba events

The third category of rumba venues in Havana that I have identified consists of what I call "for-profit" gigs that take place in small cabarets/nightclubs. This type of venue appears to have arisen as a result of the expansion of the tourist sector and the dollarization of the economy, and allows rumba groups – at least those who are *subvencionado* (subsidized) – to earn extra money over and above their monthly salary. Unlike community events, which are unpaid, and state-sponsored events, that are either part of musicians' and dancers' salaried quota of performances or unpaid in the case of non-subsidized groups, these cabaret gigs provide *rumberos* with an immediate source of income after each show. There are generally two ways in which performers are paid for these performances: either the group is allowed to take home the money collected at the door, or a fixed amount is agreed upon beforehand with the cabaret manager (p.c. with Daniel Rodríguez, September 2006 and Lucas Rodríguez, July 2008). In both cases the total sum, minus the percentage owed to the *empresa*, is divided equally among the members. While this may seem like a lucrative opportunity for *rumberos* to engage with the new market-oriented economy, the amount of money each performer takes home after these events can vary widely from group to group and performance to performance. For example, I have been at a cabaret performance by one rumba group where the audience never reached more than ten or fifteen people. With an average of eight Cubans to every two foreigners, the total door income would be around $13 CUC ($25 MN or $1 CUC for Cubans and $2-3 CUC for foreigners). This would then be split among the eleven or twelve group members (including dancers, singers and percussionists), averaging just over $1 CUC per person, and without factoring in the percentage reserved for the *empresa*. On the other hand, on an average Saturday afternoon, Yoruba Andabo packs the Cabaret Las Vegas and easily takes in at least $100 CUC.

Between August 2006 and May 2007, I became familiar with and attended regular rumba events at several cabarets in Havana, including three in the Vedado – the Cabaret Las Vegas, the Delirio Habanero, housed in the Teatro Nacional (National Theater), and the Karabalí – and two in Centro Habana – the Cabaret Nacional and the Trastevere (actually a pizza restaurant

[17] In the Cuban context, *espectáculos* refer specifically to performances that include a diverse presentation of Afro-Cuban sacred (*Yoruba, Congo, Abakúa, Arará*) and secular (rumba, *comparsa* [Cuban carnival]) music and dance practices. I discuss this phenomenon further in chapter five.

[18] Clave y Guaguancó's repertoire and career trajectory will be discussed further in chapter five.

[19] Los Ibellis is one of the rumba groups that seem to have capitalized on Clave y Guaguancó's departure. They were invited several times to perform at the *Peña del Ambia* in Spring 2007 and I saw them again at the UNEAC during a brief research trip in May 2008.

that began to host rumba and other musical events in late 2006).[20] In addition, when I returned to Cuba in May 2008, Los Ibellis had begun performing in another cabaret in Centro Habana called the Palermo and Yoruba Andabo had a new *peña* at the La Maison restaurant in the upscale Miramar neighborhood. Judging from the dilapidated exterior of these venues, most of them appear to be relics of the 1950s, the golden age of Havana nightlife, when American tourists boarded weekend ferries to the island to party and gamble. These cabaret venues are all compact and generally have a small raised stage for the percussionists and singers with designated floor space for the dancers, which is surrounded by tables and chairs for the audience.



Figure 3.7: Clave y Guaguancó performing at the Trastevere

As suggested above, the audience is largely Cuban, a function of the fact that these venues are relatively new spaces for rumba performance and may not be mentioned as such in tour guides. These venues are not obvious stops on the cultural tourism circuit, and foreigners generally need to have formed some sort of a relationship with a local musician to find out about them.

Cubans who regularly attend these events must have some level of disposable income, not only to pay the entrance fee (which ranges from $25-50 MN or $1-2 CUC), but more importantly to be able to consume alcohol and soft drinks, sold only in *divisa* (beers are usually $1-1.50 CUC, sodas are $0.50-1.00 and the cheapest bottle of rum is just under $4). The cabaret events invariably begin around 4-5pm and end around 8-9pm. The start and end times are not as strict as at the Callejón, UNEAC, or Palenque since they are usually determined by the size of the audience: rumba groups try to wait until the cabaret is as full as possible before beginning.

[20] As far as I know, Trastevere hosted a Clave y Guaguancó rumba *peña* for just a few months, from October 2006 to January 2007. However, information posted on Plazacuba.com, a website dedicated to Afro-Cuban music and dance, states that the venue is currently hosting a weekly event featuring another top Havana rumba group, Los Rumberos de Cuba (http://www.plazacuba.com/havana_music.html, accessed July 2008).

Most of the cabarets mentioned above establish contracts with a particular rumba group to perform a weekly gig, the exception being the Delirio Habanero, which, at least as recently as 2008, has boasted a weekly rotation of the current top three "names" in Havana rumba: Yoruba Andabo, Clave y Guaguancó, and Rumberos de Cuba. At these gigs, rumba groups usually perform three sets, each lasting 30-45 minutes. Given that the groups have three sets to fill, they usually perform one set of Afro-Cuban folkloric music – almost always several *Santería*-derived *orisha* dances, but sometimes also a choreographed dance representing Bantu/*Congo* traditions, an *Abakuá*, or an *Arará* piece – which is sandwiched between two rumba sets.[21] Between sets a DJ spins popular recorded music, almost always a mix of *timba* and reggaetón songs, which sparks eager dancing by the audience.

Yoruba Andabo's Saturday *peña* at Cabaret Las Vegas is exemplary of these "for-profit" gigs because of its longevity and popularity among local audiences. The group began performing there in 1998 (p.c. with Geovani del Pino, December 2006), and every time I have attended the *peña*, they have had a packed, standing-room-only audience that is composed largely of young *Habaneros*. The day and time of the event – Saturdays, late afternoon/early evening – contributes to the party-like atmosphere as everyone is eager to spend their disposable income drinking, dancing and singing along to their favorite rumba group.



Figure 3.8: Yoruba Andabo performing at the Cabaret Las Vegas

[21] While the three rumba groups with whom I conducted research perform folkloric music as well as rumba, Rumberos de Cuba perform rumba exclusively. Nevertheless, I saw a publicity packet for the group in May 2008 that suggested they might be expanding their repertoire to the domain of sacred music.

Rumba audiences in Havana

While I have touched on the issue of audience demographics at the respective Havana rumba venues, noting the approximate percentage of Cubans to foreigners, it is important to emphasize the ways they are entangled with the politics of place. In other words, *who* comes to these events is influenced by *where* they are held, i.e., the neighborhoods and their corresponding racial and class demographics, as well as the economic resources of a given audience member. Lisa Knauer briefly discusses the racialized geography of Havana neighborhoods, noting that the Revolution has had only partial success in eliminating residential segregation. She asserts that while formerly white neighborhoods like Vedado and Miramar have become racially mixed, there has not been a " 'whitening' of black, lower-class neighborhoods like Jesús María [in the municipality of Habana Vieja]" (Knauer: 30). Historic rumba neighborhoods within Havana are located in the previously mentioned (municipalities) of Habana Vieja and Centro Habana, as well as Guanabacoa, San Miguel del Padrón, Cerro, and Marianao.[22] Nonetheless, there are no regular, organized rumba events in the majority of these neighborhoods – whose rumbas tend to be constituted by spontaneous street rumbas or rumbas played at private parties – and all of the venues mentioned above take place in the centralized Vedado neighborhood or within Centro Habana.

The local audience at the free Callejón event is very representative of the Centro Habana neighborhood in which it is located, Cayo Hueso, which has a high proportion of poor Afro-Cuban residents. However, the local audience is not exclusively from Cayo Hueso – many local musicians and some spectators also "commute" into Centro Habana from other municipalities on Sundays to attend the rumba. The rumba events that take place in cabarets in Centro Habana attract audiences hailing from different parts of Havana and people often travel into the center of the city to attend them. The rumba events in the more middle-class Vedado neighborhood, whether state-sponsored or cabaret gigs, also tend to have diverse local audiences since it is a central neighborhood that is relatively easy to reach from Centro Habana or Habana Vieja. In short, local audiences and musicians come from different municipalities in order to attend the rumba events that take place in centralized locations in Havana. Nonetheless, finding transportation to the center of the city is never easy, particularly on Sundays, and the people traveling to Centro Habana or the Vedado from more distant municipalities must have enough money to get there by collective or private taxi. Thus, what tends to distinguish the audiences at these difference events, more than their race (most are black or *mulato*), is not only their neighborhood of origin, but also their, economic resources and access to dollars. The Callejón rumba inevitably attracts a poorer audience because, being free, it is the only event that this audience can regularly attend, whereas rumba aficionados who have access to dollars often choose to attend other events which offer the comforts of being inside – with air conditioning and away from the humid heat and big crowds – or at least sitting down. In contrast to the Callejón, the Delirio Habanero rumba event is located above the Plaza de la Revolución, in a part of the Vedado that is less accessible by public transportation, and most of the people who regularly

[22] Ciudad de la Habana (Havana City, which is a province in and of itself) is divided up into 15 different *municipios* (municipalities, equivalent administratively to cities or towns in the United States). Havana City and its different *municipios* can be equated roughly to the administrative separation of New York City, which is divided up into five boroughs. In each *municipio* of Havana there are different barrios, much like Harlem or the West Village in Manhattan. The *municipio* of Centro Habana, for example, is divided up into the barrios of Colón, San Leopoldo, and Cayo Hueso.

attend the Callejón event cannot afford to get there, much less pay the entrance fee of $50 MN ($2 CUC).

In addition to the factors of class and neighborhood of origin, it is also important to discuss the issues of generation and gender within the spaces in which rumba is performed. In general, contemporary rumba audiences can be characterized by a wide age range: the youngest spectators tend to be in their late teens – although there are always many children on hand at free events such as the Callejón rumba – and there are usually several rumba elders in their 60s and 70s. In fact, rumba events have an inter-generational quality: the children and/or parents of an adult performer often attend the performance, and audience members often go to these events with family members. The majority of rumba audiences at any given event appear to be between 25 and 50 years old. However, there are also distinctions to be made in terms of particular venues and rumba groups. While the Callejón and CFN events tend to attract many young spectators, the UNEAC event attracts some older, non-rumba audiences as well as rumba aficionados. Members of the UNEAC – including writers and television producers – are given priority in terms of admission to the event and having tables reserved for them, and so many of them in their 40s and 50s attend the event despite not considering themselves to be rumba lovers. In other words, many members attend because it is an event at the UNEAC and provides a forum for socializing and drinking with friends. While the cabaret venues are usually attended by people ranging from 25-50 years old, Yoruba Andabo's longstanding *peña* at Cabaret Las Vegas tends to attract a younger audience – the majority are in their early 20s to early 30s. I believe this age range has much to do with the style of rumba they have adopted in the last few years, particularly their incorporation of reggaetón choruses into their songs.

In terms of the gender dynamics at rumba events in Havana, I have found that, unlike the composition of rumba groups – in which male performers predominate – contemporary audiences are characterized by a fairly equal ratio of men to women.[23] Notwithstanding the gendered associations of the practice, female rumba aficionados are often the most animated spectators at any given event, particularly in the arena of dancing. Furthermore, unlike some other Afro-Caribbean musical practices such as Jamaican dancehall, in which there is often a spatial separation between men and women within a venue and on the dance floor (p.c. with Jocelyne Guilbault, July 2008), at rumba events there are no gendered spatial boundaries. Male musicians and spectators often attend rumba events together, and thus stand or sit in a group with no women. Conversely a few girlfriends may go to an event together without male friends or partners. However, it is just as normal to see male-female couples attend rumba events together, or for groups of men and women to merge and start socializing once the event has begun. In short, there do not appear to be any tacit gender boundaries or rules that dictate who (male or female) comes to rumba events, or that make it easy to generalize about spatial politics in relation to gender within a venue. These relaxed gender politics are somewhat generalizable to Cuban society as a whole. While gender inequality still persists within the private domain – i.e., women are still responsible for the large majority of cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing – the Cuban public sphere is characterized by relative gender equality, and in my experience, Cuban women

[23] Women in rumba (and folkloric groups) almost invariably occupy the role of singers or dancers, and it is extremely rare to see a woman playing percussion, except in the case of all-female groups like Rumba Morena. Even among the singers, women usually account for only one or two out of five or six singers in an average rumba group. Los Ibellis is an anomaly in this arena, as the majority of the singers in the chorus are female. There were moments during my research with the group when there were no male back-up singers, and when Daniel, who sang lead on most songs, was the only male singer.

are generally quite strong, opinionated, and outspoken.[24] Thus, women do not play the role of "shrinking violets" at rumba events – they often dance in an explicitly sexual manner and are not afraid to go up to a man and initiate the danced game of sexual possession that is represented in the rumba *guaguancó*.[25]

The various types and contexts of rumba performance in Matanzas

A portrait of Matanzas' economic situation within the context of post-Soviet-era tourism

While there has been a fair amount of research on the Havana rumba scene since the Special Period, there has not been any in-depth research on the contemporary rumba scene in Matanzas.[26] My discussion of current rumba and folkloric music venues in Matanzas is not necessarily comprehensive and may leave out certain venues, given that my research was delimited by my methodological choice to focus on one group, Afrocuba de Matanzas (from now on referred to as "Afrocuba"). However, Matanzas is a small city, and presents a major contrast in many ways to the sprawling and seemingly endless geography of Havana; in the former there are only a few regular venues for rumba and folkloric music performance. In addition to its geographical compactness, cultural performance within the city of Matanzas is affected by its impoverished status vis-à-vis the tourism industry. For most foreigners Matanzas city is merely a stop on the bus line from Havana to Varadero, the island's most famous beach resort, located 22 miles northeast of Matanzas. The city is currently characterized by a rather depressing restaurant and nightlife scene and a striking lack of tourist-oriented amenities; for example, during the ten weeks I spent conducting research there in early 2007, both of the city's hotels were closed for repairs. While Matanzas' folkloric scene is internationally renowned and foreigners come somewhat regularly for religious purposes or to take lessons with members of Afrocuba or Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, local musicians often experience periods of tourist draught and, consequently, economic hardship. Despite the negative economic effects correlated with the lack of a tourist infrastructure in Matanzas, and the fact that some Cubans consider Matanzas to be a "boring place," conducting research there generally presented fewer problems for me in terms of

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[24] I do not wish to paint an overly optimistic portrait of gender relations in contemporary Cuba – sexist comments are still very pervasive, and there is widespread homophobia that is often expressed through vocal condemnations of women and men who do not conform to normalized gender roles and/or appearances. At the same time, the liberal attitude toward sexuality in general on the island, and the harsh penalization of sexual violence, means that most women feel free to dress in very revealing clothing and display their sexuality in public. However, while women are often free to dance with a man who is not their partner in their partner's presence, flirting openly or dancing provocatively with the male non-partner would be considered a *falta de respeto* (display of disrespect).

[25] The *guaguancó* – long the most popular genre within the rumba complex – is famous for its characteristic couple dance, which is sometimes discussed as symbolizing a rooster's sexual pursuit of a hen. The male dancer repeatedly attempts a *vacunao* (from the verb *vacunar*, meaning "to vaccinate"), a pelvic thrust directed towards the female's groin area that symbolizes sexual possession. As is displayed in Figure 3.10 below, the *vacunao* can also be performed by thrusting a leg or another appendage towards the female's groin. In recent years female *guaguancó* dancing in Havana has become more assertive, even aggressive, as women sometimes "taunt" or challenge the men into attempting a *vacunao* instead of dancing in a merely protective stance. For more on the gender politics of *guaguancó* dance see Daniel 1995.

[26] Cuban scholar Nancy Grasso González conducted research on the two principal professional rumba groups in Matanzas – Afrocuba de Matanzas and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas – for her B.A. thesis (1989), but her fieldwork was conducted in the 1980s.

transportation, the relatively small amount of petty crime, and the less hectic nature of the city as compared to the capital. [27]

Some of my friends in Matanzas have suggested that the city's lack of restaurants and entertainment venues is related to its proximity to Varadero, the island's most successful, and for many years its most exclusive, tourist resort. They feel that the state (or the provincial government) has made a decision not to invest in promoting tourism in Matanzas, preferring to focus their energy and resources on Varadero. In any case, this situation forces *Matanceros* (Matanzas natives) to travel to Varadero (either the whole way or part of the way, since there are a few nightclubs on the road from Matanzas to Varadero) if they want to go out dancing or to eat at a restaurant that serves more than pizza, fried chicken, or hamburgers. In my experience, *Matanceros* enjoy a better standard of living than many Havana residents due to the lack of overcrowding, pollution, and crime. In addition, some Matanzas natives have been able to secure employment in the Varadero tourist sector. Nevertheless, a better standard of living does not necessarily translate to more material or economic wealth; it is also related to the broader social relations within a given place. Thus, while life is calmer and less chaotic in Matanzas than in the capital (a factor that I believe augments the standard of living), the majority of *Matanceros* do not have the disposable income to travel to Varadero, eat at one of its expensive restaurants, or party at one of its nightclubs. Even the musicians and dancers of Afrocuba, who during my research period performed a regular bimonthly gig in one of the Varadero hotels for which they were paid in dollars, rarely had more than a few dollars in their pockets at any given time and that money would usually be spent quickly on food for their households.

Rumba venues in Matanzas

Before discussing the venues in which rumba is performed, I want to introduce, as I did with Havana, the historic rumba barrios of Matanzas city. Simpson and Pueblo Nuevo are historic Afro-Cuban neighborhoods that have been linked to rumba performance since the late nineteenth century. The majority of the *cabildos de nación* in Matanzas were located in these barrios – 24 in Simpson and 12 in Pueblo Nuevo – and rumba parties were almost daily events (Grasso González 1989: 5).[28] Cuban musicologist Nancy Grasso González asserts that the middle classes were historically concentrated in the central part of the city, which locals refer to as "Matanzas," and in the Versailles and La Marina neighborhoods. Nevertheless, during my fieldwork in Matanzas, I came to know La Marina as a barrio with a longstanding, deep history of Afro-Cuban religious practice and rumba performance, an observation that concurs with ethnomusicologist María Teresa Vélez's book *Drumming for the Gods* (2000). Many famous *rumbero* families – including members of Afrocuba and Los Muñequitos – are from La Marina. While consulting Grasso González's B.A. thesis, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the same street on which I lived while conducting research in Matanzas – Calle San Francisco in Pueblo Nuevo – was a common site of rumba parties (Grasso González: 9). In fact, Afrocuba was formed in 1957 principally by musicians and dancers from the Pueblo Nuevo neighborhood, an association that was made explicit by the original name of the group, Guaguancó Neopoblano (Pueblo

[27] The culture of hustling, for example, is much less pervasive in Matanzas than in Havana.

[28] *Cabildos de nacíon* were colonial-era mutual aid societies for African slaves and their descendants, which were formed principally along African ethnic (national) lines. See Introduction for more details. There are still a few extant *cabildos* in the Simpson neighborhood (Grasso González: 5).

Nuevo-style Guaguancó). The founding members' main mission was to return the practice of rumba to the Pueblo Nuevo barrio, where it had declined; at that time rumba was played spontaneously and regularly only in Simpson and La Marina (ibid.: 25).

Since I began traveling to Matanzas to conduct research I have never been aware of a regular *peña* dedicated exclusively to rumba performance in the city. At the time she wrote her thesis (1989), Grasso González asserted that Afrocuba and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas participated in a rumba event called *Las tardes de la Rumba* (Rumba afternoons) that took place on alternating Saturdays in Matanzas, but as her research was conducted in the later 1980s it is hard to ascertain in which year the event was suspended. I have always been struck by the different nature and function of Afrocuba performances as compared with the rumba groups in Havana. Afrocuba performances are usually *espectáculo*-based, i.e., a prepared show in which an array of Afro-Cuban sacred and secular folkloric music and dance traditions are presented. The group rarely performs more than two or three rumba songs in any given show (unless the event organizers have specifically requested an all-rumba performance), and they are always performed after the folkloric dances. These repertoire decisions, which I discuss in detail in chapter five, have much to do with Afrocuba's principal artistic mission since they transitioned from being a rumba group to a full-fledged folkloric group in 1980: to represent and demonstrate in the most comprehensive manner possible the diversity of folkloric music and dance from the province of Matanzas. Thus, many of their performances have a didactic as well as entertainment function, and Afrocuba's director, Francisco "Minini" Zamora Chirino, often says a few words before each choreographed dance about the particular folkloric tradition being represented. Grasso González's characterization of the nature of Afrocuba's performances is strikingly similar to my own ethnographic experience, suggesting that the group has followed this formula for over twenty years. Corresponding with Afrocuba's artistic mission, she states that during the 1980s the group performed often in schools, workplaces, and *casas de cultura* (state-sponsored community cultural centers), mostly within the Matanzas province, and that less common were "dance" and "recreational" events (ibid.).

During my period of research with the group, Afrocuba performed often for state-sponsored events and within institutional venues, such as those listed by Grasso González. However, the group's performance venues had also expanded in line with the new economic order on the island: they were now involved in performances for tourist-only audiences such as the Varadero hotel gig mentioned above and private performances for particular groups of tourists. The group also performed within small provincial towns for local festivals/events several times a month, and was called on for state-sponsored events in Matanzas such as the *Feria del Libro* (the annual book fair that travels from province to province offering books at low prices). I witnessed one political-oriented performance in which Afrocuba, along with a variety of musicians performing other genres, participated in a celebration for a Communist Party school in Matanzas that is dedicated to teaching Revolutionary ideals.[29] There was one recurring event that could be viewed as Afrocuba's regular *peña*: the *Tarde de Cabildo* (*Cabildo* Afternoon), performed on the second Friday of each month under the colonial arches of the Palacio del Junco, Matanzas' provincial museum.

[29] While many of Afrocuba's members were not at all interested in mixing politics with art, from the statements I heard the director make at various moments, I gleaned that he was very supportive of the government and probably a member of the PCC (Cuban Communist Party).



Figure 3.9: Palacio del Junco

This event is exemplary of the Afrocuba's pedagogical mission, as Minini often gives an explanation before each song about what African-derived tradition the dance is representing as well as a few details about the type of percussion instruments being played. I have rarely seen any other foreigners at this event due to the overall scarcity of tourism in Matanzas. The audience consists of local aficionados of folklore, and usually a sizeable group of casual onlookers also gathers around as the group begins to play.



Figure 3.10: Afrocuba dancers performing *guaguancó* (with male dancer executing a *vacunao*) under the arches at the Palacio del Junco

Rumba audiences in Matanzas

In contrast to the situation in Havana, the venues in which Afrocuba performs often predetermine or at least delimit the nationality of the audience members. In other words, when the group performs in small towns in the Matanzas province, or for local festivals or political/civic events, the spectators are almost invariably Cuban. Conversely, when Afrocuba performs in Varadero or at a private show for a specific group of tourists, the audience is necessarily composed of foreigners exclusively. Thus, there is less mixing of Cubans and foreigners at Afrocuba shows, and at rumba and folkloric events in Matanzas, in general, than in Havana. The few foreigners who do attend these events are usually in Matanzas for the purposes of academic research, individual cultural tourism – such as taking music or dance lessons with a local folkloric musician – or for religious reasons – such as being initiated into *Santería* or visiting their *padrinos* or *madrinas* (religious godfathers or godmothers).[30]

Local audiences who attend rumba events in Matanzas tend to be black or of mixed race and most are initiates of at least one Afro-Cuban religion. While the city still has a substantial white population, I have not observed as large a degree of interracial socializing in Matanzas as is characteristic in Havana. However, one context in which interracial mixing is fairly common is within religious worship: there are "houses" of *Santería* into which both white and black practitioners have been initiated, and this automatically ties them to each other as *hermanos en la religión* (siblings in religion). Because there are no "for-profit" gigs in cabarets as in Havana, and all events are free, it is hard to generalize about the class status (measured by one's access to

[30] As will be discussed in chapter four, Matanzas is considered by many to be the center of Afro-Cuban sacred practice, where various religions are practiced in their most authentic manifestations. For this reason, many foreigners wishing to be initiated into *Santería* choose a house and godmother/father in Matanzas rather than Havana; they feel that the initiation will be conducted in a more "correct" fashion.

dollars through the various avenues discussed in chapter two) of rumba audiences in Matanzas. Some audience members have more access to dollars through jobs in the Varadero tourist sector, remittances sent by relatives living abroad or foreign *aijados* (religious godchildren), or private enterprise. As rumba and folkloric events generally happen during the day and in public spaces, the age range of spectators is quite wide, very often including young children who attend either with their parents in the audience or as children of performers. Due to rumba's long history in and association with Matanzas, many elderly Afro-Cubans attend these events – they remember the times when rumba was played spontaneously in the streets in the barrios of Simpson, Pueblo Nuevo, and La Marina and when there were no professional *rumberos*.[31] Finally, in terms of gender dynamics, female spectators tend to be more numerous than male ones if I take my evidence from the monthly *Tarde de Cabildo* event performed by Afrocuba, probably because it is a mid-afternoon event during the week and women are more likely to be working part-time jobs that allow them to pick up their children after classes are over in the afternoon.

Conclusion: The politics of place vis-à-vis the tourism industry

As has been illustrated by my discussion of the different and somewhat contrasting contexts, venues and audiences in Havana and Matanzas, the micro-practices of rumba performance are very much informed by the politics of place vis-à-vis the tourism industry in contemporary Cuba. These two cities have very different statuses within the tourist sector on the island: Havana is the capital, an enormous city by Cuban standards – its residents number roughly two million – and the primary destination for a majority of foreigners who travel to the island, whether they be tourists, researchers, artists, or journalists. Matanzas, on the other hand, is a small city of about 100,000 residents with no tourist infrastructure to speak of.

Although Matanzas folkloric musicians do not enjoy the same possibilities for material gain as their Havana counterparts, many of them measure their standard of life by more than their access to dollars. I do not wish to assert that Matanzas musicians have no avenues for earning money within the informal economy: foreign students of folkloric music and dance – usually those who are already somewhat familiar with the different Afro-Cuban secular and sacred repertoires – do seek out teachers in Matanzas in order to *profundizar* (deepen) their knowledge, and, just as in Havana, folkloric musicians make much of their supplemental income playing at private religious ceremonies such as *tambores, güiros* and *cajones de muertos*.[32] Notwithstanding these economic opportunities, Matanzas musicians rarely "stumble upon" foreign students of folkloric traditions as Havana musicians do, because unless foreigners are already knowledgeable, they will not generally travel to Matanzas. Furthermore, because there are no regular rumba performances, there are no venues that facilitate first encounters between local musicians and the

[31] Los Muñequitos de Matanzas was formed in 1952 and constituted the first group to attain professional status after the Revolution (Grasso González 1989). Gaining national fame in the 1950s, Los Muñequitos was also the first rumba group to enjoy widespread dissemination on the radio and have access to recording their music.

[32] A *tambor* (literally "drum") is a *Santería* ceremony in which the *batá* drum ensemble, consisting of three double-headed hourglass-shaped membranophones, accompanies the singing for the *orishas*. A *güiro* is another ceremony within the *Lukumí* pantheon, for which the percussion accompaniment consists of three *shékeres* (gourds covered in beads) and a conga drum. As discussed in a previous footnote, *cajones de muertos* (ceremonies honoring dead ancestors) are associated with *Espiritismo*, although many *Santería* practitioners also host these ceremonies. The musical accompaniment consists of a variety of musical practices – principally rumba and various rhythms associated with the Bantu-derived religion called *Palo* – played on *cajones* (wooden boxes).

few tourists who do travel to Matanzas; tourists might travel to Matanzas and be interested in lessons, but unless they have the name of a musician, it is unlikely they will find one. In other words, the situations of Havana and Matanzas within the tourist sector influence their respective musicians' livelihoods and access to supplemental income.

The audience demographics at rumba events in Havana and Matanzas also reflect their different, respective statuses within the tourism industry. The principal axes along which the two cities differ are in the nationality of the audiences, i.e., the ratio of Cubans to foreigners, and the class status of the Cuban spectators. At Havana rumba events there is much more intermingling between Cubans and foreigners, which in turn means a higher presence of folkloric hustling. In Matanzas, on the other hand, audiences tend to be composed exclusively of Cubans or of foreigners. Whereas one's access to dollars does not make much of a difference in terms of audience demographics at Matanzas rumba events, because no one is paying to get in, it is a determining factor in the capital. Due to the existence of "for-profit" gigs in Havana, the class status of the Cuban audiences tends to be highly correlated with the price of admission at any given event.

This chapter has focused on the micro-practices of contemporary rumba performance in Havana and Matanzas, emphasizing how the politics of place vis-à-vis the tourism industry inform the differences in political economy and audience demographics between the two cities. The following chapter shifts from a discussion of the micro-effects of the politics of place to an investigation of the politics of place within the broader, discursive realm. Chapter four examines racialized tropes of place attached to Havana and Matanzas, and the ways these two cities have been discussed in polarized terms, in order to elucidate the cultural work these discourses do in terms of folkloric musicians' livelihoods.

CHAPTER FOUR

Racialized discourses of place and rethinking the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture"

The conceptualization of the politics of place, conveyed in this dissertation as articulated through rumba and Afro-Cuban folkloric performance, consists of two distinct yet related discursive formations. The first, which was detailed in chapter one, concerns contemporary regionalist sentiment within Cuba, both in everyday social relations in Havana among Cubans from different provinces and in the lyrics of *timba* and rumba songs. This chapter examines the other discursive formation that elaborates the politics of place through race and musical traditions: what I refer to as racialized discourses of place. By this, I mean the ways that certain locales in Cuba are linked with particular racial and cultural attributes in both popular and academic arenas. Here I explore the racialized tropes of place attached to Havana and Matanzas, the two cities with the longest and most influential histories of rumba performance. I argue that these two cities are inserted into polarized cultural discourses, where Havana is represented as the center of contemporary innovation and racial/cultural hybridity, and Matanzas as the heartland of Afro-Cuban tradition and "authentic" blackness. The latter's reputation as *la cuna de la cultura afrocubana* (the cradle of Afro-Cuban culture) exemplifies these racialized tropes of place, which I believe are also pervasive in discussions of other locales on the island. For example, the provinces of Matanzas and Santiago are often coded as "black," albeit representing very different kinds of blackness, as will be discussed below. On the other hand, the central province of Camagüey is commonly racialized as white, and also viewed by many Cubans as the most racist region – in terms of peoples' individual attitudes – in the country.[1]

Drawing on my fieldwork with rumba and folkloric groups in Havana and Matanzas, I posit that these polarized tropes of place are problematic in their essentialization of the two cities' cultural identities. I follow anthropologist Donald Moore in his suggestion that places are hybrid: "Place emerges as a distinctive mixture, not an enduring essence, a nodal point where the translocal influences intermesh with practices and meanings previously sedimented in the local landscape" (Moore 2005: 20). Notwithstanding this hybridity of place, it is important not to dismiss the effects of essentializing discourses of place, for they have strongly informed the choices of folkloric musicians about how to represent themselves musically. The government's investment in cultural tourism centered on Afro-Cuban music and dance since the Special Period (detailed in chapter two), has significantly raised the stakes for folkloric musicians in terms of representing themselves as "authentic." Competition for cultural tourism, mainly in the form of music and dance lessons, presents a very concrete example of the impact of these discourses of place on the economic landscapes of folkloric musicians. Thus, continuing in the vein of the previous two chapters, this chapter further explores how cultural politics and racialized discourses are entangled with material realities in contemporary Cuba.

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[1] My observations regarding the discourse of whiteness associated with Camagüey are confirmed by published scholarship (de la Fuente 2001: 278). These popular notions are based, at least to a certain extent, on historical events: as noted in chapter one, during the Independence Wars battalions from Camagüey, who were predominantly white, were reluctant to unite with those from the blacker provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo (Helg 1995: 58). Notwithstanding the widespread racialization of Camagüey as white however, the province is also home to one of the largest populations of Afro-Haitian descent on the island.

In *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia*, anthropologist Peter Wade theorizes "the regionality of blackness," stating, "…race is often spoken of in a locative voice, as it were, and this is because racial identities are broadly regionalized…race relations are regional relations" (Wade 1993: 54). Wade's critique of the Colombian nationalist notion of *mestizaje* (racial mixture) is accompanied by a nuanced analysis of the "regionalization" of *mestizaje*, or the different manifestations of and discourses about racial and cultural mixture in the Atlantic coast, the Pacific coast, and the interior of the country respectively. This chapter explores the ways that race is regionalized and region is racialized in another Latin American country in which the discourse of *mestizaje* is hegemonic.[2] The construction of Matanzas as an historic space of blackness is a clear example of the widespread tendency to correlate race and place, and the ways that the two often stand in for each other discursively.

In addition to elucidating the discursive links between race and place as they pertain to cultural expression in Cuba, this chapter foregrounds the authenticating discourses that are often embedded within racialized tropes of place. Scholars from different disciplines have problematized place-based discourses of authenticity, such as the notion that Matanzas is the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture." Anthropologists Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1991) and Lisa Malkki (1997) have critiqued the long-held assumption within their discipline of an isomorphic link between cultural groups, seen as unitary and homogenous, and the territories they inhabit. Instead of reifying these essentialized discourses, Gupta and Ferguson call for attention to ethnographers' *production* of spatialized difference, insightfully stating, "The special challenge here is to use a focus on the way space is imagined (but not *imaginary!)*…How are spatial meanings established? Who has the power to make places of spaces? Who contests this? What is at stake?" (Gupta and Ferguson 1991: 11).[3] In terms of my own concerns in this chapter, I intend to explore the questions, How, why and by whom has Matanzas been constructed as the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture"? Who benefits from the reification of this notion and who, if anyone, is attempting to contest this claim? Finally, it is important to ask what is at stake in the reproduction of these tropes, particularly in the context of post-Soviet Cuba and the expansion of the tourism industry over the past two decades.

While it is necessary to recognize ethnographers' production of spatialized difference, it also crucial to examine how and why musicians invoke place-based discourses of authenticity. Cultural geographer Michael Watts provocatively states, "A community, then, typically involves a territorialization of history ('this is our land and resources which can be traced in relation to

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[2] I conceive of Cuba as belonging to two geopolitical categories – Latin America and the Caribbean. Although the two are intimately related to each other in many ways, they are also characterized by certain important differences, particularly in terms of their respective racial compositions and colonial histories. Cuba is very commonly, and justifiably, considered to be part of Latin America (consisting of Mexico, Central America and South America), due to the shared experience of Iberian (which also includes Portuguese) colonialism and its effects. However, in terms of racial composition, and particularly its large population of African descent, Cuba also belongs firmly within the category of the Caribbean, where indigenous peoples were almost completely exterminated in the century following the arrival of Europeans, and thus do not constitute an important source of racial ancestry as they do in the majority of Latin America. Furthermore, Cuba's African-derived population shares many ethnic roots with and has cultural traditions very similar to those of *non*-Spanish speaking nations in the circum-Caribbean, such as Haiti, Brazil, and Trinidad. For example, all three countries are characterized by the widespread practice of local, syncretic manifestations of West African religions that are strikingly similar to Cuban *Santería*. Lastly, I do not claim that Cuba is unique in the sense of belonging to two geopolitical categories; this situation also applies to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic (and possibly even Panama), the other nations that make up the "Spanish Caribbean" but are also considered to be Latin American.

[3] See Introduction for a brief discussion of how I distinguish between space and place.

these founding events') and a naturalized history ('history becomes the history of my people and not of our relations to others'). Communities fabricate, and refabricate through their unique histories, the claims which they take to be naturally and self-evidently their own" (Watts 2003: 446). The notion of a "territorialization of history," which Watts links to Gupta's assertion that indigeneity is " 'an invented space of authenticity'" (ibid: 447), can be employed productively in this chapter as a means of interrogating the place-based discourses of authenticity attached to Matanzas that are repeatedly invoked by local folkloric musicians.

In *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop*, Murray Forman draws on Henri Lefebvre's notion of the social production of space in asserting that hip-hop artists invoke racialized regional identity to prove their "ghetto authenticity" (Forman 2002: 5). This chapter's focus on place-based discourses of authenticity within a musical practice that is also mapped as black presents a clear parallel to Forman's work on hip-hop. Whereas New York is recognized as the birthplace of hip-hop, a fact frequently employed by New York artists in asserting their authenticity, Matanzas occupies this position in rumba and folkloric discourse within Cuba. Forman, a mass communications scholar, examines discourses of authenticity through song texts and written media. Following anthropologist Donald Moore's call for "analytical and ethnographic attention to the *spatiality* of power relations and the politics of positioning" (Moore 2005: 9, his italics), this chapter entails an ethnographic exploration of how notions of racialized regional authenticity make a crucial difference in the lives of folkloric musicians in both Havana and Matanzas. To accomplish this, I draw on a variety of representations that link race, place and cultural expression, including published academic scholarship, the opinions of folkloric musicians, commercial recordings, and live performances.

The religious, musical, and social histories of the city and province of Matanzas constitute convincing evidence for accepting the "cradle" notion without further investigation. Ethnomusicologist Jocelyne Guilbault touches on a similar discourse that assumes a natural link between a musical/cultural practice and a particular place, stating, "In both popular and academic discourses, invocations of Trinidad's organic relation to calypso are often taken as self-evident truths" (Guilbault 2007: 21). Instead of accepting this discourse at face value, Guilbault elucidates both the historically specific factors that resulted in this association of calypso with the Trinidadian nation, and the ways in which its hybrid, transnational musical formation was disavowed once it was claimed as "national" music. In the same vein, I hope to interrogate the racialized discourse of tradition attached to Matanzas in several ways. My interventions include highlighting some of the inconsistencies within the scholarship on the subject, critically analyzing opinions and views expressed to me by folkloric musicians during my fieldwork, presenting historical evidence that complicates the discourse of origins associated with Matanzas, and offering a few examples of Matanzas-based groups engaging in musical fusion, which has the potential to challenge the implied fixity and anti-modernness of the "cradle" notion. In the last section of the chapter, I address the "spatiality of power relations and the politics of positioning" (Moore: 9) by discussing some of the structural and material effects of racialized discourses of place and related claims of authenticity.

Racialized discourses of place

The "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture"

The city of Matanzas has been famously dubbed the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture," a nickname that evokes notions of "authentic" blackness tied to tradition. This epithet is usually explained by referencing the Matanzas province's deep entanglement with plantation slavery: the province boasted the largest and most productive sugar plantations and greatest concentration of slaves in nineteenth-century Cuba. In contrast to the Anglophone Caribbean, where the slave trade was outlawed in the first half of the nineteenth century, Cuba saw a growth in the importation of African slaves during the middle of that century related to the fact that the island became the world's leading sugar producer after the Haitian Revolution. The increased economic importance of Cuba explains not only why the island became the focal point and crowning jewel of waning Spanish colonialism,[4] but also why the emancipation of slave labor – so crucial to Cuba's sugar production – came so late to the island, in 1886. Matanzas historian Raúl R. Ruiz posits that by 1826, 57% of the population in the province of Matanzas was made up of slaves, a figure that rose to 62% by 1841 (Ruiz 2001). U.S. historian Rebecca Scott notes that in 1862, 46% of Cuba's overall slave population was concentrated in Matanzas and the central Cuban province of Santa Clara, a figure that rose to 57% by 1877 (Scott 2000: 88).[5] By 1840 the Matanzas province had become a leader in the mechanization of sugar production and other technological advances, and boasted the largest, most modern and profitable sugar plantations in Cuba. By 1857 sugar from the Matanzas province came to represent almost 56% of the island's total production (ibid.). Scott breaks down the number of fully mechanized sugar plantations in 1860 by province: Matanzas had 44, Santa Clara had 10, Havana (the province, not the city) had 4, and the eastern province of Santiago had none (ibid.: 22). The fact that Santiago had 109 more sugar mills than the Havana province, none of which was fully mechanized, is a testament to the historical (and ongoing) regional inequalities within Cuba with respect to technological advances and more generally to modernization.

Ethnomusicologists and other scholars have generally used Matanzas' slave plantation history as a principal explanation for the "cradle" nickname, taking this notion as self-evident fact (Cabrera 1973; Vinueza 1986; Delgado 2001). For example, in his dissertation on the Afro-Cuban religious and musical tradition *Iyesá,* ethnomusicologist Kevin Delgado states, "The reason Matanzas is the capital of Afro-Cuban culture is simple and sad – it was once the capital of slavery" (Delgado 2001: 16). Beyond the slavery explanation, many scholars also refer to Matanzas' particularly strong tradition of Afro-Cuban religious worship (Vinueza 1986; Vélez 2000; Delgado 2001; Hagedorn 2003). In addition to the ongoing practice of sacred traditions

[4] Spain was dealt a huge blow with the successive but rapid independence of all former colonies except Puerto Rico and Cuba between 1822 and 1824. However, by this time, the economic value of the Cuban-based sugar trade was greater than that of all of the former colonies' wealth combined, which explains why Spain fought several wars to try and maintain possession of Cuba in the later nineteenth century and why Cuba's independence took 30 years to achieve.

[5] As a result of policies enabling gradual emancipation, the total slave population in Cuba fell by 46% between 1862 and 1877, but this decline varied widely from province to province, and it was precisely these two high-producing sugar zones, Matanzas and Santa Clara, that had the highest rates of persistence of slavery until official emancipation in 1886 (Scott: 86).

not found anywhere else in contemporary Cuba – namely *Iyesá*,[6] *Arará*,[7] *Brikamo*[8] and *Olokún*[9] - many religious practitioners are initiates of two or more Afro-Cuban religions.[10]

Furthermore, Matanzas is also considered to be *la mata de la rumba* (the "tree" or birthplace of rumba). Ethnomusicologist María Teresa Vélez even asserts that rumba has "made this region [Matanzas] famous" (Vélez 2000: 36). Legendary rumba singer Hortensio "Virulilla" Alfonso, founder of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas and one half of the most famous vocal duet in rumba history, stated in a Cuban magazine interview, "I don't want anyone to be offended by my response, but they have to realize that the cradle is here, in Matanzas, in Cuba, where any kid can play a great rumba or *quinto* [improvising drum in rumba percussion] before even learning to walk…Not to mention [the Matanzas tradition of rumba] singing!" (Diago Urfé 1997: 28, my translation). The majority of Cuban scholarship concurs that two of the three traditional styles of rumba still performed today, *yambú* and *columbia*, emerged in rural Matanzas around the mid-nineteenth century (León 1984; Urfé 1984; Grasso González 1989).[11] However, there is a longstanding debate regarding whether the third and most popular style of rumba, *guaguancó*, emerged in urban Matanzas or Havana. Some scholars, including the pioneering Cuban musicologist Argeliers León, simply acknowledge the fact that *guaguancó*'s site of emergence is disputed, without coming down on one side of the debate (León 1984). Scholars engaged in Matanzas-sited research, however, tend to view the province as the unequivocal birthplace of all three styles of rumba (Martínez Rodríguez 1977; Grasso González 1989; Vélez 2000), which suggests that the debate may be colored by regionalist sentiment, even when the scholar does not hail from Matanzas. The city's reputation as the birthplace of rumba is also well known outside of Cuba among rumba enthusiasts, as illustrated by a compilation CD released by Mexico's Corason Records called *Real Rumba from Cuba* (1994). The CD includes eleven tracks, nine of

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[6] See Delgado 2001 for a detailed discussion of *Iyesá*, a sub-group of the Yoruba whose religious practice and music is intertwined with that of *Santería* in many ways.

[7] See Vinueza 1989 for a detailed discussion of *Arará*, the religious and musical practice associated with the ancient kingdom of Dahomey in modern-day Benin.

[8] See the *Atlas de los Instrumentos de la Música Folclórico-Popular de Cuba* (1997) for information on *Brikamo*, a rarely practiced tradition intimately related to *Abakuá*, the secret male society/religion derived from the Calabar region of Nigeria that is one of the three principal Afro-Cuban religions practiced in Cuba. Unlike *Abakuá*, where only men are allowed to be initiated into or participate in ceremonies, women play an important role in *Brikamo* ceremonies. I was fortunate to see one *Brikamo* ceremony in Matanzas in January 2007, the only locale where it is currently (and rarely) practiced, and noted that women were the most active participants, especially in the dancing.

[9] See the *Atlas de los Instrumentos de la Música Folclórico-Popular de Cuba* (1997) for information on *Olokún*, a religious practice honoring a mysterious *orisha* (Yoruba-derived deity) who is associated with the depths of the ocean, and also with the Middle Passage, as so many Africans died aboard slave ships bound for the Americas and were thrown into the ocean. AfroCubaWeb.com reproduces an article by Cuban filmmaker and folklorist Gloria Rolando from which the following quote is taken: "The ocean is a permanent question for humans. The depths especially are objects of all kinds of fantasies and attractions because they are a source of life and at the same time make up a Universe of the Unknown. For the Tradition in Cuba which is of Yoruba origin, the manifestation of this mystery is personified in the deity known as Olokun. In some versions, this is interpreted as an aspect of Yemaya, the Queen of the sea. But both in the African Tradition and in the versions that were developed by the descendants in Cuba, Olokun is the 'impenetrable abyss, the infinite solitude' where light does not shine" (http://afrocubaweb.com).

[10] Afro-Cuban religions do not require that practitioners adhere to only one worship practice. As my Matanzas song teacher and member of Afrocuba explained, practitioners use the different religions for distinct purposes (personal communication, July 2005). See ethnomusicologist María Teresa Vélez's *Drumming for the Gods* (2000) for an in-depth biography of a Matanzas ritual drummer initiated into the three principal Afro-Cuban religions: *Santería*, *Palo* and *Abakuá*.

[11] See Introduction for a brief discussion of the musical differences between these styles.

which are performed by Matanzas-based groups, one of which includes a famed Havana rumba musician singing with a folkloric group from Santiago, and the last performed by that same Santiago group. In other words, not one of the tracks includes a Havana-based rumba group, despite the fact that the capital boasts the largest number of rumba groups on the island by far.

Musical odes to Matanzas as the birthplace of rumba and/or various Afro-Cuban religious practices are another illustration of the ways that the city is discursively constructed as the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture." The island's elite dance band for the past forty years, Los Van Van, has a song entitled "De La Habana a Matanzas" (From Havana to Matanzas), which is an ode to Matanzas' rich tradition of Afro-Cuban culture that begins with a rumba clave rhythm and rumba-style vocals punctuated by guitar harmonics.[12] The song chronicles a trip from the capital to Matanzas, and the narrator's intention of investigating the origins of rumba, presumed to reside there. The opening verse states, "Quería saber del *guaguancó,* de la rumba, de la *columbia*" (I wanted to learn about the *yambú*, about rumba, about the *columbia*). In the *montuno* (call-and-response) section the lead singer mentions the most famous singing duo in rumba history, Saldiguera and Virulilla, founding members of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas who helped propel them to fame in the 1950s. A more recent, and very popular, *timba* song that reifies the "cradle" discourse is "La Habana me llama," released by Manolito y su Trabuco on their 2008 album *Control* (Egrem). The song begins by naming virtually all the Cuban provinces and praising them for their unique qualities, which, in the case of Matanzas, is "su rumba y su religion" (its rumba and religion).

Although modern-day Matanzas is internationally renowned for its Afro-Cuban religious and musical practices, the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" was not always known as such. In 1860, the city was given a very different nickname during the inauguration of the first Matanzas high school dedicated to the study of arts and literature: the "Athens of Cuba" (Ruiz 2003).[13] Alluding to this notion, prominent Cuban folklorist Lydia Cabrera characterizes Matanzas city during the Spanish colonial regime as the second most beautiful and important city in the "pearl of the Antilles," as Cuba was known then (Cabrera 1973: 7). The likening of Matanzas to the ancient center of Western civilization was related to the flourishing European-derived art scene that began to develop in Matanzas in the 1830s as the region and city acquired wealth from the slave-driven sugar industry. Theater, literary mediums such as poetry and journalism, and classical music were all institutionalized during the mid-nineteenth century, creating the conditions under which intellectuals and artists gravitated to the city (Ruiz 2001). Matanzas reached its height of European-derived cultural splendor during the 1850s and 60s, exemplified in the construction of the Teatro Sauto, a neo-classical theater in the city center that still functions as the main performing arts venue in Matanzas. The city was also the birthplace of one of Cuba's most important nineteenth-century popular traditions, the *danzón*, which until at least the mid-twentieth century was considered to be Cuba's national dance. The first *danzón*, "Las alturas de Simpson" (The heights of [the Matanzas neighborhood] Simpson), was composed by Matanzas native Miguel Faílde in 1879.

The fact that Matanzas was known as the "Athens of Cuba" also highlights the very different attitudes towards Afro-Cuban people and culture in the colonial era and first decades of independence, as compared with the valorization and "nationalization of blackness" (Moore

[12] This song can be found on the Los Van Van compilation album *The Legendary Los Van Van: 30 Years of Cuba's Greatest Dance Band* (Ashé Records, 1999).

[13] Kevin Delgado's dissertation (2001) also mentions that in addition to this nickname, Matanzas was known as the "Venice of Cuba" for its many bridges.

1997) that began in the late 1920s and intensified after the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Cuban musicologist Raul Martínez Rodríguez presents historical documents showing that the wealthy white occupants of the "Athens of Cuba" were horrified by parties held by Afro-Cubans in the late nineteenth century that included public drumming, dancing, and singing. Blacks were often fined or arrested for having rumba parties (Martínez Rodríguez 1977). Although *danzón* is a largely European-derived, literate genre that bears little resemblance to the more African-sounding rumba, its emergence in 1879 resulted in a racist backlash. White intellectuals pointed to the *danzón*'s African-derived rhythmic ostinato, the *cinquillo* rhythm, as evidence that black Cubans were trying to "Africanize" Cuban culture and would eventually start a race war in the vein of the Haitian Revolution.[14] Although Afro-Cuban culture began to be valorized as it was discursively linked to a nationalist agenda, Afro-Cuban ritual drummers and religious practitioners in Matanzas continued to be persecuted and harassed by the authorities throughout the nation-building decades of the 1920s and 30s, and even after the socialist Revolution (Vélez 2000; Delgado 2001).

In addition to the "Athens of Cuba," Ruiz presents a number of other nicknames that have been given to Matanzas since the nineteenth century, including *la Ciudad de los Ríos* (the City of Rivers), *la Ciudad de los Puentes* (the City of Bridges), *el Nápoles de América* (the Naples of America), *la Venecia cubana* (the Cuban Venice), *la Ciudad de los Poetas* (City of Poets), and finally *la Ciudad Dormida* (the Sleeping City, alluding to the decline of commercial and artistic activity in the city during the twentieth century) (Ruiz 2003: 86-7). Ruiz asserts that in 1961 one Cuban writer came to conclusion that, rather than deciding amongst the many epithets attached to the city, Matanzas should be known as *la Ciudad cubana de los Sobrenombres* (the Cuban city of Nicknames) (ibid). Curiously, Ruiz does not mention the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" when discussing Matanzas' various nicknames, although he does consider Matanzas to be one of most important sites for the preservation of African culture in the Americas due to the diversity of African ethnic groups brought to the province during the height of the island's sugar production (ibid.: 27-8). He concludes that in the early twenty-first century, Matanzas is still known widely by *Matanceros* (Matanzas natives) and other Cubans as the "Athens of Cuba." While I do not disagree that this nickname still holds currency, I believe the "cradle" notion must be considered alongside the "Athens" label, especially in the context of the post-Soviet tourism era, where Afro-Cuban music and religious practices have been central in attracting foreigners to the island and to the city of Matanzas.

Although I have not been able to ascertain exactly when the "cradle" notion became widespread in popular and academic discourse, I believe its appearance is correlated with the shift in the Castro regime's racial politics away from the segregationist policies that were widespread in pre-Revolutionary Cuba. Since the early 1960s there has been a discursive valorization of African-derived culture on the island by state officials, and the government has supported the creation of institutions dedicated to researching and performing Afro-Cuban music, dance and religious traditions (Daniel 1995; Knauer 2005).[15] My fieldwork experience in Matanzas indicates that the two nicknames (the "Athens of Cuba" and the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture") currently co-exist, which is interesting, considering that each represents a racial extreme. The "Athens of Cuba" effectively likens Matanzas' cultural history to an ancient city

[14] In fact, the *cinquillo* rhythm was introduced to Cuba via musical practices of Haitian slaves brought over by French planters fleeing the Haitian Revolution (Carpentier 2001). See chapter 1, footnote 88 for more details.

[15] As I discussed in detail in chapter two, this discursive celebration of Afro-Cuban culture by the state has not translated into full practical support for black expressive or religious practices, nor has it precluded continuing policies of repression against and policing of them.

that is considered to be the birthplace of European civilization, and foregrounds European colonial culture and influences in Cuba. On the other hand, the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" constructs Matanzas as the principal site of the preservation of African-derived musical and religious practices, and emphasizes the African presence on the island. Thus, the tropes of place associated with Matanzas actually underscore racial difference on the island – implying that the categories of "black" and "white" constitute unbridgeable poles on the racial spectrum – rather than emphasizing *mestizaje* (racial mixture), which is the cornerstone ideal of Cuba's hegemonic nationalist discourse (similar to most Caribbean nations). Furthermore, while the "Athens" epithet implies European-style cosmopolitanism and a certain level of engagement with culture beyond the island, the "cradle" trope is inevitably entangled with a discourse of purity and preservation, where "outside" cultural influences tend to be minimized or even denied. Interestingly enough, both nicknames are tied to pre-modern societies, and thus link Matanzas with the past, whether African or European. As I discuss below, this association with anti-modernity is not necessarily beneficial for Matanzas folkloric musicians' livelihoods.

During my fieldwork, I heard the folkloric group Afrocuba de Matanzas perform a rumba song dedicated to their native city that provides an interesting example of these racially polarized, rather than hybrid, discursive representations of Matanzas.[16] The song extols the virtues of the city and province's natural beauty, mentioning the Valle de Yumurí (Yumurí Valley), Las Cuevas de Bellamar (the Bellamar Caves), and Varadero's incomparable beach. The lyrics also reference Matanzas city's importance within the political history of the Cuban Revolution, as a site of the creation of important Communist Party institutions. In terms of the two prevailing nicknames associated with the city, the song explicitly refers to Matanzas as *el Atenas de Cuba* (the Athens of Cuba), and recalls the city's rich legacy of European-derived poetry. However, like the Los Van Van song, the lyrics mention Saldiguera and Virulilla as *rumberos* from Matanzas and salute the city's two longstanding professional rumba groups – Afrocuba itself and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas – thereby making an implicit assertion regarding the city's reputation as the birthplace of rumba. Ironically, within the *montuno* (call-and-response) section, Afrocuba appropriates the melody from a well-known traditional rumba *coro* (chorus or refrain) dedicated to the capital city. While the original lyrics are *O La Habana, O La Habana* (Oh Havana, Oh Havana), in Afrocuba's version "Havana" is substituted by "Matanzas." Although not intended by the musicians to allude to the racialized discourses of place attached to these two cities, I believe the appropriation by a Matanzas group of a melody and chorus associated with Havana problematizes the notion that the former is the originator of all Afro-Cuban expressive traditions, which are then appropriated and commercialized by Havana musicians.[17] While the fact that a rumba song includes the "Athens" nickname may seem somewhat incongruous, I believe it can be attributed to the simple fact that the director of Afrocuba and presumed author of the lyrics, Francisco "Minini" Zamora, was not familiar with the "cradle" notion (see below), and wanted to express his local pride through the glorification of his native city; the "Athens" nickname accomplishes this.

[16] I heard this song, which has not been commercially recorded, performed twice in late February 2007 during two different civic events held in Matanzas.

[17] This interpretation is, of course, highly subjective. Others might view the use of this chorus by Afrocuba as poking fun at Havana (p.c. with Ben Brinner, February 2009).

Havana as the geographic representation of the nationalist hybridity discourse

While Matanzas is currently represented as the principal site of Afro-Cuban tradition, I would argue that Havana is constructed as the cosmopolitan capital where Cuban modernity is located, and where musical innovation and fusion take place.[18] Contemporary Havana has in fact been the locus for the creative appropriation of jazz, rock, hip-hop, and other musical practices in the Americas, as well as the site of important rhythmic innovations within recent rumba performance. In terms of racialized discourses of place, Havana is often associated with racial hybridity and mixture. This trope is undergirded by several historical factors, including the fact that it was the seat of the Spanish colonial authority, and that the free population of color on the island had traditionally been concentrated in the capital before emancipation (Hagedorn 2003). In fact, ethnomusicologist Katherine Hagedorn suggests that former slaves from Matanzas migrating to the capital for seasonal work after emancipation contributed to the growing racial hybridity of Havana (Hagedorn 2003: 99).

Furthermore, in terms of the national imaginary, Havana – as Cuba's capital city – is assumed to represent the nation in many ways. Assertions of racial and cultural hybridity have been the cornerstone of Cuba's nationalist discourse throughout the twentieth century irrespective of the radically distinct political orientations of different governments.[19] Thus, Havana's demographic make-up is generally thought to mirror these notions of national race mixture.[20] Whereas other provinces of the country are racially coded as black (Matanzas, Santiago) or white (Camagüey), Havana stands in for the racially hybrid nation. While the diverse capital city is able to resist binary racial classification, the constituent elements that make up the hybrid nation must also be emplaced and "come from" somewhere within the country. As the primary locus for Cuba's nineteenth-century slave-driven sugar economy, Matanzas represents Cuba's "pure" African past – as opposed to *Oriente*, eastern Cuba, which is also discursively blackened but not linked to pure African ancestry due to its mix of Afro-diasporic populations from different African ethnic groups and from the Caribbean, primarily Haiti and Jamaica. Conversely, Cuba's Spanish past could be said to be "located" in the largely rural province of Pinar del Río.[21] This discursive mapping of Cuba's racial ancestry onto different regions of the country leads me to suggest that while Havana's identity as the racially and culturally hybrid capital allows it to escape rigid categorization, the rest of the country tends to be essentialized in racial, cultural, class and/or regional terms.

Havana rumba group Clave y Guaguancó's song "Para Gozar, La Habana," which was discussed in detail in chapter one in relation to its assertions of regionalist sentiment, provides a

[18] Chapter one touched upon the different popular discourses painting Havana as the seat of modernity, and the ways that *Habaneros* (Havana natives) conceive of everywhere else in the country, including large cities, as *el campo* (the countryside), which implicitly assumes backwardness.

[19] For discussions and critiques of the Cuban nationalist hybridity discourse at various historical moments, see C. Moore 1988; Perez Sarduy and Stubbs 1993; Helg 1995; R. Moore 1997; de la Fuente 2001; Puri 2004; and Sawyer 2006. See also my chapters one and six.

[20] I thank Percy Hintzen for his guidance in formulating this argument.

[21] Cubans of Spanish ancestry historically constituted a large proportion of the population in Pinar del Río (Helg 1995). It's difficult to ascertain information about more contemporary racial demographics because the Revolutionary government has not collected, or at least has not published, these statistics.

good illustration of the discourses of place that help construct Havana as the seat of racial and cultural hybridity. Here is the first verse of the song's *canto* (narrative) section:[22]

La Habana tiene un sabor muy dificil de igualar (2x)	Havana has a flavor/feeling that can't be matched
Es una mezcla Yoruba, del Congo, del Abakuá,	It's a mix of Yoruba, Congo, Abakuá,[23]
Del Andaluz, del Gitano y de varias mezclas más (2x)	Of Andalusian,[24] Gypsy and various other mixtures
Para gozar, La Habana	For enjoyment, Havana
Para disfrutar, La Habana	For enjoyment, Havana

This ode to Havana references the capital city as the main site of racial mixture on the island, asserting that it is primarily in this way that the capital distinguishes itself from other Cuban cities (and for that matter, from other cities internationally). The song provides an interesting contrast to the homage to Matanzas discussed above: while the Afrocuba song alludes to both the city's European- and African-derived cultural histories as sources of pride, thus emphasizing two presumably opposite poles on the racial spectrum, the Clave y Guaguancó song highlights and celebrates Havana's racial hybridity. These two rumba songs are thus representative of the polarized discourses of place that circulate about Havana and Matanzas respectively. Now I turn to an examination of these racialized tropes of place in music scholarship and within popular discourse among Cuban musicians.

Discourses of place within music scholarship

Lydia Cabrera, the famed Cuban folklorist who made important field recordings in the rural areas of the Matanzas and Havana provinces during the 1950s and wrote extensively about Afro-Cuban religious music in later decades, was particularly instrumental in constructing the polarized discourses of place about Havana and Matanzas. Her work is a clear example of Gupta and Ferguson's assertions regarding the ways that ethnographers produce spatialized difference. Cabrera considered the Matanzas province to be the most fruitful for her research and stated, "In no other place as in Matanzas were our inquiries so easy, the African gods that we searched for more accessible, nor in plain light and at all hours were they found so close to man. Going from Havana to Matanzas was for us, in little more than an hour by highway…like passing from the 20th century…to the 19th century, and feeling like we were more in Cuba than in the capital, naively sophisticated with its North American disguises" (Cabrera 1973: 7, my translation). Invoking a discourse of racialized authenticity, Cabrera's ode to Matanzas views Havana as a breeding ground for the introduction of foreign elements and the corruption of a national,

[22] This song can be found on Clave y Guaguancó's recent album *La Rumba Que No Termina* (Cuba Chévere Musikproduktionen, 2006). Translation of the lyrics are my own. Lyrics reproduced courtesy of Cuba Chévere Musikproduktionen.

[23] The *Lukumí* (Yoruba), *Congo* (Bantu), and *Abakuá* (Calabar) are three of the four principal African ethnic groups brought to Cuba during the transatlantic slave trade.

[24] Andalusians, from the southern region of Andalucía in Spain, constituted a large proportion of the Spaniards who traveled to and settled in Cuba throughout the colonial period (Guanche 1996).

"authentic" culture that originates and is maintained in the Matanzas countryside. However, it also sets the stage for the conception of Matanzas as anti-modern and irrevocably tied to the past, a trope often invoked by Havana musicians that has certain negative consequences for Matanzas folkloric musicians that I will detail later.

While Cuban scholars (Martínez Rodríguez 1977; Vinueza 1986; Ruiz 2003) have been the most strident in upholding the notion that Matanzas is the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture," foreign scholars have also tended to reify this racialized discourse of tradition and to discuss Havana and Matanzas in binary cultural terms. In *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba* (1995), Yvonne Daniel characterizes Matanzas-style rumba as more "participatory" and "spontaneous" (Daniel 1995: 8), and Havana-based rumba performance as having a more institutional, "prepared" character.[25] I believe Daniel's methodological choice to work with the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional (CFN) in Havana, which has the most rigid performance criteria of any folkloric group in Cuba, may have led to her implication of a natural distinction between Havana-style rumba as "institutional" and Matanzas-style rumba as "spontaneous."[26] This dichotomy may be less useful in describing the current, diverse rumba scenes in Havana and Matanzas. Afrocuba de Matanzas, for example, performs at least as often as most Havana rumba groups in official, state-sponsored venues. Furthermore, in my experience, common descriptions by musicians about the different sounds of Havana- vs. Matanzas-style rumba do not coincide with this polarized characterization. Matanzas-style rumba is often critiqued by Havana musicians as a conservative style that sounds quite repetitive as compared with the more improvisatory (or spontaneous) and lively Havana style. Many musicians who prefer the Matanzas style, on the other hand, describe the rhythm, tempo, and dancing style as *cadencioso* (lilting) or *asentado* (settled or grounded), which they juxtapose with the *corriendo* (running, or too-fast) style of Havana.

The time period in which Daniel conducted her research was likely a major factor influencing her characterization of Havana- and Matanzas-style rumba respectively; her fieldwork was carried out in the 1980s, within a very different social and economic context than the one that I have encountered since 2003. During the 1980s, there were probably far fewer professional rumba groups than there are currently, which may have led to Daniel's decision to conduct fieldwork with the CFN, a group that in my experience is not representative of Havana-style rumba. As ethnomusicologist Katherine Hagedorn states in her book *Divine Utterances* (2001), and as I witnessed during my research, the CFN is a folkloric dance troupe dedicated primarily to presenting the various Afro-Cuban religious music and dance traditions, and only rarely do their performances include Afro-Cuban secular traditions like rumba and *comparsa* (Cuban carnival music).[27] In addition to the fact that rumba is not a large part of the CFN's current

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[25] Although probably not the author's intention, I would note that the notions of "spontaneity" and "institutional" have clear racialized overtones, where the former corresponds to essentialist notions about Afro-diasporic music/dance practices and the latter implies a "whiter," "cleaned up" and more formalized version.

[26] Writing about the CFN in the early twenty-first century, ethnomusicologist Robin Moore quotes several important Cuban scholars who have been critical of the group's artistic objectives, in that their performances present a relatively fixed representation of various traditions that does not allow for the spontaneity or improvisation that have always been a part of these practices. Moore also illuminates the complex racial politics within the first several decades of the CFN's history, and the misunderstandings and problems that arose between the largely white leadership and the largely poor Afro-Cuban folkloric musicians, who were not trained professionally and did not always observe "proper" comportment during rehearsals and international tours (Moore 2006: 187-88).

[27] It is also possible that the CFN performed rumba more often during the 1980s than in later decades. During my dissertation fieldwork in 2006-07 I saw the group perform 20th-century popular, mass-mediated dance genres like mambo and *rueda de casino* (Cuban-style salsa danced in a circle with multiple pairs) more often than they performed

repertoire, the dance troupe differs from the majority of rumba and folkloric groups in Havana (and everywhere in Cuba) in terms of the racialized bodies that make up the group. While most rumba groups are comprised of predominantly dark-skinned musicians and dancers, the CFN has relatively few black dancers; most are light-skinned, and some are white.[28] During my research I saw very few white musicians or dancers in rumba or folkloric groups in either Havana or Matanzas, an observation that coincides with anthropologist Lisa Knauer's estimates that about 5% of rumba performers are white (Knauer 2005: 549).[29]

Katherine Hagedorn's article "Drum Talk: Sweet and Tasty Rhythms for the *Orichas*," which analyzes the ways that ritual drummers speak about the respective styles of Yoruba-derived *batá* drumming in Havana and Matanzas, is (to my knowledge) the only academic exploration of Cuban discourses of place in relation to different, locally-defined styles of one musical practice.[30] She insightfully posits, "Talk about music reveals not only aesthetic preferences and norms of performance practice, but deeply embedded ideologies about identity and territoriality" (Hagedorn 2003: 95). Similar to the descriptions I presented above, Hagedorn juxtaposes Matanzas-style ritual drumming, discussed as "laid back and funky" (ibid.: 97), with the Havana style, characterized as more fast-paced and hybrid in terms of its influence from popular musical styles. Furthermore, she links this "drum talk" to notions of race by highlighting how slower tempos are taken as evidence of "blacker" and more "authentic" traditions (ibid.: 100). This is a clear example of how musical style in Matanzas comes to discursively represent a closer connection with Africa. Hagedorn thus touches on the discourse of racialized authenticity attached to Matanzas, although her focus is not on interrogating this notion or addressing how the city's racial identity is juxtaposed with that of Havana. My research with rumba and folkloric groups in both Havana and Matanzas leads me to argue for problematizing this discourse of racialized authenticity, and for unsettling widely held assumptions about where tradition is "located" and where hybridity "takes place" in Cuba. The reification of these polarized tropes obfuscates the diversity that characterizes the folkloric scenes in both cities.

Discourses of place within the popular domain: folkloric musicians' perspectives

Folkloric musicians in Matanzas and Havana broached several distinct issues related to racialized discourses of place in my interviews and conversations with them. These included questions of rumba's origin and its relation to identity formation – both the cities' discursive identities and individuals' local identities; different attitudes regarding innovation in the two places; place-based ownership of cultural practices; issues of authenticity related to musical style;

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secular folkloric traditions like rumba. Most often the CFN's weekly *Sabado de la rumba* (Saturday rumba) show includes an invited rumba group that plays during the second half of the show, after the CFN has performed the folkloric part of the show.

[28] The musicians, percussionists and singers, are mostly dark-skinned, but the CFN is first and foremost a dance troupe.

[29] Of the three most popular rumba groups in Havana currently, Rumberos de Cuba has two white male singers (one of whom is the group's director), Clave y Guaguancó has a white male singer, and Yoruba Andabo has a white male percussionist. The demographics of these groups may have changed since my last trip to Cuba in May 2008, as rumba musicians often rotate in and out of different groups in Havana.

[30] Kenneth Schweitzer's 2003 D.M.A. dissertation includes a lengthy musical comparison of *batá* drumming styles in Havana and Matanzas, but he does not link the different playing styles to discourses of place. Nonetheless, similar to ways that musicians have often described these styles to me, he characterizes the Matanzas example as the most "conservative" of the three he analyzed (Schweitzer 2003: 227).

and the notion that musicians' abilities and limitations are determined (or not) by their place of birth. As my interview questions were not standardized, musicians interpreted this issue in their own ways, which revealed a variety of concerns that elucidate the importance of place-based identifications in relation to cultural practices.

I began to conduct research in Matanzas in July 2004 with the explicit goal of working with Afrocuba de Matanzas, an internationally renowned folkloric group famous both for their incomparably comprehensive repertoire in Afro-Cuban sacred and secular practices and for their creation of the rumba hybrid *batarumba*, an innovation that I believe challenges the discourse of tradition surrounding the city. During my interviews and conversations with various members of Afrocuba between July 2005 and May 2007, I broached the subject of Matanzas' reputation as the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture." Not surprisingly, all of the musicians felt strongly that the city deserved this distinction for a variety of reasons. Although many of them referred to the city as the *cuna* (cradle) or *mata* (tree) of many Afro-Cuban religious and musical traditions such as *Santería* and rumba, Afrocuba founder and longtime director Francisco Zamora Chirino, known to everyone in Cuba's folkloric world as "Minini," told me he was not familiar with the nickname.[31] He was aware of the "Athens of Cuba" nickname and, as was evidenced in the Afrocuba rumba song that I discussed earlier, had even referenced it in a musical ode to his native city. This recognition suggests that the "Athens" nickname is still in circulation concurrently with the "cradle" notion, and that scholars and musicians may use different tropes of place strategically, at different times, to make particular declarations that are often related to claims of authenticity and cultural ownership. Although Minini did not explicitly allude to the "cradle" notion before I brought it up in our interview, he commented that Matanzas was the only place in Cuba where several rare African-derived traditions are still conserved, an assertion that is frequently used – by academics as well as musicians – to buttress this discourse of racialized origins and, thus, place-based authenticity.[32] I have also heard him make introductory comments during different Afrocuba performances that highlight the uniqueness of Matanzas' racialized cultural identity. Minini asserted that the group's mission has always been to "rescue" Matanzas-based African-derived traditions that were being lost. Interestingly, the reason he gave for the loss of rarer traditions was not a lack of interest on the part of younger generations, but the fact that elders/culture-bearers were hesitant to pass on religious secrets to people outside their immediate family. He asserted that the history of persecution by government authorities during much of the twentieth century had created a large amount of distrust on the part of religious elders, resulting in a culture of secrecy that was hard to penetrate even for Minini, now considered to be one of Matanzas' most well-known cultural ambassadors and tradition-bearers.[33]

When we spoke about Matanzas- and Havana-style rumba, Minini seemed to view them as two parallel traditions, that is, with very different styles of performance, and was careful not to include a value judgment. However, he also stated that because Havana is the capital and receives more tourists than Matanzas, Havana musicians are more inclined to *inventar*, or make

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[31] All information is drawn from an interview that took place on February 12, 2007 at Minini's home in Matanzas.

[32] As I argue in chapter five, rather than being a reflection of the "cradle" notion, the conservation of African-derived practices, particularly by Afrocuba, may have been a formative phenomenon that helped to construct and reinforce this discourse.

[33] Several scholars who have conducted research in Matanzas have also commented upon the culture of secrecy characteristic of the city's religious community, especially concerning the more rare traditions such as *Arará* (Martínez Furé 1979; Vélez 2000).

things up, an opinion that is extremely common among Matanzas folkloric musicians.[34] He recounted that whenever Afrocuba performed in Havana, people would come up to him and tell him they had just witnessed "real" rumba. While it is possible to interpret this comment as a way of shifting the responsibility for reinforcing this discourse of authenticity from himself to other people, it is also true that many Cuban rumba aficionados outside of Matanzas believe firmly in this "origin story," in part due to the longstanding fame of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas and their role in popularizing rumba in the 1950s. Minini directed explicit critiques not at the Havana musicians, but at the newer generation of Matanzas *rumberos* who he feels are trying to imitate Havana-style playing. Then he injected a very suggestive proverb, borrowed from national hero/poet José Martí, into the conversation: *Nuestro vino es agrio, pero es* ***nuestro*** *vino* (Our wine is sour, but it's **our** wine). Rather than interpret this commentary as an oblique disparagement of his own Matanzas-based traditions, which would be out of character for Minini, I believe it functioned as a claim of local ownership of cultural practices and a veiled critique of musicians who overstep the boundaries of place in performance. Minini reiterated this stance with the phrase *lo mio es lo mio* (what's mine is mine).

One of the most strident arguments for reinforcing the "cradle" notion came from Reinaldo Alfonso García, known as "Wichichi," a well-respected religious elder, percussionist, and veteran member of Afrocuba. During our interview, he attributed the Matanzas "cradle" notion to the province's unique history of slavery and to the breadth of African-derived traditions found there, illustrating that these explanations are not confined to the academic arena.[35] He expressed the opinion that most folklore practiced in Havana emerged from other provinces, principally Matanzas. Similar to Lydia Cabrera's narrative, Wichichi painted Havana's traditions as culturally derivative, noting that *bembé* and *Arará* music could only be "imitations" in Havana since they had not existed there "originally."[36] Alluding to issues of authenticity and revealing his own regionalist-oriented stance (despite his claims to the contrary) vis-à-vis the different styles of rumba played in Matanzas and Havana, Wichichi felt that an objective comparison of the two styles would invariably lead to the conclusion that the latter is a "richer" tradition. He stated,

> It's not because I'm from Matanzas, which I am very proud of, nor because I'm a *regionalista* [roughly translated to someone displaying strong regionalist sentiment], nor because I am very pretentious or think we are the best, and least of all because I'm smug, but he who has the opportunity to listen to what they play in Havana and what they play in Matanzas, even if he is not a knowledgeable listener, will realize that what they play here in Matanzas is richer, is more, how can I explain to you, more pleasing to listen to

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[34] *Inventar* literally means "to invent." However, it is a polysemic word in the context of post-Soviet Cuba and is used very often to refer to making ends meet. In reference to economic problems and the inadequacy of wages in state jobs, it is very common to hear someone say *Tengo que inventar algo* (I have to find some way of making money/figure something out), and often alludes to an engagement with the black market. In the folkloric music scene it can be used as a verb, *inventar*, meaning "to make something up" or "to create something," or as a noun, *invento*, meaning "something invented or created." Both of these uses can have either a positive connotation, alluding to creativity, or a negative connotation, highlighting a lack of authenticity and/or knowledge about traditional music and dance practices. A common example of the latter is, *Los habaneros siempre están inventando* (People from Havana are always making stuff up).

[35] All information is drawn from an interview that took place on March 8, 2007 at Wichichi's home in Matanzas.

[36] *Bembé* is one type of ceremony within the *Lukumí* pantheon in Cuba that is practiced more in Matanzas and the central Cuban provinces than in Havana. In addition to being the name of the ceremony, the term is used to refer to the ensemble and the group of drums used in the ceremony.

> and to see...Because in Havana they play very fast, running, as if they're in a rush, and many things [in the percussion] cannot be distinguished. And they dance the same way, they dance with the same intensity with which they play and sing. Nevertheless, here in Matanzas we play in a more grounded [slow] way, we sing in a more grounded way, we dance in a more grounded way, the music can be distinguished better, and the rhythm is different.[37]

Finally, like Minini, Wichichi used a metaphor to police the bounds of regional identity, asserting, "If we dedicated ourselves to cultivating a style of folkloric music, something that is not ours, we would identify ourselves as *Habaneros*, not as *Matanceros*, we would lose our identity as such."[38] This statement articulates the belief that it is important for *Matanceros* to conserve their identity as separate and distinct from that of Havana, that musical traditions are absolutely constitutive of local identity formation, and that they are owned and should be practiced only by particular people.

Dolores Pérez Herrera, a veteran singer and dancer who retired from Afrocuba in 2004 after 37 years with the group, is part of a large and prestigious family in Matanzas known for their Afro-Cuban religious and cultural knowledge, particularly concerning *Santería* worship. Several members of the family have been core members of Afrocuba and/or Los Munequitos de Matanzas since the 1970s. When I discussed the "cradle" notion with Dolores, she recalled that during her childhood, *se formaban las rumbas* (rumbas were started up) for any reason, not necessarily for a special occasion, and people would compose songs spontaneously about the most banal idea or object.[39] Dolores thus felt that her city deserved the distinction of being named the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" primarily because of Matanzas' history of spontaneous rumba performance and its ubiquity within the city during the mid-twentieth century. While she conceded that these spontaneous rumbas were a less common occurrence now, she recounted that on special days – such as the eve of December 17, the day of San Lázaro/Babalu-Ayé, a saint/*orisha*[40] who is highly revered by Cubans of various religions – one can still happen upon a rumba party that lasts well into the early hours of the morning. She asserted that in Havana this type of rumba performance does not occur, and that *Habaneros* are much more likely to play recorded music at parties, particularly reggaetón, than to play live rumba. Here Dolores clearly reinforced the binary discourse that characterizes discussions of Havana and Matanzas: *Habaneros*

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[37] "No porque yo sea Matancero, que vivo orgulloso de serlo, y no por ser regionalista, ni tampoco por pecar ni de pretensión ni de superlativo, y mucho menos de autosuficiente, pero él que tenga la oportunidad de escuchar lo que se percute en La Habana y lo que se percute en Matanzas, aunque no sea muy buen entendedor en la materia, puede darse cuenta que lo que se percute o se toca aquí en Matanzas tiene mas riqueza, es más, como te voy a explicar, más agradable de escuchar y de ver...Porque en La Habana se percute y se toca muy rápido, corriendo, muy a prisa, y muchas cosas no se alcanzan a entender. Y bailando igual, bailan muy acorde con la intensidad con la que tocan y con la que cantan. Sin embargo, aquí en Matanzas se toca más asentado, se canta más asentado, se baila más asentado, se entiende mejor, y el ritmo es distinto."

[38] "Si nos dedicaríamos a cosechar un folklore, una cosa que no es nuestra, nos identificaríamos como Habaneros, no como Matanceros, perderíamos nuestra identidad como tal."

[39] All information is drawn from an interview that took place on March 2, 2007 at Dolores' home in Matanzas.

[40] *Orishas* are Yoruba-derived deities who are worshipped in *Lukumí* (*Santería*) practice. The Catholic saint San Lázaro is syncretized with the *orisha* Babalu-Ayé, and is one of the most fervently worshipped within both *Santería* and Cuban Catholicism because of his association with disease and epidemics – and thus his symbolization of suffering – and for his curative powers. See Hagedorn 2002 for a detailed ethnographic account of the significance of San Lázaro to religious practitioners, and the annual pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of San Lázaro in Rincón, a town on the outskirts of Havana.

are portrayed as being interested only in the latest popular musical trend, and not in preserving traditional musical practices.

Dolores' husband, Juan García Fernández, is a prominent Havana choreographer who was drawn from the CFN to become Afrocuba's artistic director at a key point in the group's history, when they were making the transition from rumba group to full-fledged folkloric group in 1980. During my interview with Dolores, Juan entered the house and was eager to present his perspective on the matter. Although he is from Havana, Juan has spent many years going back and forth between the capital and Matanzas, working with both Afrocuba and the CFN. Like Wichichi, he expressed the opinion that much of Havana's folkloric knowledge is a result of what he termed *préstamos culturales* (cultural loans) from Matanzas. As an example, he stated that famed Havana folkloric singer Lázaro Ros – founder of the CFN and considered to be the most important tradition-bearer of Yoruba-derived religious song until his death in 2005 – came to Matanzas in the 1950s to learn songs from elders knowledgeable in the *Santería* and *Iyesá* repertoires. Juan noted however, that due to the inherently unstable nature of oral transmission, some of the songs' characteristics were changed when Ros returned to Havana and began to perform them. Juan also talked about the historic cultural and musical exchanges between Havana and Matanzas, stating that men from Matanzas often went to Havana for work, and that *Habaneros* came to Matanzas and took rumba back to the capital. Thus, he clearly viewed Matanzas as the unequivocal site of origins for rumba and many Afro-Cuban sacred practices, a perspective that might seem "out of place" for a *Habanero*.

One interpretation for Juan's perspective has to do with the possibility that he prefers to forge an alliance with Matanzas as a way of representing himself as more authentically black, both in terms of his racial/social identity and his cultural/artistic identity. In other words, Juan may be identifying himself not with a particular place, but with blackness and more broadly with Africa, which are emplaced discursively in Matanzas, an issue I explore in more depth below. It is also possible that Juan's identification with Matanzas-based cultural traditions is evidence that *Habaneros'* allegiances are more flexible, and that there exists a broader difference in identify formation between Havana and Matanzas: while *Matanceros'* views on folkloric music may be more tied to their place of birth and the notions circulating about it, *Habaneros* feel the freedom to associate themselves with other places and styles at strategic moments and not feel like this entails a loss of identity. I believe this hypothesis is borne out by certain comments made by Havana-based musicians (reproduced below), and that there are larger reasons for this difference in identity politics, which I discuss below and link to the spatiality of power relations on the island.

Although there were some divergences among Matanzas-based musicians, Havana-based folkloric musicians displayed a wider variety of opinions on the "cradle" notion. Some well-respected Havana *rumberos*, such as my song and percussion teacher Daniel Rodríguez Morales, agreed wholeheartedly with the notion that Matanzas is the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture."[41] Daniel attributed much of his musical and religious knowledge to his experiences in Matanzas, and foregrounded not the differences between the cities' traditions, but the many connections between the two. Despite the fact that he was one of the few *Habaneros puros* (pure-bred Havana natives) that either he or I knew, he did not display a great deal of regionalist sentiment.[42] He felt

[41] All information from Daniel is drawn from our many conversations during music lessons between September 2007 and May 2008 and two formal interviews conducted on October 6 and October 26, 2006.

[42] As was discussed in chapter one, there is a common perception that there are no more pure-bred *Habaneros* (defined by the criteria of having both parents be Havana-born) in the capital anymore and that they have all left the country, principally for Miami. Judging from the family histories of my Havana friends and acquaintances, this perception seems to be fairly accurate. Ironically, despite all the antagonism towards people from *el campo* (the

that Matanzas deserved the "cradle" title, particularly with regards to the rumba and *Abakuá* traditions, and critiqued the widespread egocentrism, lack of discipline and tendency to *inventar* within the Havana rumba scene. Thus, like Juan and despite his identity as a *Habanero*, Daniel felt a certain cultural allegiance to Matanzas. He also reinforced the "cradle" trope by reifying the common dichotomy that Matanzas-style rumba is about conserving tradition while the Havana style is about taking a little bit of everything and making it one's own. When speaking about the differences in *batá* drumming, however, although Daniel located the origins of the musical practice in Matanzas, he preferred the Havana style. He made a gendered critique of the Matanzas style, noting that the musicians there often use the bottom of a wooden sandal instead of their fingers to play the *chachá* (the smaller end of the double-headed *batá* drum), thus displaying a lack of endurance for pain. The Havana style, in other words, represented a more "hardcore," masculine way of playing.

Another Havana musician whom I interviewed, Gerardo de Arma Sarria, had spent periods of his career in the Matanzas province performing with rumba and folkloric groups in the famous Varadero beach resort. He professed deep admiration for Matanzas' folkloric history and cultural identity, stating that his time there had constituted his "schooling" in folklore.[43] Although he expressed his preference for Matanzas-style rumba, much like Daniel, he found fault with the Matanzas *batá* drumming tradition, stating – similar to the descriptions reproduced in Katherine Hagedorn's aforementioned article – that the musicians played too slow and took too long to get through the *toques* (rhythms) for the different *orishas*. These sorts of opinions suggest that the labeling of one style as "original" or "more traditional" does not always or necessarily translate into greater aesthetic appeal.

Despite the overall respect Havana musicians have for Matanzas' folkloric traditions, there were some who disputed the "cradle" trope and the origin stories linking Matanzas with Afro-Cuban cultural expression. Amado Dedeu Hernández, longtime director of the prestigious rumba group Clave y Guaguancó, asserted that this notion was not "historically justified" for a number of reasons relating to the history of slavery in Cuba.[44] He listed several reasons for considering Havana's connections to slavery and colonial African-derived culture to be just as strong as those of Matanzas, including the fact that many Africans had entered first via the port of Havana rather than Matanzas and that Havana had a long history of *Día de los Reyes* celebrations.[45] He noted that the majority of the surface area that constitutes the modern city of Havana was *monte* (countryside) during the nineteenth century, and was a sugar zone just like Matanzas. He also offered a challenge to the common perception of a unidirectional flow of cultural influence from Matanzas to Havana, stating that many songs from the *coro de clave* tradition had originated in Havana and were subsequently taken up by Matanzas-based rumba

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"countryside"), most *Habaneros* have at least one parent who migrated to Havana from another province. This phenomenon presents similarities to the experiences of many children of immigrants to the U.S., who feel embarrassed by their parents' obvious markers of difference (in language, musical and religious traditions, appearance, etc.) that set them apart from mainstream culture.

[43] All information is drawn from an interview that took place on December 23, 2006 near Gerardo's home in Arroyo Naranjo, one of the outlying municipalities within the province of Ciudad de la Habana (Havana City).

[44] All information is drawn from an interview that took place on October 24, 2006 at Amado's home in Central Havana.

[45] *Día de los Reyes*, or Day of Kings, celebrations have been well-documented by Fernando Ortiz and other scholars of Cuban culture (Ortiz 1984[1921]; Bettelheim 2001). They took place in colonial Cuba on January 6, Epiphany Day in Catholicism, and formed the basis for what would become Cuba's carnival tradition. It was on this one day a year that slaves and free blacks were allowed to publicly perform their music and dance traditions, and the celebrations generally included competitions between the different African ethnic groups.

groups.[46] In general Amado was hesitant to attribute the origins of Afro-Cuban culture to just one region of the country, noting that the western province of Pinar del Río and the eastern provinces of *Oriente* also have longstanding Afro-Cuban traditions. He asserted that the "cradle" notion is not an official one, and was probably disseminated by a certain writer or journalist, after which people began to reiterate it. He likened it to a "slogan," where the idea that Matanzas is the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" was utilized as an authenticating marketing term (possibly to attract a foreign audience), rather than a notion based in historical truth.

Geovani Del Pino Rodríguez, director of the famed Havana rumba group Yoruba Andabo, offered a different, more philosophical perspective than the other musicians I interviewed regarding the "cradle" notion and all of its implications. He acknowledged differences in playing style between Havana- and Matanzas-style rumba and, like Amado, asserted that each region has its own distinctive traditions.[47] He stated, "La cuna de la cultura cubana es Cuba" (the cradle of Cuban culture is Cuba) and, much like an ethnomusicologist, he questioned the need to assert ownership over Afro-Cuban cultural traditions. He also called into question the common perception that Matanzas groups are still playing traditional rumba, noting that even Los Muñequitos de Matanzas do not play rumba in the same style as before, an issue I address in more detail below. However, notwithstanding Geovani's seemingly unbiased views concerning the "cradle" notion and the discursive polarization of Havana and Matanzas, his regionalist sentiment surfaced when he discussed the difference between Afro-Cuban folkloric practices in western and eastern Cuba. He asserted that western Cuba, in which both Havana and Matanzas are located, possesses a more "developed" and "conserved" Afro-Cuban culture, while eastern Cuban African-derived traditions display more influences from other parts of the Caribbean such as Haiti, France, and Jamaica. In other words, African-derived traditions in *Oriente* are "already hybrid," having passed through other countries first. What Geovani ultimately seemed to be positing, then, was a binary cultural discourse not between Havana and Matanzas, but between western and eastern Cuba; western Cuba, instead of Matanzas, was the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture," as compared to the more impure, hybrid expressive practices deriving from *Oriente*.

Finally, an interesting perspective was offered during my interview with Ronald González Coba, currently considered to be the hottest rumba singer in Havana. Ronald occupies a unique position for the following reasons: he was a member for three years of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, the rumba group most associated with Matanzas-style rumba; he is currently a member of Yoruba Andabo, one of the two rumba groups that have most embodied Havana-style rumba in the past two decades; and, most interestingly, he hails from neither city, but from Santiago, the unofficial capital of *Oriente*, which is not considered to be an historically important place for rumba performance.[48] Because Ronald's regional/local identity was not linked to either Havana or Matanzas, and he thus had no emotional attachment to the debate concerning the origins of rumba or the merits of its different styles, he felt that he could provide a more objective

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[46] *Coros de clave* (literally, "clave choirs") were groups of singers that would circulate in the streets of Havana and Matanzas in the nineteenth century, particularly during the Christmas holidays. Their repertoire and vocal style are thought to be an important predecessor of rumba *guaguancó*. For more information on *coros de clave* see León 1984. Grasso González (1989) also discusses their history in Matanzas, referring to them as "coros de rumba."

[47] All information is drawn from an interview that took place on December 1, 2006 at Geovani's home in Central Havana.

[48] Despite the fact that rumba does not have as long a history in Santiago as in Havana or Matanzas, rumba performance has been prevalent in the eastern city at least since the mid-twentieth century and many *rumberos* in Cuba acknowledge that Santiago has developed its own unique style and sound.

perspective.[49] He asserted that he felt comfortable performing both styles of rumba, and could see both the advantages and drawbacks of the different regionally-influenced critiques: while *Matanceros* often felt that *Habaneros* were always *inventando*, *Habaneros* often expressed the opinion that Matanzas-style rumba was boring because they always played *lo mismo* (the same thing). Considering the widespread demonization and marginalization of eastern Cubans in Havana and other western Cuban cities generally, I find it interesting that Ronald has come to occupy the middle ground in this debate. Furthermore, he is a *Santiaguero* (Santiago native) who has proven himself to be a versatile musician, able both to sing well enough in the Matanzas style to be invited to join Los Munequitos de Matanzas – a prestigious honor and rare occurrence for an eastern Cuban – and to have enough creative insight and talent to be invited to join Yoruba Andabo, where he has helped forge a new, more hybrid style of rumba singing that is now intimately associated with Havana.[50]

Although Ronald recognized the merit of both *Habaneros*' and *Matanceros*' perspectives, like many of the musicians I interviewed in both places, his comments buttressed the "cradle" trope and the polarized cultural discourses attached to both cities. He asserted that Matanzas respects its traditions, and that *Matanceros* are not even capable of straying far from "traditional" playing styles. This essentialist statement illustrates the widespread belief that tradition can actually be found "in the blood" of *Matanceros*, and that innovation and change in expressive practices are antithetical to their character. In contrast, he characterized Havana musicians as predisposed to engage in hybridity and fusion practices and to *recoger todo lo que está en el ambiente* (roughly, soak up every musical practice around them). Thus, like Daniel, not only did Ronald posit an essential and fixed difference between musicians from Havana and Matanzas, but he also suggested that the former most often engage in an indiscriminate sort of fusion, an issue I address in chapter six.

There were some clear differences among the perspectives of Havana musicians regarding the "cradle notion," the question of where rumba originated, personal preferences in playing style, notions of authenticity, and the relationship of cultural practices to local identity formation. Juan seemed to overwhelmingly prefer Matanzas playing styles, which he felt were closer to their African antecedents and thus more authentic; he fully endorsed the "cradle" discourse. Daniel and Gerardo also buttressed this racialized discourse of authenticity, presenting Matanzas as a sort of "school" of folklore; however, they did not prefer all Matanzas playing styles over those of Havana, which suggests that in some cases, personal preference has more to do with the style in which they were trained, which is more familiar and sounds more "right" to their ears. Amado was the only musician I interviewed who rejected the validity of the "cradle" discourse and all of its implications regarding authenticity, and who offered anti-essentialist rebuttals to these notions. Geovani offered a somewhat detached perspective, in that he neither endorsed nor critiqued the "cradle" notion, although he replaced the Matanzas-Havana binary discourse with a dichotomy between eastern and western Cuban traditions. Given the complexity of these perspectives I cannot generalize much about them. What I can suggest, related to my aforementioned hypothesis, is that Havana musicians display a certain flexibility in terms of their identifications with and opinions about particular playing styles. While it may seem, then, that Havana musicians are less bound by their local identity vis-à-vis their musical preferences than Matanzas musicians, this lack of rigidity may in fact have much to do with their local identity and the

[49] All information is drawn from an interview that took place on April 18, 2007 at Ronald's home in Old Havana.
[50] I discuss this new singing style in chapter six.

privilege they have, as musicians from the capital, that allows them to "dabble" in different styles (see last section).[51]

Rethinking polarized discourses of place

The relationship between racialized discourses of place and claims of authenticity

In many cases, the perspectives and opinions expressed to me by folkloric musicians about the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" trope are illustrative of Michael Watt's notion of a "territorialization of history" – in this case, a "territorialization of expressive practices" – where the linking of a particular place (Matanzas) with various musical traditions (rumba, *bembé*, *Ararás*) serves to authenticate the specific performance style with which that person aligns him/herself. While the Matanzas musicians asserted a more obvious and uniform discursive "territorialization" through the use of "cradle" trope and the claims that Havana's traditions are culturally derivative, this type of authenticating discourse can also be detected in the claims of many of the Havana musicians. While two Havana musicians issued gendered, even emasculating, critiques of the Matanzas style of *batá* drumming in order to posit the superiority of the Havana style, another musician, Amado, attempted a reverse "territorialization" discourse by highlighting the historical existence of slaves and African-derived culture in the capital. This tendency suggests that, like Forman's "ghetto authenticity," assertions of regional/local identity are often entangled with the desire or need to claim authenticity in some arena, especially in the realm of expressive practice.

The construction of Matanzas as the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" is not only an example of the pervasiveness of racialized tropes of place in Cuba (and elsewhere). This discursive identity also constitutes a claim about the unparalleled cultural authenticity of the city and province of Matanzas within the country. Here I examine the articulation, in Stuart Hall's sense,[52] of two discursive formations embedded in the "cradle" notion: racialized tropes of place and assertions of cultural authenticity. The "cradle" notion is illustrative of the fact that in the minds of many Cubans and foreigners, and in academic scholarship, Matanzas is synonymous not only with blackness, but with "authentic" blackness. In the article discussed earlier, Katherine Hagedorn elucidates this entanglement between racialized tropes of place and discourses of authenticity that characterizes much of Cuban folkloric scholarship. Referencing Lydia Cabrera's research, she states, "Even as late as the 1980s, Matanzas has been coded as more 'African' than Havana" (Hagedorn 2003: 99). In fact, I would argue that this association of Matanzas with authentic African-derived culture still enjoys widespread currency in the twenty-first century both in academic scholarship and popular discourse.

Owing to this discursive "Africanization" of Matanzas, which has both historical and contemporary manifestations, the city and province have been constructed within the national

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[51] This type of privilege is most obviously evidenced in the racial politics of musical appropriation in the U.S. and Europe, where musicians can often perform or borrow from non-western traditions without any critique directed at them, while non-western musicians who do the same are accused of "selling out" or betraying their cultural heritage. I thank Jocelyne Guilbault for her guidance with this argument.

[52] Hall states, "An articulation is thus the form of a connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time" (Grossberg 1996 [1986]: 141).

imaginary as the main site of racially-defined tradition. The cultural capital bestowed upon Matanzas musicians owing to the racialized associations of the city is evident in their frequent claims that *Habaneros siempre están inventando* (are always making things up, i.e., introducing foreign elements into Afro-Cuban traditional practices), which function to de-authenticate all cultural production from Havana and present it as impure. In chapter one I discussed the widespread racialized stereotypes about *Oriente* – particularly the provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo – and the fact that it is often discussed as the "blackest" region of the country. While I therefore view both Matanzas and *Oriente* as geographical signifiers of blackness, I find that the two tend to be associated with different types of blackness respectively. Peter Wade's discussion of the relationality of blackness within Colombia is relevant here. He states, "The Atlantic coastal region is 'black' in relation to the Andean interior, but 'not so black' in relation to the Pacific Coast…the former [is] not so black, poor, or peripheral as the latter" (Wade 1993: 64). While Wade is focused on relative degrees of blackness, here I want to distinguish between cultural blackness and social blackness. Matanzas is constructed as the site of the most authentic and well-preserved African-derived traditions, which is a positive discourse that alludes primarily to the past and to historical phenomena, particularly the importation of large numbers of African slaves of diverse ethnic groups in order to work on the many sugar plantations that were built throughout the province. On the other hand, the racialized tropes about *Oriente* are negative in that easterners are thought to represent a criminal, socially deviant, and even foreign blackness.[53] In addition, this trope of criminal blackness is tied to contemporary social problems (as opposed to Cuba's slave past), exemplified in the idea that *Orientales*' illegal internal migration upsets the stability of the capital city and creates residential overcrowding. As should be evident, the discursive "blackness" that adheres to eastern Cuba is not valorized in the same way as that attached to Matanzas, which invariably invokes tropes of authenticity and purity vis-à-vis African-derived culture and customs. Matanzas, in other words, is constructed as a museum of blackness, which is why Afro-Cuban folkloric traditions are so important there: these practices memorialize and conjure up the country's African past. This is a benign form of blackness that neither creates social/regionalist tensions among Cubans from different provinces, nor threatens the hegemony of the nationalist hybridity discourse that denies racial difference in the present moment.[54]

Challenging the "cradle" discourse

There are historical explanations that underlie the polarizing cultural discourses that circulate about Havana and Matanzas, and that make a good argument for accepting these tropes as self-evident truths. The Matanzas region had the largest number of sugar mills, the largest number of

[53] As I argue in chapter one, *Orientales* are often stereotyped by *Habaneros* and other western Cubans as hustlers or petty criminals who migrate to and stay in the capital illegally. The "foreign" element of eastern blackness is represented on one hand by the long history of Afro-Haitian migration to *Oriente*, in the sense that Afro-Haitian culture and religion is still widely viewed as outside the limits of Afro-Cuban identity; even after 200 years of migration the cultural practices have not been "nationalized." On the other hand, eastern Cubans are also constructed as "foreign" through the use of terms such as *indocumentado* (undocumented) to refer to *Orientales* in Havana, which posits a parallel with illegal Mexican immigrants in the United States.

[54] While the nationalist hybridity discourses acknowledges the different racial components that make up the nation – i.e., Spanish and African ancestry – these distinct elements are considered to belong to Cuba's past, and have now "melted away" into one hybrid populace.

slaves on the plantations, and the most diverse combinations of African ethnic groups in nineteenth-century Cuba. Given this history, it is logical that the province became the focal point for African-derived religious and musical traditions. Conversely, Havana's population boasted the highest number of free people of color per capita, and was the seat of the Spanish colonial administration. Thus, there was bound to be more racial and cultural intermixing than in other parts of the country. Furthermore, as the capital, Havana has always been not only the locus of transnational interactions between Cubans and foreigners, but also the primary meeting ground for Cubans from different provinces migrating to the capital for economic opportunities.

Notwithstanding these social histories, my fieldwork experience has alerted me to the many ways that these racialized discourses of place essentialize and fix the cultural identities of these two cities, and how they fail to account for the diverse nature of rumba and folkloric performance in both Havana and Matanzas. I have come across several examples, both in the performance and repertoire of rumba and folkloric groups, and within the literature discussing the histories of different Afro-Cuban musical and religious practices, suggesting that these discourses of place warrant reconsideration. To begin, many folkloric groups in Havana are actively engaged in the preservation of traditional Afro-Cuban music and dance practices. Yvonne Daniel states that the CFN is prohibited from engaging explicitly in hybridizing practices (Daniel 1995), a constraint not faced by folkloric groups like Afrocuba de Matanzas that were formed independently of the government. It is precisely my research with Afrocuba that leads me to argue that tradition-bearing activities and hybridizing practices are not mutually exclusive, and consequently that viewing Matanzas and Havana as two poles on the tradition-innovation spectrum constitutes a false dichotomy.

Furthermore, as alluded to by Clave y Guaguancó director Amado Dedeu earlier, the capital has a long history of African-derived religious and musical practice that calls into question the notion that Matanzas is the unequivocal source of Afro-Cuban traditions. Referring to research conducted by Fernando Ortiz, María Teresa Vélez asserts that the first known set of *batá* drums was manufactured in Havana in 1830 (Vélez 2000: 53). This suggests that the Yoruba-derived drumming tradition was being performed in Havana at least as early as it was being practiced in Matanzas, and possibly earlier.[55] Similarly, while many Cubans consider Matanzas to be the birthplace and center of *Abakuá* religious practice, Vélez notes that the first all-male secret society appeared in Regla, an outlying municipality of Havana, in 1836 and then spread to other parts of the capital and to the port cities of Matanzas and Cárdenas (ibid: 17).[56] One further piece of evidence that complicates the notion that Matanzas is the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" concerns the history of the lesser-known religious practice called *Ararás*, which derives from the ancient kingdom of Dahomey in modern-day Benin.[57] It is commonly accepted in Cuban and foreign scholarship that the *Ararás* religion was first practiced in the Matanzas province, and is currently retained only in a few locales there (Martínez Furé 1979; Vinueza 1989; Delgado 2001). Nonetheless, celebrated Cuban folklorist Rogelio Martínez Furé cites Ortiz's research that

[55] Vélez states that there are no records concerning the first set of *batá* drums in Matanzas (Vélez: 53).
[56] Cárdenas is the second biggest city in the Matanzas province. Both Matanzas City and Cárdenas were important port cities that received shipments of slaves directly from Africa during the nineteenth century. The *Abakuá* religion has always had its stronghold among stevedores working on the docks in Havana, Matanzas, and Cárdenas.
[57] While slaves from Dahomey were not predominant in Cuba as compared to the numbers of Bantu and Yoruba slaves imported, they made up the most important African ethnic group among slaves sent to Haiti, where Dahomeyan-derived culture is the most influential. Thus, aside from *Ararás*, there are other Dahomey-derived traditions practiced in Cuba among Afro-Haitian communities.

found evidence of an *Arará cabildo*[58] in Havana as early as 1691 (Martínez Furé 1979: 123), which again suggests that the religion and related musical practice may have just as long a history in the capital as in Matanzas. These three examples of historical research indicate that Matanzas is not *the* "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture," although it certainly holds a privileged position with respect to the variety and preservation of African-derived traditions, but rather *a* "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture." Instead of continuing to reify this discourse of place, I believe it is more productive to explore why Matanzas has been singled out for this particular signification and why Matanzas-based musicians might be invested in upholding this notion.

Although it is a discourse that affirms the uniqueness of a particular place, the "cradle" notion also constructs a discursive barrier around the city's creative expression, and fails to take into account the multi-faceted nature of its musical identity. Innovation is not confined to the city of Havana, a point that is exemplified in fusions such as the Afrocuba creation *batarumba*. Broadly defined, *batarumba* is, as its name suggests, a hybrid subgenre within the rumba complex that fuses rumba rhythms and percussion instruments with rhythms taken from Yoruba-derived *batá* drumming.[59] *Batarumba* was created by various members of Afrocuba in 1973, and since that time has been not only a staple of the group's repertoire, but also one of the key musical signifiers of the group's identity.[60] Although there have been other rumba groups who have performed and recorded fusions under the name *batarumba*, it is commonly acknowledged that Afrocuba had the original idea and that the style is uniquely associated with their name.[61] Seemingly contradicting this association of a Matanzas group with a rumba fusion, the "cradle" notion discursively charges Matanzas with the burden of safeguarding Afro-Cuban sacred and secular traditions, a duty that involves the implicit or explicit discouraging of fusions of any kind. Thus, this trope of place is inherently at odds with, and cannot accommodate, the type of fusion embodied in *batarumba*.

Batarumba is not the only example of fusion found in Matanzas. One of the sons of well-respected *rumbera* and *Santera* (*Santería* priestess) Ana Pérez Herrera,[62] with whom I became very close during my fieldwork, is a percussionist working in a professional modern dance company, Danza Espiral. The company's pieces mix diverse genres, utilizing a combination of recorded instrumental music and live Afro-Cuban drumming as accompaniment for modern dance choreography. In addition to the innovative spirit that is perhaps as native to Matanzas as it is to Havana, it is important to note that the former is not a hermetically sealed locale severed from the current trends within popular music and culture that have taken hold across the island. Afro-Cuban folkloric music and dance practices are not the only form of creative expression performed or enjoyed by *Matanceros*. As in every other city and town in Cuba, people of all ages

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[58] *Cabildos de nacíon* were colonial-era mutual aid societies formed by African slaves and their descendants, which were formed principally along ethnic (national) lines. See Introduction for more details.

[59] I discuss *batarumba*'s musical elements and history in more detail in chapter six.

[60] Since the 1970s several Cuban popular music groups have also introduced sacred *batá* drums and rhythms into their repertoires. Among those who have experimented with this type of sacred-secular fusion is the famed Cuban jazz group Irakere, led by pianist Chucho Valdés, who have mixed *batá* rhythms with elements of jazz, dance music, rumba, and rock.

[61] In the wake of many imitations over the years, the veteran members of Afrocuba feel very possessive of their creation and think they should have a patent on the term *batarumba*, that is, that no other group should perform pieces with this name (p.c. with musicians, February-March 2007).

[62] Sister of Afrocuba singer Dolores Pérez, Ana is a longtime singer and dancer with Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. Afrocuba has been filled with other members of the Pérez family, including Ana's daughter, another sister, an uncle (who passed away a few years ago), an aunt, a nephew, and her son (an ex-member who moved to the U.S. in the late 1990s).

love listening and dancing to *timba* and the youth love reggaetón. In fact, several of the younger members of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas have founded a group in recent years called Rumba Timba, in which they mix rumba singing and percussion with musical elements from *timba* and reggaetón. This phenomenon indicates that rumba performance is being influenced by elements of popular music and style, and that rumba and *timba* are being reciprocally nourished by each other.[63]

A recent interview with Rogelio Martínez Furé, a *Matancero* by birth, constitutes an example of an academic challenge to the purity discourse entailed in the "cradle" notion. Martínez Furé was asked on the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the CFN (an institution he helped found), how his identity as a Matanzas native had influenced his formation as a folklorist. He spoke of his native city as a cosmopolitan and racially hybrid place, asserting that all of the major ethnic components of *Cubanidad* (Cubanness) were represented in Matanzas. In addition to the four major African ethnic groups brought to Cuba during slavery (Yoruba, Bantu, Calabar and Dahomey), Martínez Furé listed many non-African ethnic groups that coexisted in Matanzas during his childhood – Galicians, Dominicans, Chinese, Mexicans, Catalans, Jamaicans, other islanders, and North Americans (Martínez Furé 2004: 179). He noted that his ancestry included Mandinga, French, Spanish, Chinese, and probably some sort of indigenous blood if one looked back many generations, stating "I neither came from Spain, nor was I brought from Africa, but rather I am a native Cuban just like the royal palms (ibid.).[64] He summed up with a description of his native city that is very reminiscent of ways that Havana is often discussed: "Matanzas' culture is a perfect example of national identity, 'many and one' as Aimé Césaire would say, original and one of a kind, where the erudite and the popular…have been fused into a synthesis, which has permitted us to always be open to the world without forgetting where we came from, and above all, fully accepting who we already are" (ibid.).[65]

As a final illustration of the problematic nature of the "cradle" trope, I present a brief discussion of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, a group that has functioned as the international emblem for *rumba matancera* (Matanzas-style rumba), and has represented Cuban rumba in general, for more than fifty years. Given their almost universally acknowledged status as the embodiment of traditional rumba, it is useful to explore the opinions of Matanzas and Havana folkloric musicians regarding Los Muñequitos' current playing style. Specifically, I aim to question whether the discourse of tradition surrounding this emblematic group does justice to, or even accurately describes, the music they presently perform. In our interview, former Afrocuba artistic director Juan García asserted that Los Muñequitos have never actually played in the traditional style, even when they emerged and became popular in the 1950s. He stated that the group has always had its own signature style that differs in many ways from traditional *rumba matancera*, which he feels has been more faithfully represented by Afrocuba's playing style. Juan's comments could be viewed as biased, given his longstanding artistic association with Afrocuba, and as evidence of a certain level of competition that does in fact exist between the two famed Matanzas groups, despite their many familial connections. However, if I compare recent rumba performances by both Matanzas-based groups, I would agree that Afrocuba plays rumba in a

[63] I explore this phenomenon in more detail in my concluding remarks.

[64] "Ni vine de España, ni me trajeron de África, sino que soy cubano reyoyo como las palmas reales." The *palma real*, or royal palm, is native to Cuba and Florida.

[65] "La cultura matancera es un ejemplo perfecto de la identidad nacional, 'multiple y una' como diría Aimé Césaire, original y irrepetible, donde lo erudito y lo popular se han fusionado en una síntesis, que nos ha permitido estar siempre abiertos al mundo pero sin olvidar de donde vinimos, y sobre todo, asumiendo a plenitud lo que ya somos."

more traditional (i.e., less contemporary) style, partially owing to recent stylistic changes by Los Muñequitos that I describe below.

Further problematizing the association of Los Muñequitos with traditional *rumba matancera*, Cuban musicologist Nancy Grasso González presents biographical information about the group in her B.A. thesis (1989) suggesting that the original intentions in founding Los Muñequitos had as much to do with commercial interests as with preserving and/or representing a traditional practice. Following the lead of popular music studies scholars,[66] most U.S.-based ethnomusicologists no longer believe that commercial and artistic interests (including the preservation of "traditions") are antithetical to each other, and instead often argue that the two work in tandem with each other and constitute mutually beneficial objectives. Nonetheless, this is not a popular or accepted notion within Cuban scholarship, particularly because Marxist-Leninist ideology prescribes an unequivocal condemnation of commercial and capitalist (which equals "imperialist" in Cuban socialist discourse) interests. Thus, Grasso González goes against the grain by stating that the main objective in forming the group in 1952 was to record albums and radio programs, and that the group was actually put together by a businessman/producer along with one of the founding members. The amusing name Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, which translates to "The Comic Strips from Matanzas," was not even self-ascribed.[67] The group's original name was Guaguancó Matancero (Matanzas-style Guaguancó), but it was unofficially renamed by the Havana public after their song called "Los Muñequitos de Matanzas" gained widespread popularity in the 1950s. Thereafter the group adopted this name (Grasso González: 44). These biographical details illustrate that, despite the discourses of tradition that circulate widely about Los Muñequitos' performance practice, the group's initial success was mediated by their ties to commercial actors, particularly the opportunities they were given in terms of dissemination through recordings and the radio.

Turning to the issue of stylistic content, despite the normative narratives within published scholarship and foreign-oriented publicity accounts, it is widely believed in both Havana and Matanzas that Los Muñequitos are no longer playing like they used to. Many believe that they are shedding the "essence" of their signature style, particularly with regards to singing, an opinion that is illustrated well by Yoruba Andabo director Geovani del Pino's comments presented earlier. The legendary duo of Esteban Lantriz and Hortensio Alfonso, famously known as "Saldiguera" and "Virulilla," revolutionized rumba vocals in the 1950s.[68] Los Muñequitos created an unmistakable singing style that split up the soloist roles into three parts: one vocalist would sing the introductory *diana* section, two different vocalists would sing the *canto* section (the body or narrative of the song) in a harmonized duo, and the first singer would return as the improvising soloist for the *montuno* (call and response) section.[69] This singing format is still largely retained not only in Los Muñequitos' performances, but is also used in the majority of Afrocuba de Matanzas' rumba songs and even those of Havana-based Yoruba Andabo. Nevertheless, in

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[66] For example, see Frith 1987 and Negus 1997.

[67] *Los Muñequitos* literally translates to "the little dolls," but in Cuban Spanish *muñequitos* also refers to comic strips and TV cartoons. The hit song that inspired the group's name change made reference to a popular Cuban comic strip of the 1950s.

[68] While widely associated with Los Muñequitos, Virulilla and Saldiguera joined Afrocuba de Matanzas for a period of time later in their career. Grasso González, whose fieldwork was conducted in the 1980s, mentions both of them as members of Afrocuba at that time.

[69] Juan García was instrumental in elucidating the details of Los Muñequitos' innovations in rumba style, which, beyond the singing format, also included Esteban "Chachá" Vega's revolutions in *quinto* (improvising drum) playing and the expansion of its role within the ensemble. See also Grasso González's thesis (1989) on professional rumba groups in Matanzas for details regarding Los Muñequitos' innovations.

recent years younger singers have joined Los Muñequitos and seem eager to integrate elements of popular music into their style; the formation of the aforementioned fusion group Rumba Timba illustrates this desire for innovation. Former Los Muñequitos singer Ronald González stated in my interview with him that traditionally the group never had young singers; the younger members were either percussionists or dancers but it was always *los mayores* (the elders) who sang. Judging from the group's performances I witnessed between 2006 and 2008, the percussion style is changing as well. While they often start songs in a more "traditional" style, during the *montuno* section they engage in several breakdowns or stop-time sections where the conga drums drop out, leaving only the singers and idiophones (*claves*, *catá* and *shékere*),[70] and the musicians encourage audience participation through clapping. These musical changes suggest that Los Muñequitos' recent style has also been influenced, in addition to popular music, by innovations that have taken place in the last two decades in Havana-style rumba associated with the percussion style called *guarapachangueo*, which I discuss in detail in chapter six.

These anecdotes, taken both from published scholarship and my own ethnographic research, suggest that the "cradle" notion should be taken with a grain of salt, and understood more as a strategic deployment of a discourse of authenticity by various actors for various reasons, rather than as an unmediated reflection of the actual musical/cultural scene in Matanzas.

Racialized discourses of place and strategic positioning

Throughout this chapter I have been alluding to the structural and material effects of discursive formations such as the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture." Taking my cue from Donald Moore's analysis of spatiality and power relations in Zimbabwe, here I discuss the ways that the "cradle" trope may constitute an attempt by Matanzas musicians to position themselves in the center of cultural tourism centered on Afro-Cuban music, dance and religious practice. I argue that it is crucial for local musicians to assert their cultural power and the significance of their city in the face of its lack of visibility within the tourism industry and infrastructure generally.

It seems apparent when considering the opinions of the various musicians I interviewed, that Matanzas-based folkloric musicians are more invested in reinforcing the racialized discourse of place attached to their city than are Havana-based musicians in overturning it. Donald Moore states, "Where cultural practices *take place* matters because they are among the critical assemblages that *produce place*. A critically conceived spatiality challenges anthropologists to conceive of identity, territory, and power in more relational terms" (Moore: 12). Along these lines, I believe there is much at stake for Matanzas-based musicians in maintaining their identity as the "originators" of Afro-Cuban religious and musical practices via the "cradle" trope, for it is in many ways the only thing that distinguishes Matanzas from any other small Cuban city and that draws tourists to the city. Havana rumba musicians are in constant contact with foreigners and tourists, many of whom do not travel beyond the capital. Matanzas, in contrast, has a weak tourism infrastructure, which I described in detail in chapter three, that does not offer much to foreigners beyond those who go there specifically for religious purposes or to take lessons with members of Afrocuba or Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. Without a steady source of tourists and

[70] The *claves* are two wooden sticks that are beat against each other to play the clave rhythm that constitutes the rhythmic timeline for all styles of rumba. The *catá* is a hollowed out piece of sugar cane against which drumsticks are beat to play a complementary rhythm with the clave. The *shékere*, which is also used to accompany singing in certain *Santería* ceremonies, is a hollowed out gourd covered in beads. In rumba performance the *shékere* usually punctuates beat one of a four-beat measure, and doubles in density during the *montuno* section.

foreigners traveling to Matanzas, local musicians have less opportunity than their Havana counterparts to earn supplemental income in *divisa* ("hard" or dollar currency), and often experience periods of economic draught. Matanzas musicians, then, fall victim to the politics of place vis-à-vis the tourism industry, because of the geographically uneven ways in which the state has invested in an infrastructure to encourage tourism.[71]

My previous discussion of the flexibility of Havana musicians and their musical tastes also relates to this relative disempowerment of Matanzas-based musicians. As Havana and its cultural production occupy a hegemonic status on the island, specifically in terms of the cultural tourism industry, its musicians may feel that they can take more license and experiment with different styles than musicians from other, smaller locales, where a particular folkloric tradition is the primary signifier that allows them to claim a distinctive identity. In other words, musicians from Havana likely do not feel obliged to "defend" a cultural heritage that already has much influence throughout Cuba and abroad. On the other hand, the stakes are higher for Matanzas musicians in terms of reinforcing the "cradle" notion, as it helps them maintain a unique identity.

In *Nationalists, cosmopolitans, and popular music in Zimbabwe*, ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino states, "The tension here between the financial benefits of translocalism versus the artistic value of being rooted in a place and its lifeways provides a concrete microcosm of tensions defining Zimbabwean identities and music much more broadly" (Turino 2000: 92). In a similar vein, I view the locational and economic isolation of Matanzas as the hidden side of the double-edged sword that is entailed in being known as "the cradle of Afro-Cuban culture." As I discussed in chapter one and above, while there is relatively little antagonism between musicians from Havana and Matanzas, the former tend to consider the latter to be conservative and even "boring" in their approach to music-making. Hagedorn notes that although Matanzas-style drumming is characterized as more "African," people in Matanzas are "considered to be Havana's 'country cousins'" (Hagedorn 2003: 101). This statement perfectly elucidates the ways that carrying the label of "traditional" or "authentic" does not result in uniformly enhanced social power, and sometimes translates into economic marginalization. At a time when the national expansion of the tourism industry has created competition for foreign dollars among cultural workers, racialized discourses of place and related claims of authenticity heavily impact the livelihoods of folkloric musicians in different ways. They can lead to more opportunities for Matanzas musicians through the reification of the notion that in order to gain true, deep knowledge of an Afro-Cuban religious or musical tradition, foreigners must take lessons with Matanzas musicians. At the same time, foreigners interested in Afro-Cuban drumming traditions are a small minority of those who travel to the island. The continual orientation of the "cradle" trope towards an imagined African past (or for that matter, an imagined European-derived lost glory via the "Athens" nickname), rather than a hybrid present and future (represented by Havana), threatens to render Matanzas and its expressive practices obsolete. Furthermore, the lack of any systematic tourist infrastructure in Matanzas – working hotels and a wealth of dining and entertainment options – means that foreigners' visits will continue to be few and far between.

[71] As noted in chapter three, Matanzas may be suffering from its geographical proximity to Cuba's most famous beach resort, Varadero, where the government has invested heavily in creating a tourist infrastructure.

Conclusion

I want to emphasize that my intention in problematizing the naturalized link between Matanzas and "authentic" blackness or racially-defined tradition has not been to completely overturn the discourses embedded in the "cradle" notion, or to suggest that they are not based on real, historical phenomena. Instead, my aim has been to illustrate how the "cradle" notion essentializes the cultural identity of a city that in fact has a history of musical innovation within diverse genres, and to counter the assumption that one cannot find "authentic" Afro-Cuban folkloric representations in other places on the island. Matanzas *was* a focal point for plantation slavery and the preservation of various African-derived practices in the nineteenth century, and this history has left a strong cultural legacy. However, as evidenced by the flowering of European culture in the mid-nineteenth century, this is not Matanzas' only cultural legacy. Furthermore, as illustrated by the anecdotes about Havana's history, Matanzas is not only the only place with a long history of Afro-Cuban cultural expression.

Finally, notwithstanding the important impacts of cultural tourism, representing their city as the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" is not only and not even primarily an economic concern for Matanzas musicians. As they suggested in their interviews, their city and province's identity as the birthplace of many African-derived cultural traditions is profoundly intertwined with their own sense of self and their desire to proclaim a distinct local and provincial identity within Cuba. The "spatiality of identity" (Mitchell 2000) is a powerful force that is often entangled with discourses of authenticity. As I mentioned in chapter one, *Matanceros* often distinguish themselves from *Habaneros* in terms that allude to authenticity: they see themselves as more "genuine" and "down-to-earth" and not as interested in material consumption and external appearances. Seen in this light, the "cradle" notion and racialized tropes of authenticity attached to Matanzas can be viewed as an extension of themselves and their community identity formation. As such, it is unlikely that local musicians will disavow this discourse of place anytime in the foreseeable future.

CHAPTER FIVE

Rumberos, repertoire, and a turn towards the folkloric *espectáculo*

It has become rare to attend a rumba event in contemporary Cuba in which only rumba music is played. All of the major groups in the historic rumba cities of Havana and Matanzas have expanded their core repertoire to incorporate music and dances associated with the four main Afro-Cuban religions – Yoruba-derived *Santería*, Bantu-derived *Palo*, Calabar-derived *Abakuá*, and Dahomey-derived *Arará*. These sacred music and dance traditions are generally considered to be synonymous with "folklore" in Cuba.[1] Some groups, although they were founded as rumba ensembles, are no longer even associated primarily with rumba performance. Rumba has now become only one of several Afro-Cuban traditions that are represented in the *espectáculos*, or folkloric shows, that have become popular in the post-Soviet era of tourism in Cuba. How can we explain the increasing "folklorization" of rumba groups' repertoires that has been accomplished through the performance of rumba alongside sacred traditions?

This chapter explores shifts in the repertoires of several Cuban rumba groups, one in Matanzas and three in Havana, focusing specifically on the incorporation of Afro-Cuban sacred music and dance into their performance practices. In her book *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (2001), ethnomusicologist Katherine Hagedorn highlights the complex relationship between the performance of Afro-Cuban sacred music in ritual contexts and in folkloric shows respectively, and posits that the increasingly blurry boundaries between the sacred and secular realms have resulted in a proliferation of folkloric groups in the 1990s. This chapter examines how rumba groups have participated in the popularization of folkloric *espectáculos*, and asks, why are rumba groups now finding it desirable and/or economically necessary to perform Afro-Cuban sacred music in addition to their core rumba repertoire? Along with the rumba innovations I detail in the following chapter, I view this phenomenon as a relatively recent hybridizing practice within rumba performance. Thus, chapters five and six should be read in tandem, as discussing different manifestations of a larger trend of hybridizing in contemporary rumba performance: while here I discuss the performance of rumba alongside Afro-Cuban sacred music within *espectáculos*, chapter six examines two specific products/practices of hybridizing: *batarumba*, which also entails a synthesis of religious and secular traditions, and *guarapachangueo*.

Guiding this chapter is my belief that rumba has long occupied an interstitial space between the constructed categories of "popular/secular" and "folkloric/religious" music,[2] a taxonomization that reflects biases inherent in Western Enlightenment ideals of rationalism and positivism, and that posits an impermeable divide between the sacred and secular realms. Departing from the assumption that rumba does indeed occupy a position of in-betweenness – a postulation that would be more consistent with African-derived ideologies that do not dictate a

[1] Ethnomusicologist Katherine Hagedorn asserts that the term "folklore" refers "primarily to the religious performance traditions of those people of African heritage who were brought to the island during almost four centuries of the Atlantic slave trade, and secondarily to the apparently secular performance of traditions of Cuba's communities of African heritage" (Hagedorn 2001: 4). I highlight some issues surrounding the use of this term in my Introduction.

[2] See my Introduction for a detailed discussion.

strict separation between the religious and profane spheres (see below) – the performative mixing of rumba with sacred practices is not surprising. Nevertheless, this turn towards the folkloric *espectáculo* must be considered in relation to the particular historical moment in which it has taken place. Why has this phenomenon proliferated in the last twenty-five years in Cuba?[3] I draw on interviews and oral histories conducted with various musicians during my dissertation fieldwork to examine the different political, economic, and creative forces that have motivated these repertoire expansions, and the resultant imbrication of rumba with Afro-Cuban religious music.

Major shifts within the Revolutionary government's economic policies and ideologies in the post-Soviet era vis-à-vis the role of religion in a socialist state seem to have played an important role in the overall greater acceptance and displays of religiosity within the public sphere. However, contrary to widespread assumptions about the near-absolute control that socialist governments assert over national cultural expression, I will also present some musicians' narratives that downplay the role of state power in their artistic decisions. Thus, my analysis draws on a Foucaultian conception of power: I emphasize the multi-sited nature of power, and the notion that "Power is not restricted to political institutions. Power plays a 'directly productive role;' 'it comes from below;' it is multidirectional, operating from the top down and also from the bottom up" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 185). In other words, I argue that power does not only entail domination, or, in this case, the imposition of certain repertoire criteria by the Cuban state, but rather that there are various agents and forces that have compelled rumba groups to expand their repertoires to the sacred domain.

On a methodological note, I provide lengthy historical narratives about the four groups with whom I conducted research – Afrocuba de Matanzas, Clave y Guaguancó, Yoruba Andabo and Los Ibellis – for two principal reasons. First I want to contextualize each group's repertoire shift within its larger respective career trajectory in order to understand why the musicians made these decisions at particular moments. Second, and of equal importance, I aim to fill a lacuna in English-language scholarship on rumba: although there have been publications in which some of these groups have been mentioned, there have been no in-depth histories written about them, or about any specific rumba group. This is a striking gap in Cuban music scholarship considering that three of these groups – along with Los Muñequitos de Matanzas – have served as the principal purveyors and representatives of rumba performance in Cuba and internationally for the last several decades.[4]

Rumba's hybridized emergence

In order to examine the recent performance of rumba alongside Afro-Cuban religious music, it is important to understand that rumba has always been a hybrid musical practice. Primarily influenced by the instruments, rhythmic patterns, forms and dances of Central and West African traditions, rumba also integrates elements of European melody and Spanish language and poetic forms. It emerged as the main accompaniment for parties and secular festivities in poor black and racially mixed communities in western Cuba in the mid-late nineteenth century. Rumba is thus a decidedly secular and popular tradition (that is, if we accept the Enlightenment-derived

[3] Although my research indicates that the first repertoire expansions began around 1980, a decade before the onset of the economic crisis precipitated by the fall of the Soviet Union, they did not become a trend until the later 1980s and proliferated at an even faster rate during the 1990s.

[4] Los Muñequitos de Matanzas have been profiled more extensively in English-language publications, specifically in Daniel 1995, although they have never been the subject of a detailed history.

categories of "sacred" and "secular"). Nonetheless, from the outset, rumba incorporated percussion ensembles and dances associated with sacred African-derived practices, primarily of Bantu origin, but also influenced by Calabar-derived *Abakuá*. This stems from its emergence within *cabildos de nación*, mutual aid societies formed along ethnic/national lines by Africans and their descendants during the Spanish colonial regime. As I noted in my Introduction, *cabildos* functioned as the primary sites of cultural exchange between Africans of different ethnic groups, creating the conditions for the emergence of syncretic genres such as rumba (Crook 1992).

Moreover, and because of rumba's emergence within this context, *rumberos* have long been intimately involved in the religious practices of *Santería*, *Palo*, and/or *Abakuá*. Cuban musicologist Nancy Grasso González provides a useful commentary on the ways that rumba has been historically associated with sacred practice. She states that although rumba has never been linked to a specific Afro-Cuban religion and its objectives are very different from those of religious ceremonies, rumbas often *se forman* (are formed or started up) after a ceremony has been concluded, and/or near religious altars (Grasso González 1989: 8). Rumba has often served the function of "letting loose" and celebrating after the conclusion of the ceremony, the content of which is generally quite prescribed and includes little room for extemporization.

In *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, Yvonne Daniel discusses the intimate connections between rumba and *Santería* dance, noting that it is common for rumba dancers to incorporate steps and movements associated with various *orishas*, or Yoruba-derived deities, into their performances. She states, "Some might analyze *orisha* movements in rumba as the secularization of highly powerful religious dancing. Others may see it as sanctification, the process of making rumba special or holy by means of expressive behavior from a religious context" (Daniel 1995: 132). While these interpretations may be based on declarations from the musicians/dancers themselves, I also see another possible explanation for the incorporation of *orisha* dancing into the rumba milieu: because most of these dancers are practitioners of *Santería* and/or other Afro-Cuban religions, mixing genres in their rumba dancing may come quite naturally, just as rumba vocalists often incorporate sacred chants and refrains into their songs. In other words, as Grasso González suggests, rumba has an organic and historical relationship with Afro-Cuban sacred traditions. It is also crucial to emphasize that it has been primarily Western-trained ethnographers (Cuban scholars included), not the practitioners, who have advocated and perpetuated Enlightenment ideals of dualism and the related mutually exclusive categories of "sacred" and "secular."[5] Scholars of the African diaspora have critiqued this dichotomy as Eurocentric, and they have instead highlighted the absence of a strict separation of the two categories in African-derived epistemologies and expressive practices (Gilroy 1993; Floyd 1995; Spencer 1996).

Given rumba's hybridized context of emergence and its longstanding referencing of *Santería* songs and dances, it is perhaps not remarkable that professional rumba groups have begun to perform Afro-Cuban religious music. However, the notable proliferation of this phenomenon during the 1990s begs the question, why now?, and what has changed? As arguably the first group to expand its repertoire in this fashion in 1980, Afrocuba de Matanzas effectively transformed itself from a rumba group to a folkloric group. Several Havana-based rumba groups

[5] As Hagedorn's book suggests, some musicians do seem to have accepted this distinction as natural, although tellingly, is it is the head of percussion at the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional, which was founded by prominent folklorists in 1962 with the mission of representing the wide diversity of Afro-Cuban expressive practices, who reinforces this dichotomy (Hagedorn: 98). In other words, this musician's perspective can be explained by the fact that the CFN's mission is more intimately entangled with the cultural agenda of the state and its folklorists than any other folkloric group, and during the time of its emergence ideologies of scientific atheism were hegemonic.

engaged in similar repertoire expansions in the 1980s and 90s, although not all of them have "become" folkloric groups, in the sense that they are still associated primarily with rumba performance. The proliferation of repertoire expansions by rumba groups has resulted in a somewhat ambiguous politics of naming in terms of the labeling of groups as "rumba" or "folkloric." However, I also believe there are valid arguments for maintaining a distinction between the two categories. As opposed to the average show performed by Afrocuba de Matanzas, in which rumba represents only one of various traditions performed, the three Havana groups that I will discuss – Clave y Guaguancó, Yoruba Andabo and Los Ibellis – most often perform longer shows composed of two or three sets, only one of which is dedicated to Afro-Cuban sacred musical practices. In other words, rumba is still the main attraction of their shows.

Rumberos **and their repertoire expansionss**

Afrocuba de Matanzas

Afrocuba de Matanzas is a world-renowned folkloric group with one of the most diverse repertoires of Afro-Cuban music and dance traditions on the island. In addition to the performance of songs and dances representing the three principal Afro-Cuban religions – *La Regla de Ocha* (or *Santería*), *La Regla de Palo* (or simply *Palo*), and *Abakuá* (a secret male society/religion derived from the Calabar region of Nigeria) – Afrocuba performs songs and dances from sacred traditions that are now rarely practiced in religious contexts and then only in the province of Matanzas. These are *Iyesá*,[6] *Ararás*, *Bríkamo* and *Olokún.* During my four years of research with the group, I came to understand that Afrocuba is unique not only because they perform all of these traditions, but also because their repertoire includes distinctive set pieces that mix songs and rhythms from different traditions. For example, they created a set piece called Coro Folklórico (Folkloric Chorus), which includes songs and dances for various Yoruba-derived *orishas* (Eleguá, Ogún, Ochosi, Yemayá and Oyá), followed by two different Bantu-derived traditions that are often performed alongside one another (*Palo* and *makuta*).[7] The performative fusion of Yoruba- and Bantu-derived religious traditions is a novelty in itself, as they have very different rhythmic qualities and are almost never mixed in performance. Beyond this unusual concept, the *makuta* section is accompanied not only by its standard instrumentation of Bantu-derived conga drums, but also by Yoruba-derived *batá* drums, which makes for a surprising interpretation. During the performance of this hybrid piece, the dancers remain onstage the whole time and sing all of the refrains with the vocalists, which fills up the sonic space in a dramatic and powerful manner. During 2006-07 the group was constituted by five singers (three

[6] See Delgado 2001 for a detailed discussion of *Iyesá*, Vinueza 1989 for a detailed discussion of *Ararás*, and the *Atlas de los Instrumentos de la Música Folclórico-Popular de Cuba* (1997) for information on *Bríkamo* and *Olokún*. I give longer descriptions of the latter two religious practices in chapter four, footnotes 8 and 9.

[7] *Makuta* is a Bantu-derived dance that symbolizes an erotic game between a rooster and a hen, and has a highly infectious rhythmic matrix which impels one to get up and dance. It is widely believed to be a principal predecessor for rumba *guaguancó*.

men and two women), six percussionists (all men), and nine dancers (five women and four men).[8] Nine members, roughly half, were veterans of the group (i.e., they had been members for more than fifteen years).

Afrocuba performances are generally full folkloric *espectáculos*, meaning that they perform a prepared show in which an array of Afro-Cuban sacred and secular practices is presented.[9] An average Afrocuba show includes four to six choreographed group folkloric dances, which are usually followed by two to four rumba songs. Each rumba song represents a different genre within the rumba complex, for example, *guaguancó*, *columbia,* or *yambú*.[10] Afrocuba almost invariably ends their show with a *batarumba*, a rumba hybrid created by the group in 1973 that fuses rumba rhythms with sacred *batá* drumming, which I discuss in chapter six. The relative prominence of Afro-Cuban sacred music as compared to rumba in the group's performances reflects their current artistic mission, which is to represent the full depth and diversity of folkloric music and dance from the Matanzas province. In line with this objective, many of the group's performances have a didactic as well as entertainment function. Afrocuba's director often says a few words before each choreographed dance about the particular folkloric tradition being represented. However, Afrocuba was not founded with this all-encompassing artistic mission.

The group was born in 1957 under the name Guaguancó Neopoblano, which referred to the most popular style of rumba, *guaguancó*, and the Matanzas neighborhood from which most members came, Pueblo Nuevo. As with most rumba groups, they began as *aficionados*, amateurs, but quickly gained national attention at various festivals throughout the island. In 1968 they were evaluated by the *empresa,* the state-run artistic agency in each province that evaluates whether music and dance groups are of professional quality and manages a number of logistical details related to performance, transportation, and performers' salaries. The group was given professional status, and changed its name to Folklore Matancero, Matanzas-style Folklore. Nevertheless, the group's repertoire still did not include those traditions normally associated with folklore in Cuba, i.e., the music and dances of the various Afro-Cuban religions. In 1973, in honor of the creation of their rumba hybrid, the group's name was changed once again, this time to Afrocuba con su Ritmo Batarumba (Afrocuba with their Batarumba Rhythm). At this point the group's repertoire was still constituted by the various genres of the rumba complex, in addition to their signature *batarumba*. Even though they had acquired *batá* drums, these were used only to play *batarumba* and not to perform *Santería* music.

The major shift in repertoire came in 1980, and was prompted primarily by a mandate from provincial cultural officials to create a full-fledged folkloric group that would represent the Matanzas province, in the vein of the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional in Havana and the Conjunto Folklórico de Oriente that represents eastern Cuban folkloric traditions. Despite Matanzas' reputation as the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" and the fact that many rumba musicians had grown up playing Afro-Cuban religious music in ceremonies, there were no professional groups performing this music in folkloric contexts in Matanzas. The Agrupación Folklórica de Matanzas (Folkloric Group of Matanzas) was born, comprised of the members of four already existing groups – Afrocuba, famed rumba group Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, Cuba Nueva (a group that performed *música campesina* or Spanish-derived rural country music),

[8] Since beginning my research with Afrocuba in 2004, there have been a few departures and new additions, a trend that is common in all the groups with whom I worked. The singers have enjoyed the most continuity through the years – four of the five have been with the group for decades.

[9] This is not to say that they never perform all-rumba shows. On occasions the group is asked to do so, and they have a vast repertoire of rumba songs from which to choose.

[10] See Introduction for a brief discussion of the distinctions between these styles.

and Emikeké (a folkloric group formed in the 1970s by celebrated Matanzas percussionist Felipe García Villamil).[11] Cuba Nueva had been included in order to emphasize that "folkloric music" did not refer only to music of African descent, but also to music of rural, Spanish origin.

Choreographer Juan García was sent on "loaned service" from Havana's Conjunto Folklórico Nacional to the new Matanzas folkloric group in order to choreograph group dances representing the various African-derived sacred practices in Matanzas. García is a prolific scholar-performer who studied ethnology and folklore at the Cuban Institute of Ethnology and Folklore. As a performer, he joined the CFN in 1966 (only four years after its foundation), where he was a dance soloist, professor of folklore and folkloric dance, and where he served as director between 2000 and 2004. He has served as an *asesor de folklore*, someone who advises professional groups on what constitutes authentic folklore, for the following prestigious groups besides the CFN: the Conjunto Folklórico de la Universidad de la Havana (Folkloric Group of the University of Havana), Conjunto Folkórico de Oriente in Santiago, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, and Afrocuba de Matanzas. García would serve as Afrocuba's artistic director for many years, and the group still retains many of his choreographies in their repertoire.[12]

The Matanzas provincial folkloric group was short-lived, and disbanded in 1981. According to veteran members of Afrocuba whom I interviewed, the major cause of the rupture was the desire by Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, who were already internationally famous, to continue as a separate entity dedicated exclusively to rumba performance. The irony is that, as folkloric *espectáculos* have become more popular and economically viable in the post-Soviet era of tourism in Cuba, Los Muñequitos have now found it necessary to incorporate the music and dances of *Santería* and other Afro-Cuban religions in order to be considered a more "complete" group.

After the departure of Los Muñequitos and Cuba Nueva from the province-wide folkloric group, the former members of Emikeké joined Afrocuba. The group decided to retain the designation of "folkloric group" and, correspondingly, the mission of representing the diversity of Matanzas folklore. Afrocuba director Francisco "Minini" Zamora emphasized the importance of the group's preservation of music and dance traditions not found in any other province of Cuba, such as the Dahomey-derived *Arará* songs and dances.[13] In fact, several sources – including one of Cuba's most prominent musicologists, Maria Elena Vinueza, who is Ecuadorian by birth – consider Minini to be one of the leading actors in reviving the *Arará* tradition in Matanzas, which had been "dying out" due to the death of elders. This cultural rebirth has had reverberating effects, as rumba and folkloric groups in Havana have begun to incorporate *Arará* songs and dances into their *espectáculos*.

Despite the critical acclaim and popularity garnered by Afrocuba both within Cuba and internationally, and their consistently demanding performance schedule, the group has suffered in the last ten years from underexposure. They recorded one studio album in 1998, *Raíces Africanas* (Shanachie Records),[14] that has enjoyed widespread popularity and circulation among

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[11] García Villamil's life is profiled in ethnomusicologist María Teresa Vélez's book *Drumming for the Gods* (2000).

[12] The biographical information about Juan García is drawn from both an interview that I conducted at Juan's home in Matanzas on March 2, 2007, and from the website AfroCubaWeb.com.

[13] Unless otherwise noted, all information is drawn from an interview that took place on February 12, 2007 at Minini's home in Matanzas.

[14] As in this case, many Cuban music groups have recorded albums with non-Cuban labels since the 1990s. This opportunity became available to musicians only after the expansion of the tourism industry and the government's decision to allow foreign investment in the island's tourist and cultural sectors. Before the 1990s the only state-run recording company was Egrem Records, but even now, there are still only two Cuban companies: Egrem and BIS Music.

foreign aficionados of Afro-Cuban folklore, so much so that it is often considered to be the Afro-Cuban folkloric album par excellence. However, apart from a jazz fusion project/album that the group recorded with saxophonist Steve Coleman in 1996,[15] the group has not been able to record another studio album featuring their primary repertoire since that time.[16] Moreover, in contrast to Afrocuba's many tours to the United States, Europe and even Africa from the late 1980s through the 1990s, the group has had several foreign tours cancelled for various reasons in the last several years. The dearth of recording and international touring opportunities is partially related to the increase in antagonistic rhetoric and hardening of foreign policy between the U.S. and Cuba during George W. Bush's administration.[17]

Notwithstanding these obstacles, there are a few signs that Afrocuba's international exposure may increase again soon. First, English ethnomusicologist Christian Weaver and his performing arts company La Timbala Music and Dance produced and released two DVDs documenting Afrocuba's repertoire and performance traditions in 2007. The first, called *Afrocuba de Matanzas: 50 Years On*, is a staged *espectáculo* performance filmed in various locales in the city of Matanzas, and the second is called *Afrocuba de Matanzas: Live at El Palenque -Havana 2005*, a live all-rumba performance filmed at the headquarters of the CFN in Havana.[18] Second, the United States' foreign policy towards Cuba has changed somewhat under the Barack Obama administration, at least in terms of cultural exchange. Although President Obama has not signaled that he will end the economic embargo in the near future – in fact, he renewed it for one year in September 2009 – Cuban musicians and artists have begun to receive visas again to perform in the U.S. since fall 2009.[19] Finally, I have recently learned from a fellow rumba scholar that in late 2009 Afrocuba de Matanzas recorded a new album at the Egrem studios (the principal Cuban recording studio and company) that consists mostly of rumba and *batarumba* songs and that will be released quite soon. I find this news to be quite interesting for the purposes of this chapter, as this new album seems to be somewhat incongruous with the longstanding focus of the group's performances (i.e., Afro-Cuban folkloric, not rumba, repertoire), and am anxious to speak to Minini about this decision on my next trip to Cuba (and of course, to hear the album).

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[15] Coleman's Afro-Cuban/jazz fusion album is entitled *The Sign and the Seal: Transmissions of the Metaphysics of a Culture* (BMG France, 1996). Rather than feature Afrocuba's repertoire as such, the album experiments with a mix of odd-meter jazz rhythms and traditional Afro-Cuban rhythms and songs. The group also toured in Europe with Coleman in 1996, the same year as the recording. See Dessen 2004 for an analysis of this fusion project.

[16] Their songs have been featured on various compilation CD's and they participated in the Smithsonian-sponsored Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C. in 1989, which led to the release of a live album entitled *Cuba in Washington* (Smithsonian Folkways, 1989) and featured various Cuban music groups.

[17] See my Introduction, foottnote 28 for a discussion of the additional restrictions imposed by the Bush administration, which included the systematic denial of travel visas for Cuban artists to perform in the U.S.

[18] See Bodenheimer 2010 (forthcoming) for a review of the DVDs.

[19] Cultural exchange in the reverse direction since the election of Barack Obama – i.e., from the U.S. to Cuba – has been dealt with in a more inconsistent manner. In summer 2009 the New York Philharmonic was extended an unprecedented invitation to perform in Cuba, which they eagerly accepted, but in October the trip was postponed because the Treasury Department denied permission for the orchestra's patrons, who were financing the tour, to travel to the island. This, despite the fact that the Philharmonic was allowed to travel to North Korea the previous year with their patrons. On the other hand, the popular 1970s funk band Kool and the Gang, which has always enjoyed enormous popularity in Cuba, was permitted to perform in Havana in December 2009.

Clave y Guaguancó

Havana-based Clave y Guaguancó is considered to be one of the capital's elite rumba groups since its reconstitution in the early 1980s. The group is perhaps best known for creating rumba fusions with a variety of Cuban and foreign musical practices, such as hip-hop, flamenco, Afro-Cuban religious music, Brazilian popular music, and *música campesina* (Spanish-derived rural country music).[20] Clave y Guaguancó has recorded several songs that fuse *batá* drumming with rumba rhythms, although the group's longtime director Amado Dedeu maintains that that there are crucial differences between his group's creations and the *batarumbas* of Afrocuba de Matanzas.[21] One Cuban journalist has even labeled Clave y Guaguancó a *grupo experimental* (experimental group) (Herrera 2002). The group seems to have a looser conception of fusion than most groups do: in October 2006 I observed them perform a fusion of a Yoruba-derived *orisha* song and an *Abakuá* song, two traditions that are not "supposed" to be mixed, which elicited strong reactions from several musicians and which I discuss in chapter six. During 2006-07, the group was composed of five singers (three men and two women), five percussionists (all men), and four dancers (two men and two women), the majority of whom were not veterans of the group.[22]

Although hybridizing practices are central to the group's identity, Clave y Guaguancó (whom I sometimes refer to here as "Clave") has always injected an element of tradition into their rumba performances. This "traditional" side of the group is expressed in part through their song repertoire, which draws on the *coro de clave* tradition that is widely thought to have died out in the early twentieth century.[23] Another way that tradition is invoked within Clave y Guaguancó's performances is through the group's longstanding use, some would argue revitalization, of *cajones*, wooden boxes of various sizes that served as rumba's main percussion instruments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, before the introduction of the conga drum to rumba's instrumental ensemble.[24] The group's performances often have a diverse quality with regards to their rumba repertoire: at any given event a rumba fusion can be followed or preceded by a song from the now-extinct *coro de clave* tradition.[25] In other words, Clave y Guaguancó's style defies categorization into simplistic binary terms such as "traditional" or "modern/innovative."

Interestingly, the group also performs songs from Afro-Haitian traditional repertoire, which is maintained primarily in the eastern Cuban provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo and the central province of Camagüey (the principal sites of immigration and settlement of Haitians in Cuba). This is a surprising repertoire choice, considering the fact that Afro-Haitian folkloric

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[20] See their albums *Déjala en la Puntica* (1996, Egrem Records), *Noche de la Rumba* (1999, Tumi Records) and *La Rumba Que No Termina* (Cuba Chévere Musikproduktionen, 2006) for examples of these fusions.

[21] Unless otherwise noted, all information is drawn from an interview that took place on October 24, 2006 at Amado's home in Central Havana.

[22] Unlike the format of Afrocuba de Matanzas, the members of Clave y Guaguancó often served dual functions: one of the female singers was also one of the two female dancers, the other female dancer would often join the five singers, two of the percussionists were also frequent singers, and both of the male dancers alternated playing a percussion instrument, in addition to the five primary percussionists.

[23] See chapter four, footnote 46 for an explanation of the *coros de clave* tradition.

[24] The reintroduction of *cajones* into rumba instrumentation, linked to the creation of the percussion style *guarapachangueo*, has become extremely widespread in the past two decades. Most professional rumba groups in Havana currently utilize a combination of conga drums and *cajones* as their standard instrumental ensemble in their performances, which provides much more timbral variety within the percussion section.

[25] While the tradition of choirs circulating on the streets of Havana and Matanzas around Christmastime is now defunct, some of the elder *rumberos* are still familiar with its repertoire.

traditions are not nearly as valorized within the national imaginary as the Afro-Cuban traditions associated with the western part of the island.[26] In fact, it seems somewhat incongruent that the group performs, and thus valorizes, these eastern Cuban traditions, while also releasing a provocative song such as "Para Gozar, La Habana" (discussed in chapter one), which takes a decidedly regionalist stance and mocks the accents and customs of *Orientales* (eastern Cubans). In many of Clave y Guaguancó's performances that I attended in Fall 2006, the group played and sang *merengue haitiano* (the eastern Cuban manifestation of the influential Haitian popular genre *meringue* [French] or *mereng* [Creole]), suggesting that it has become a core part of their repertoire. The audience always responded with great enthusiasm and dancing, and during one performance I even witnessed some Havana audience members requesting that the group play *merengue haitiano*.[27] When I compared Clave's version to the genre recognized in Haiti as *meringue/mereng*, there were a number of obvious sonic differences between the two, although both are sung in Creole. Haitian *mereng*, which emerged after the Haitian Revolution, combines the music of European figure dances, such as *contredanse*, with Bantu-derived secular dance musical practices, and makes use of melodic instruments (Averill 1997). The conga drum and bell patterns used in the Clave y Guaguancó *merengue* sound very similar to those used in the Haitian *mereng* recordings I listened to. It is primarily the use of melodic instruments in the latter, particularly guitar and accordion, that accounts for the very different sounds between the two. The result is that Clave's *merengue* sounds much more like other Afro-Cuban secular drumming and song traditions, and has particular rhythmic similarities with the Bantu-derived *makuta*.[28]

Clave y Guaguancó was founded on November 2, 1945 (the Day of the Dead) by a group of *rumberos* who decided to go to the cemetery and honor their ancestors by playing *rumba de cajón* or *rumba de tiempo España* (rumba with *cajones*, or rumba "from the time of Spain," both used to refer to old-style rumba as played during Spanish colonial rule). The group's name, Clave y Guaguancó, refers explicitly to their original repertoire, which consisted of *guaguancós*, *yambús*, and *coro de clave* songs, the last of which group director Amado characterized as having a very "lyrical" quality. I was surprised to learn that the group's emergence predated the 1952 formation of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, widely thought to be the oldest extant rumba in Cuba. Clave y Guaguancó's relative obscurity in their early years seems to be related to the fact that they did

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[26] See chapter one for a discussion of the relative lack of attention given to Afro-Haitian traditions within national cultural discourse.

[27] As I noted in chapter one, footnote 88, several ethnomusicologists have discussed the historical Haitian influence on Cuban popular music (Averill 1989, 1997; Hill 1998; Carpentier 2001; Sublette 2004; Lapidus 2005a), which dates back to the early 19th century with the introduction of a creolized version of the French *contredanse* (country dance) by French planters and their slaves fleeing to eastern Cuba after the Haitian Revolution. Notwithstanding the academic recognition of the influence of Haitian music in Cuba during the 19th century, there has been no scholarship on 20th century Haitian musical influences in Cuba, particularly the introduction of the Haitian *mereng* into Afro-Haitian folklore in eastern Cuba. According to Gage Averill, Haitian singer Martha Jean-Claude was the main agent in bringing *mereng* to Cuba when she left Haiti in 1954 and settled in eastern Cuba for the rest of her life. She recorded several albums in Cuba featuring Haitian *merengs* (email exchange with author, February 2009). Furthermore, Cuba's most famous female singer, Celia Cruz, recorded at least one Haitian *mereng* called "Gede Zaryen," which she also performed live in Haiti in 1995 at the First International Haitian Roots Music Festival. Global Beat Records released a concert CD of this festival in 1996.

[28] I was fortunate, during my fieldwork, to be able to record one performance by a folkloric group specializing in Afro-Haitian traditions, Siete Potencias, which is originally from Guantánamo but is now based in Havana. I compared recordings of the *merengues* played by Clave and Siete Potencias respectively, in order to determine if Clave was performing a "traditional" *merengue haitiano* or whether they had their own version. I found that the two *merengues* were indeed very similar, and consequently that Clave was performing an eastern Cuban folkloric genre quite faithfully.

not enjoy the widespread media exposure, specifically through radio, that catapulted Los Muñequitos to stardom in the mid-1950s. In their early days, the group played mainly at private parties, but many of the founding members soon left the group to play with *son* groups, which were more economically viable than rumba groups in the 1940s and 50s (Mestas 2002). When speaking of the history of *coros de clave*, Amado exhibited a knowledge of Cuban folklore scholarship by invoking Fernando Ortiz's notion of transculturation to explain the organological history of the practice. He noted that the African American banjo was adapted for use in this tradition as an instrument called the *viola*, which removed the strings (from the standard viola used in western European art music) and served a percussive function in accompanying the *coro de clave* songs.

Prominent folklorists Odilio Urfé and Argeliers León helped reunite the group after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution (Basanta 2001; Mestas 2002), but Clave y Guaguancó still languished in obscurity until the mid-1980s, when current director Amado Dedeu formally joined the group. Although Amado had always had a personal connection with the group through his grandfather's friendship with Clave's founding director, Mario Alán, he did not formally join the group until 1984. By this time Alán had passed away and Miguel Chappotín, the celebrated rumba singer, was directing the group.[29] Amado's assumption of the leadership of Clave y Guaguancó around 1986 was the key to the group finally gaining widespread attention and recognition. The group's repertoire had remained basically unchanged since its inception, and the percussionists were still playing only with *cajones*. Amado added *tumbadoras* (conga drums), which had become the standard rumba percussion instrument in the 1930s and 40s. His principal artistic mission was to amplify and modernize Clave's repertoire, while simultaneously preserving the group's unique legacy of performing historic rumba and *coro de clave* songs. The main repertoire changes consisted of the creation of rumba fusions with various genres, and the expansion of the group's repertoire to include the performance of Afro-Cuban religious traditions such as *Lukumí* and *Abakuá.*

Believing that Afrocuba de Matanzas' repertoire expansion may have influenced other rumba groups, I asked Amado whether Clave y Guaguancó's inclusion of Afro-Cuban sacred genres had also been prompted by their group's *empresa*, interested in pursuing a more varied and thus more profitable *espectáculo*. Amado responded that Clave's repertoire expansion had nothing to do with initiatives by the *empresa*, which he characterized as being concerned solely with whether the group was fulfilling its mandated quota of monthly musical performances, and not their content. Instead he attributed the repertoire changes to the *inquietudes,* or creative restlessness, on the part of the musicians and a desire to play diverse genres. He emphasized that while this desire for creative expansion happened to dovetail with the imperatives of cultural tourism, i.e. repertoire variety, this shift appealed not only to foreign audiences, but also to national Cuban audiences seeking diversity within performances. In terms of the genealogy of *espectáculos* in general, Amado cited the possible influences of folkloric groups such as the CFN and Raíces Profundas, and their mission to represent a diverse array of Afro-Cuban music and dance traditions. He pointed out that many founding members of the CFN, such as Raíces Profundas director Juan de Dios, left the group in order to start their own folkloric groups with a similar artistic agenda.

Clave's repertoire expansion seems to be at least somewhat linked to the *peña de rumba*, or rumba event, with which they were associated for roughly fifteen years until recently. The *Peña del Ambia* (Ambia's gathering), which I discussed in detail in chapter three, was initiated in 1985

[29] Chappotín would later move on to be the lead singer for Yoruba Andabo, with whom he achieved great acclaim.

and is still held on the patio of the UNEAC (Union of Cuban Writers and Artists) on alternating Wednesdays. The first rumba group to serve as the "house band" was actually Yoruba Andabo, under a different name at that time. As will be discussed below, the event was pivotal in launching their professional career. Amado estimated that Clave y Guaguancó became the principal house band around 1991. Their association with this very popular and longstanding rumba event has undoubtedly been a principal factor in the group's success in the last two decades. In the past few years the *Peña del Ambia* has moved in the direction of presenting *espectáculos*, where the first half is dedicated to folkloric/religious music and the second half is dedicated to rumba. Until recently Clave y Guaguancó was responsible only for the second part of the event, but around mid-2006 the group began performing the folkloric section of the *peña* as well. I believe this signaled a turn for the group towards *espectacúlo*-based, rather than only rumba-based performance.[30] While the group abruptly ceased to be the house band at the *Peña del Ambia* in January 2007 for reasons I was not able to discern, they continue to perform *espectacúlo*-based shows in other Havana venues.

Unlike Afrocuba de Matanzas, Clave y Guaguancó has been able to maintain a steady recording schedule since the mid-1990s, including the following studio albums: *Songs and Dances* (Xenophile Records, 1994), the highly acclaimed *Déjala en la Puntica* (Egrem Records, 1996) – on which they included a rumba-rap fusion – *Noche de la Rumba* (Tumi Records, 1999), and *La Rumba Que No Termina* (Cuba Chévere Musikproduktionen, 2006). The group was also featured, along with Yoruba Andabo and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, on an acclaimed collaborative recording called *La Rumba Soy Yo* (BIS Music, 2000). While I was conducting research with the group in Fall 2006 they were shooting an *espectáculo*-based DVD of live performances (where the audience also appears), which, to my knowledge, has not yet been released. Due to the high profile the group has maintained in the last twenty years, which is partially related to being a Havana-based group,[31] Clave y Guaguancó has also been able to secure many foreign tours, and has not suffered from underexposure internationally like Afrocuba. As discussed in chapters three four, this exposure is intimately linked to the politics of place vis-à-vis the tourism industry, or the fact that Havana-based musicians are in a position of privilege as compared with musicians from Matanzas and the rest of the island, as they have much more frequent contact with foreigners.

Yoruba Andabo

Along with Clave y Guaguancó, Yoruba Andabo has constituted the Havana rumba elite for over twenty years. Yoruba Andabo currently enjoys a level of popularity and audience support that is unrivaled by any rumba group in either Havana or Matanzas, an upswing that group director Geovani Del Pino attributes largely to the younger members who have joined the group

[30] Amado seemed to assert in our interview that Clave's expansion of repertoire happened much earlier, perhaps in the late 1980s, although it is hard for me to determine whether he was referring to the performance of sacred Afro-Cuban traditions as such, or the rumba fusions that incorporate elements of those religious musical practices. Raul García's article in an issue of the magazine *Salsa Cubana* (2000) is similarly vague on the distinction between the two, asserting that in recent years, i.e. the late 1990s, Clave has incorporated *Santería* and *Abakuá* songs into their repertoire.

[31] Los Muñequitos de Matanzas are a clear exception to the general rule that Havana-based musicians enjoy more widespread media diffusion than those from other provinces in Cuba.

in the past few years.[32] Yoruba Andabo lead singer Ronald González, who is from the eastern Cuban city of Santiago, is rumba's most recognizable star at the moment. He has managed to attract a whole new generation of rumba aficionados in their early 20s, principally by inserting choral refrains from popular, mass-mediated reggaetón songs into the *montuno* (call and response) section of rumba songs. In addition, a few percussionists in their early-mid 20s have recently joined the group, bringing an energized physical presence and a more improvisatory style of playing to Yoruba Andabo's performances. During 2006-07, the group members included six singers (five men and one woman), six percussionists (all men), and four dancers (two men and two women), the majority of whom were not veterans of the group.[33]

The group was founded in the early 1960s, during the formative years of the Cuban Revolution, by Havana dockworkers under the auspices of their union, the Sindicato de Marina Mercante y Puertos. The formation of the group as a representative of this union relates to the longstanding historical association between dockworkers and *rumberos*. In the decades following emancipation in 1886, many Afro-Cubans found work as stevedores in the ports of western Cuban cities such as Havana, Matanzas, and Cárdenas.[34] It was the musicians' occupation, in fact, that inspired the group's original name: Guaguancó Marítimo Portuario (Sea Port Guaguancó). As with the majority of rumba groups at this time, the members were all amateur musicians, and none of them had full-time music-related occupations. During the 1960s the group played mainly for union events attended by fellow workers, and also in festivals organized by the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba, or Confederation of Cuban Workers, which functions as a centralized organism that represents many local and national unions and millions of workers. Like Afrocuba de Matanzas, the group gained widespread attention by winning several national amateur festivals.[35] Yoruba Andabo director Geovani, one of only two founders still with the group today, recounted that by the late 1960s the group had begun to disintegrate due to a lack of organization. Apart from playing occasionally at private birthday parties, they had all but stopped performing.

Yoruba Andabo's history presents an intriguing parallel to that of rival rumba group Clave y Guaguancó: both groups were reconstituted and gained professional status in the mid-1980s. As noted above, Yoruba Andabo's launching pad was, in fact, the event which Clave y Guaguancó eventually took over: the popular *Peña del Ambia*. Its founder, black poet Eloy Machado, known as "El Ambia," invited Yoruba Andabo to perform at his event's inception in 1985, when the group was not even actively performing. Yoruba Andabo director Geovani asserted that the musicians decided to start playing at the UNEAC simply *para pasar el tiempo* (to pass the time). Several weeks

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[32] Unless otherwise noted, all information is drawn from two interviews that took place on December 1, 2006 and January 12, 2007 at Geovani's home in Central Havana.

[33] Although the two female dancers sometimes joined the singers, Yoruba Andabo's members did not serve dual performing functions to the extent that Clave y Guaguancó's members did.

[34] Rumba's organological history is intimately linked to work on the docks: the use of conga drums as rumba's main percussion accompaniment was preceded by *cajones*, wooden boxes of various sizes that could be easily obtained by workers in the ports. Rumba historiography asserts that large boxes used to ship *bacalao* (salted cod) served as the low-range percussion instrument while the higher ranges were obtained through the use of small boxes used to ship candles.

[35] Geovani is quoted in Cuban scholar Rosa Esther Álvarez Vergara's 1989 thesis, as stating that the group won three consecutive national amateur festivals while associated with this union. She divides the group's career into three stages: the first, from their inception until 1970, where they were performing mostly for union events and private parties; the second, from 1970-87, characterized by a lack of participation in institutional events and personnel shakeups within the group, as some of the founders emigrated to other countries; and the third stage, from 1988 on, characterized by a resurgence of performing at institutional cultural events.

later, the legendary *nueva trova* singer Pablo Milanés showed up and was so taken with the group that he invited them to perform with him at the prestigious Karl Marx Theater.[36] Geovani recounted the amusing story of how the group's new name came about: in approaching the group, Milanés asked Geovani what the group was called. Taken by surprise, Geovani blurted out "Yoruba Andabo," which had come to mind spontaneously when he glanced at one of the *cajones* of famed Yoruba Andabo percussionist Pancho Quinto and saw these words written on the instrument. In other words, the name of the group, meaning "friends or followers of Yoruba" in the Yoruba language (or at least in *Lukumí*, the Cuban derivative of Yoruba) came to Geovani inadvertently. From that point on, he became the director of the newly named group. Yoruba Andabo stayed on as the house band at the *Peña del Ambia* until 1987, at which point UNEAC members closed down the Wednesday rumba event for a period of time. As I discussed in chapter two, Geovani, who didn't specify exactly how long the event was suspended, referred to the initiators of the closure as the "enemies of rumba," those who held discriminatory and racist attitudes towards rumba and its participants and followers. I can only assume the closure lasted a substantial period of time, since by the time it reopened, Yoruba Andabo had moved on to other professional activities.

Yoruba Andabo's chance meeting with Milanés was auspicious in many ways: not only did his invitation for them to perform with him at the Karl Marx Theater mark a transition from amateur to professional status,[37] but he also offered to buy them instruments, including conga drums and *batá* drums – a generous gift that allowed them to expand their repertoire beyond rumba.[38] Until they began playing at the UNEAC and acquired the new instruments from Milanés, the group that became Yoruba Andabo had only been able to perform *rumba de cajón* (*cajón*-based rumba) and *Abakuá*, much like Clave y Guaguancó before their professionalization. *Abakuá* is played on its own set of Calabar-derived percussion instruments in ritual contexts, but rumba percussion is often substituted in folkloric performance.[39] As is widely known, rumba and *Abakuá* have a historically intimate relationship, dating back to the post-emancipation period when many dockworkers in western Cuban port cities were *Abakuá* practitioners as well as rumba enthusiasts, and evidenced by the fact that most rumba albums include at least one *Abakuá* song.

When discussing the impetus for Yoruba Andabo's repertoire expansion after the group's reconstitution in 1985, Geovani asserted that the Cuban audience at the UNEAC rumba event had been requesting the performance of *Santería* music, but that the group did not have a set of *batá* drums. He thus emphasized that the principal catalyst for the repertoire change was the group's acquisition of instruments required to perform different Afro-Cuban musical traditions. He also presented Yoruba Andabo's repertoire expansion as a natural extension of rumba

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[36] *Nueva trova*, or the new song movement that emerged in the 1960s, is the musical genre most closely associated with the socialist ideologies of the Cuban Revolution, although its proponents have not always been deemed uncontrovertibly "revolutionary" by cultural officials within the Castro regime, and have at times faced censorship. Unlike the majority of Cuban popular music that emerged during the twentieth century, which was strongly oriented towards social dancing, the focus of *nueva trova* has always been the lyrics, and the music is meant for listening and reflection. See Moore 2006 for more background on the *nueva trova* movement.

[37] Geovani did not specify the exact date when the group became professional, signified by their entry into the *empresa* system. Álvarez Vergara's thesis (1989) suggests this happened in the late 1980s.

[38] Milanés also went on to produce their first album in 1993, *El Callejón de los Rumberos* (Ayva Records), which is universally acclaimed among rumba scholars and enthusiasts. One of the songs on the album is a rumba-style adaptation of Milanés composition, "El Breve Espacio."

[39] Afrocuba de Matanzas is the only group with which I conducted research that performs *Abakuá* music with *Abakuá* drums instead of congas. That they own a set of these drums may have to do with the fact that Matanzas is known to have a particularly strong *Abakuá* tradition.

performance, stating that although rumba is secular music "its roots are in sacred music, in the union of African sacred music with Spanish music and influences from other places," and clearly refuting the Enlightenment-derived separation of the sacred and secular realms.[40] Notwithstanding Geovani's perspective, one Yoruba Andabo percussionist whom I interviewed, Francisco "Frank" Queralta Borrero, asserted that before the mid-1980s rumba groups were only performing rumba, and began to perform Afro-Cuban sacred traditions due to appeals from the *empresas* and rumba venues that wanted to present a more varied folkloric show to tourists.[41] As I discuss below, I too view cultural tourism, which is inevitably entangled with statist agendas, as an important factor in these decisions. Frank also stated, however that the decision regarding Yoruba Andabo's repertoire expansion was made by veteran musicians of the group, like famed percussionist Pancho Quinto, who wanted to create a full-fledged *espectáculo*. He thus concurred with Clave y Guaguancó director Amado's perspective that musicians were an influential force in these artistic decisions, and that musicians' desires sometimes dovetail with statist agendas. The existence of divergent viewpoints on this matter within Yoruba Andabo illustrates that, just as there is no one comprehensive explanation for the phenomenon of repertoire expansions, i.e., the factors vary from group to group, there is no uniform perspective offered by musicians within one group.

In addition to allowing Yoruba Andabo to play with a more standard rumba instrumental ensemble, acquiring conga drums also made possible the performance of Yoruba songs accompanied by non-*batá* ensembles – notably *güiro*[42] - as well as Bantu-derived sacred and secular musical practices such as *Palo* and *makuta*, and *comparsa* (percussion-based carnival music). Furthermore, the group's rumba style was affected profoundly by these instrumental acquisitions: from that point on Yoruba Andabo began to use a combination of conga drums and *cajones*, adopting the now popular *guarapachangueo* style that has revolutionized Havana-style rumba percussion in the last two decades. Although they did not invent *guarapachangueo*, whose history and musical features will be discussed in detail in chapter six, Yoruba Andabo percussionists Francisco Hernández Mora, "Pancho Quinto," and Jacinto School Castillo, "El Chori," were the first to disseminate this new percussion style in the center of Havana.

After the temporary closure of the *Peña del Ambia* in 1987, Yoruba Andabo went on to inaugurate another rumba event that, along with the UNEAC, is one of the most popular and longstanding rumba venues in Havana, the Callejón de Hamel. The Callejón, as I discussed in chapter three, is an alley in the heart of the marginalized neighborhood of Cayo Hueso in Central Havana. It was transformed into Cuba's most famous community mural by the renowned artist Salvador González in the late 1980s, and has since become a primary destination for cultural tourists seeking to experience "authentic" Cuban culture. When González inaugurated his Sunday rumba event at the Callejón, he invited Yoruba Andabo to be the debut group, and to perform with a famous folkloric singer, Merceditas Valdés.[43] This opportunity led

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[40] "Somos del criterio que la rumba, aunque es una música profana, su raíz está en la música sacra, en la unión de la música sacra Africana con la música Española e influencias de otros lugares."

[41] All information is drawn from an interview that took place on September 30, 2006 at Frank's home in Central Havana. A Santiago native, Frank entered the group in 2000, and left the group in the middle of my fieldwork, in December 2006.

[42] Yoruba-derived songs in Cuba can be accompanied by several different instrumental ensembles. The two most common are the *batá* ensemble (three double-headed drums in the shape of an hourglass), and the *güiro* ensemble (one or two conga drums and three *shékeres*, or gourds covered with a skirt of beads, of different sizes that play different rhythms).

[43] Clave y Guaguancó also served as the house band at the Callejón at some point during the 1990s, although I have not been able to ascertain precise dates.

to a partnership between Valdés and Yoruba Andabo that lasted from 1989 until 1993, and included both studio recordings and tours to the U.S. and several Latin American countries. After Valdés left Yoruba Andabo she moved on to front another rumba group with whom I conducted research, Los Ibellis, whose career trajectory I discuss below. Yoruba Andabo maintained a steady performance schedule throughout the 1990s, culminating in the debut of a *peña* at the nightclub Cabaret Las Vegas in 1998, a gig that is still going strong, evidenced by the packed audience that comes to *descargar* ("get down" or party), every Saturday evening from 5-8pm.

Yoruba Andabo, like Clave y Guaguancó, has enjoyed bountiful recording and touring opportunities since the early 1990s. The group's first studio album was a collaboration with Canadian saxophonist Jane Bunnett on her *Spirits of Havana* (EMI Canada, 1991) in which Yoruba Andabo was joined by some of the most important names in Cuban jazz.[44] In 1993 they recorded their first solo album called *El Callejón de los Rumberos* (Ayva Records, 1993), a hugely popular album among rumba aficionados both in Cuba and abroad that consists primarily of rumba repertoire and includes two *Abakuá* pieces. This album occupies a similarly prominent status among rumba recordings as that of Afrocuba's *Raíces Africanas* within Afro-Cuban folkloric repertoire more broadly. During the group's association with Merceditas Valdés, they recorded two albums of *Lukumí* songs with her, *Aché IV* and *Aché V* (both released by Egrem Records, 1995 and 1996). The group's second solo album, *Del Yoruba al Son* (Magic Music/Universal, 1997) corresponds to an *espectáculo*-based performance, including several Yoruba-derived songs, an *Abakuá* song, and four rumba songs of different types, one of which is a *guaguancó* version of Cuba's most famous song, "Guantanamera." Interestingly, it also includes two fusion pieces. The first is a rumba-rap, which suggests that Yoruba Andabo may have taken a play from the Clave y Guaguancó fusion handbook, although the first rumba-rap recorded by the former group was released only a year earlier (1996).[45] The second song consists of rumba vocals and percussion accompanied by a keyboard simulating the various melodic instruments of a dance band ensemble. Finally, Ayva Music produced and released a DVD for Yoruba Andabo roughly ten years after their first collaboration with the group called *Rumba en La Habana con Yoruba Andabo* (2005). Here, the repertoire is once again consistent with an *espectáculo* format, which makes sense as the DVD is a perfect format to display folkloric dances. Beyond the showcase of songs and dances from several different Afro-Cuban repertoires and styles of rumba, Yoruba Andabo once again includes two fusion pieces – one is a rumba-rap (the same one recorded in 1997) and the other is a *guaguancó*-flamenco, a combination that Clave y Guaguancó also employed on their 1999 album *Noche de la Rumba*. Finally, the group has appeared not only on several recorded collaborations, such as *La Rumba Soy Yo*, but also as invited guests on albums by Cuban popular musicians.[46]

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[44] Bunnett has made at least nine other recordings with Cuban jazz and popular musicians, and her most recent album *Embracing Voices* (Blue Note, 2008) features female Cuban rapper Telmary.

[45] While it would be almost impossible to determine whether Yoruba Andabo was cognizant of Clave y Guaguancó's previously recorded rumba-rap fusion, the former takes credit for the invention of this hybrid by stating in the lyrics, "Es un nuevo estilo de Yoruba Andabo" (This is a new style created by Yoruba Andabo).

[46] For example, see Cuban flute virtuoso Maraca's album *Tremenda Rumba* (Warner Music France, 2002).

Los Ibellis

Los Ibellis, the rumba group founded by my Havana percussion and song teacher, Daniel Rodríguez, is the fourth rumba group with whom I conducted research. The group has not enjoyed the longstanding success or international fame of the other two Havana rumba groups I have discussed, a situation that does not necessarily imply less musical/dance talent or creativity. Instead, Los Ibellis' career trajectory has been marked with many ups and downs, especially in recent years. Because of this relative professional instability, my discussion of the group serves as a contrast to the histories of the two longstanding "super-groups" in Havana. The inclusion of Los Ibellis in my research and narrative is important precisely because their economic and professional situation is much more representative of the average rumba group in the capital that struggles to maintain gigs and is rarely able to tour internationally. During the fall of 2006, the group consisted of only one full-time singer (Daniel himself) and one other male singer who performed intermittently, six percussionists (all men and most quite young, i.e., early 20s), and five dancers (one man and four women). The four female dancers, three of whom were veterans of the group, doubled as singers. In early 2007 another male singer joined the group and there was a substitution within the percussion section.

As far as I can discern, Los Ibellis, founded in 1982, has always performed rumba alongside Afro-Cuban sacred music. Like the other Havana groups, most of the group's shows consist of folkloric *espectáculos*. In terms of the style of rumba that is characteristic of Los Ibellis, Daniel calls it *rumba ligada con guarapachangueo* (rumba mixed with *guarapachangueo*).[47] Although Yoruba Andabo popularized the *guarapachangueo* percussion style, the majority of Havana rumba groups currently use it when playing rumba. One aspect of instrumentation is almost universal among the different rumba groups in Havana that play the style, and that is the use of the *cajón*. Yoruba Andabo's *guarapachangueo* features a particular combination of percussion instruments, which features a very polyrhythmic mix of *batá* drums, conga drums, *cajones* and idiophones (such as cowbells), and which will be discussed in detail in chapter six. Los Ibellis' *guarapachangueo* uses a different combination of instruments and rhythms than Yoruba Andabo and other groups, which is the way Daniel distinguishes his group's playing style.

The group's name, Los Ibellis, references two *orishas* who are twins. The "twins" in the group's name refer to Daniel and his brother Erminio, who founded the group together in 1982, although it was not until 1990 that the two brothers dedicated themselves solely to Los Ibellis. From the beginning, Daniel and Erminio performed a variety of folkloric genres, with one unique twist: they played with only two members – themselves. In contrast to the average rumba ensemble, which is made up of seven to ten people, Los Ibellis' rumba format consisted of each of the brothers playing with two conga drums and singing, and Daniel playing the *catá* rhythm with his foot.[48] Similarly, they would play *batá* drums and sing *Lukumí* songs with two percussionists instead of the standard three – Daniel would play the *iyá* ("mother" or large, lead drum) and the *itótole* (middle drum) while Erminio played the smallest drum of the ensemble, the *okónkolo*. Daniel explained that a *Patakín* (Yoruba fable/story) about Los Ibellis, who are known as the twin *orishas* who laughed at the devil and engaged in mischief more generally, inspired their concept of

[47] All information is drawn from an interview with Daniel that took place on October 6, 2006 at the Yoruba Cultural Association in Old Havana.

[48] The *catá* is a hollowed out piece of sugar cane against which drumsticks are beat to play a complementary rhythm with the clave, or timeline rhythm.

playing traditional genres in unconventional ways, such as playing instruments with the feet and with only two musicians. He also asserted that they were one of the first groups to introduce bass and piano into contemporary rumba performance, although I have never witnessed this instrumental configuration in their shows.

At some point in the 1980s (Daniel did not remember when exactly), the two brothers added a female dancer, Carmen Méndes Frontela or "Debora," who had been performing with the CFN, and whom Daniel asserted was the first woman percussionist to play *batá* in Cuba.[49] In fact, she would go on to form the first all-female *batá* group, Obini Batá, in the later 1980s during a temporary hiatus with Los Ibellis. Just like the brothers, Debora constituted a "triple threat" in Los Ibellis performances – she played, sang, and danced. During Los Ibellis' hiatus, the two brothers joined a group performing in the Varadero beach resort in the Matanzas province.

1990 marked a turning point for Los Ibellis. Much like Yoruba Andabo, whose professionalization was prompted by the intervention of a celebrated musician, Pablo Milanés, Los Ibellis had a chance performance encounter with folkloric singer Merceditas Valdés, who had previously worked and recorded with Yoruba Andabo. Valdés also had a previous connection with Debora and Obini Batá, with whom she went on tour to perform an extended *espectáculo* in Cádiz, Spain. In 1990, Debora left Obini Batá and reunited with Los Ibellis, and Valdés joined the group, which was renamed Merceditas Valdés y Sus Ibellis (Merceditas Valdés and Her Twins).[50] I am fairly certain that by this time the group had expanded beyond the original duo and then trio, incorporating more dancers and percussionists, but I do not know exactly how many members there were when Valdés joined the group. Daniel recounted that the group traveled extensively in those years to Spain, Portugal, Canada, South America, and also played often in national festivals in Cuba with Valdés, including the annual Wemilere (a festival of African-derived music and culture) and the Rumba Festival.[51] Valdés was with Los Ibellis until her death in 1996 at the age of 74. Daniel considered her to be like a mother, and emphasized Valdés' diversity of repertoire, noting that with Los Ibellis she performed just about every genre of Cuban popular and folkloric music, including lullabies.

After the death of Valdés, the group was renamed Los Ibellis de Mercedita Valdés (The Twins of Merceditas Valdés), and Daniel took over leadership of the group. Los Ibellis was able to secure a profitable tourist gig at the upscale Hotel Meliá Cohiba in the Vedado neighborhood, which lasted for four years (1996-2000), and involved the group performing an *espectáculo* almost every day for tourists. The group also traveled often to Europe during these years, which led to Erminio securing a gig in Spain and to his eventual emigration there in 2000. It was in that same year that Daniel began playing with the Teatro América dance company in Central Havana, as an accompanying percussionist for the dancers. Between 2000 and 2004 Daniel traveled back and forth between Cuba and France performing with the Teatro América dancers as a

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[49] Women are banned from playing *batá* drums in ritual contexts, where the drums have been consecrated and given *Aña*, a ritual in which the *orisha* Aña is placed into the drums. They can, however, play *aberikula* or unconsecrated drums, which are used in non-ceremonial and public contexts such as folkloric performances. Some explanations for the ban on women playing in ritual contexts center around the impurity associated with female menstruation. Others explain the ban, which also includes gay men, in terms of the extreme power of Aña, which is thought to be too *fuerte* or intense for women and gay men to handle.

[50] Daniel's time frame contradicts with that of Yoruba Andabo director Geovani, who asserted that Valdés was with his group until 1993, but I did not follow up on this discrepancy with either musician.

[51] The Rumba Festival has never taken place since I began traveling to Cuba in 2003, and seems to have been discontinued in the last ten years. It used to take place every two years.

percussionist, actor and singer in a show honoring legendary percussionist Chano Pozo at the Comic Opera of Paris.[52]

Daniel went to France once a year for three to four months at a time, and during the times that he was away, Los Ibellis continued to perform under the leadership of his longtime female dancers, Milagros Rodríguez Bayamo and Silvia María Sarria. During this period the group performed regularly in various venues, including the Casa de África (a small museum in old Havana that contains various African artifacts). The fact that Daniel left his female dancers in charge of the group is illustrative of the long history of good professional relationships he has had with female performers in general. It is rare for a director of a Cuban folkloric (or popular) group to allow women to hold positions of power, and to include them in decision-making about the group. Daniel often commented to me that his female dancers, who also sing backup to his lead vocals, are his most trusted and faithful members; many male percussionists, singers and dancers have come and gone but the female performers have by and large stood by Daniel even during difficult periods for the group.

Between 2004 and 2008 Daniel did not perform or live outside of Cuba, and he dedicated himself fully to directing Los Ibellis, while also maintaining his position as an accompanying percussionist at the Teatro América. In late 2008, he was sent to work in Venezuela on a state-sponsored mission to teach Afro-Cuban folkloric music, and was there at least through the beginning of 2010.[53] I assume that Milagros and Silvia have been leading Los Ibellis in Daniel's absence, but I do not know how actively the group is performing. The years in which I conducted my dissertation research (2004-08), were not easy for the group economically. While they have had regular *peñas*, or gigs, for varying lengths of time, their performance schedule is not as stable as those of Yoruba Andabo or Clave y Guaguancó. As detailed in chapter two, in early 2005 Los Ibellis had established a very successful gig and loyal audience following at a *peña* in which the group performed both rumba and Afro-Cuban sacred music, held at the Asosación Cultural Yoruba (Yoruba Cultural Association, a center of religious worship for *Regla de Ocha*). However, it was cancelled in October 2006 because a government official told the manager they wanted to use the space for other types of events on Sunday afternoons. As I discussed in chapter two, I view this suspension as part of the general marginalization of rumba and folkloric performance by officials of the state cultural apparatus. When I arrived in Havana to conduct long-term dissertation research in August 2006, Los Ibellis had established a new *peña* at a cabaret called the Karabalí Club in the Vedado neighborhood. Once again this event was characterized by instability, and it was finally cancelled in early 2007. During a brief research trip to the island in May 2008 Los Ibellis were performing a weekly *peña* at a cabaret in Centro Habana called the Palermo, although, with Daniel's recent residence in Venezuela, this event

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[52] Havana-born Chano Pozo is remembered as one of the most celebrated and influential *rumberos* of the twentieth century, and one of the first ritual percussionists to introduce Afro-Cuban sacred texts and rhythms into popular music. He was also a key figure in the New York-based Afro-Cuban jazz movement of the 1940s, and traveled several times to New York to record with fellow black Cuban émigré Francisco "Machito" Grillo. Pozo emigrated to the U.S. in 1947, when his legendary musical association with Dizzy Gillespie began, and which produced the Afro-Cuban jazz classic "Manteca." Pozo died in late 1948, at the age of 33, in a New York bar fight that allegedly involved a drug deal.

[53] The Cuban government has a long history of sending doctors on "missions" to a range of developing countries, many in Latin America, but also in Africa and Asia. Venezuela and Bolivia in particular have been host to large numbers of Cuban doctors since the respective elections of socialist-leaning leaders Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales. This was the first time I had heard about musicians being sent on missions, although it may have been happening for years.

may have been suspended. Unfortunately, this constant state of flux is all too familiar for the large majority of rumba groups in Havana, and all over the island.

Related to the group's lack of stability, Daniel addressed the differences in professional status that exist between folkloric groups. He noted that there is a distinction between professional rumba/folkloric groups that are *grupos subvencionados* (subsidized groups) – who earn a fixed salary each month in exchange for performing a certain number of events – and other groups such as his own, in which the musicians and dancers have professional status but get paid per gig instead of having a regular monthly salary. The latter classification, which is more in line with the situation of musicians in capitalist societies, entails more responsibility for the group's director and representative to drum up performance opportunities in order to make a living. Daniel told me that Yoruba Andabo and Clave y Guaguancó, were *grupos subvencionados* (personal communication, September 2006).

In contrast to the other Havana groups, Los Ibellis has not yet secured a major release recording, although they have recorded several albums that have not been released commercially (i.e., they were informally recorded outside of a professional studio space and not released by a music label), and that circulate mainly in Cuba's underground economy. While I was conducting research, the group was solicited by a Chilean entrepreneur to record a studio album in April 2007 consisting of a variety of Afro-Cuban repertoires including rumba, *Abakuá,* and *Lukumí* songs. I was present for the recording, which took place at the Egrem studios, and was invited to sing background vocals on several tracks. Although the album has been mastered and copies have been made for the musicians, I do not believe it has been released commercially.[54]

Personal and professional relationships among rumba groups

As can be ascertained from the preceding narratives, there are numerous personal and professional relationships between the various groups with whom I conducted research in Havana. The same can be said of the two Matanzas-based professional groups, Los Muñequitos and Afrocuba, whose members are often bound by familial ties, and who also have connections with the Havana-based groups. One brief example elucidates the nature of these relationships. During the period in which Los Ibellis was performing at the Hotel Meliá Cohiba between 2000 and 2004, the membership included many musicians who would later move to Yoruba Andabo or Clave y Guaguancó, undoubtedly to improve their professional stability and recognition. These included two performers – one male dancer and one male singer – who later moved to Clave y Guaguancó, and three performers – one female singer, one male dancer, and one young male percussionist – who went on to join Yoruba Andabo. Daniel has commented of his group, "Los Ibellis es una escuela" (Los Ibellis is a school), meaning that many musicians and performers

[54] Despite the fact that Los Ibellis have not yet released a studio album, a group called Los Ibellis Junior, which seems to have been an offshoot of Daniel's original group in the 1990s that consisted of Daniel and a group of his child protégés, has garnered some international media attention. Los Ibellis Junior is one of various groups that appear on a 2004 DVD entitled *Fiesta de Tambores* (Traditional Cuban Records), which showcases both Yoruba-derived songs and dances and rumba repertoire. I have also come across three live performance videos of the group on Youtube, which may have been taken from the DVD itself. While I am not sure about the exact date of these video recordings, I assume them to be taken roughly between 1996 and 1998, as Daniel's protégés were about ten years younger in the videos than they were when I met them in 2006. The fact that these videos constitute the main media dissemination of Los Ibellis (or at least a part of the group), is probably due to the novelty entailed in children performing complex rhythms and songs.

have developed their skills and learned their craft under Daniel's leadership, only to later move on to more prominent groups.[55] While I will not go into further details here, I believe it is important to draw attention to these interactions in order to present a fuller picture of the micro-politics of the rumba scenes in Havana and Matanzas, particularly the ways in which rumba's social and professional circles tend to be quite intimate even in a large city.

Notwithstanding the many positive personal and professional interactions between the various groups with whom I conducted research, there is also, unsurprisingly, an element of competition among Havana rumba groups to secure profitable and/or prestigious *peñas*. At times, this competitive spirit is expressed through rumba lyrics, which have historically made use of braggadocio as a central lyrical strategy and can at times even be antagonistic. For example, during one Yoruba Andabo performance at the Cabaret Las Vegas in November 2006, Ronald alluded in his lyrics to the fact that although the group had been abroad on tour for the last month, now they were back to reclaim their throne as the "best rumba group in Havana." The song ended with a choral refrain asserting "Fuera de mi casa!" (Get out of my house!), which was clearly addressed to the groups who had substituted for Yoruba Andabo during their absence in a venue with which the group is so intimately associated.

Multi-sited power and the expansion of rumba groups' repertoires

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, I conceive of the expansion of rumba groups' repertoire to the Afro-Cuban sacred domain as a hybridizing practice within rumba performance, and thus was interested in exploring the impetus for these repertoire changes during my interviews with musicians. My initial hypothesis concerning rumba groups' repertoire expansions was that they stemmed from artistic decisions that had come from "above," perhaps mandated by the groups' *empresas*. I reasoned that *empresas* were interested in maximizing the creative output of folkloric musicians, and that the capability to perform many different Afro-Cuban musical traditions would be particularly privileged in assessing a group's worth in the current era of cultural tourism, where diversity of repertoire is linked to the generation of foreign dollars for the Cuban state. Instead, as illustrated by the diverse narratives of the four groups with which I conducted fieldwork, there is no one factor, but rather a wide range of forces and motivations, that informed these creative decisions. Examining these narratives through a Foucaultian lens allows me to highlight the different motivations for these repertoire expansions, or the ways in which power resides not only in the apparatus of the state, but instead is multi-sited and "plays a 'directly productive role'" (Dreyfus and Rabinow: 185).

Afrocuba's career trajectory and transformation from a rumba to folkloric group was prompted by a mandate from the provincial cultural apparatus in Matanzas, and thus their case corresponds roughly to my hypothesis about repertoire expansions emanating from beyond the scope of group members' actions and artistic decisions. Considering the repertoire expansion from another angle, it is possible that the decision to form a province-wide folkloric group also related to the politics of cultural representation within the nation. In other words, provincial cultural officials may have felt pressured to promote and display Matanzas' cultural uniqueness in order to "compete" with other provinces and assert its importance within national culture.[56]

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[55] Daniel has not only served as a teacher for folkloric performers aspiring to professional status, but he has also taught percussion classes to children at the Yoruba Cultural Association for many years.

[56] I thank Jocelyne Guilbault for her help in formulating this hypothesis.

Related to this issue and my exploration of discourses of place in chapter four, I believe the creation of a province-wide folkloric group, which in turn resulted in a transformation of Afrocuba's identity and their subsequent emergence as the principal purveyors of Afro-Cuban traditions from Matanzas, may have had long-ranging effects not only for the group itself, but also for larger discursive formations of culture in Cuba. Specifically, it is possible that Afrocuba's shift in focus from rumba to the whole Afro-Cuban folkloric spectrum was key in the dissemination and reification of the discourse of place attached to Matanzas, i.e., that it is the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture." As Afrocuba director Minini asserted, his main objectives have been to preserve and revitalize rare Matanzas-based folkloric traditions such as *Arará*, and to faithfully represent the wide range of Matanzas folklore. Thus, the group's current repertoire and mission dovetail well with the common explanation for why Matanzas is the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture," i.e., that these rarer sacred traditions are currently practiced *only* in the Matanzas province (Vinueza 1986; Vélez 2000; Delgado 2001). In this vein, it is possible to see Afrocuba's repertoire shift as an example of a state-mandated decision that had effects beyond just the transformation of one group's identity. I suggest that it also had repercussions for the ways that cultural practices are emplaced discursively within particular regions/locales, and for the ways that these racialized discourses of place circulate and are reinforced.

In contrast to the accounts of members of Afrocuba de Matanzas, the directors of the two Havana groups emphasized not the deployment of state power vis-à-vis repertoire decisions, but instead focused on other, non-governmental forces, thus displaying a multi-sited and productive view of power. These divergent narratives may be explained in part by the different political atmospheres of Havana and Matanzas: the Revolutionary government, and organisms representing the Cuban state, have enjoyed considerably less popular support, both historically and currently, in the capital as compared with other provinces such as Matanzas. Evidence of this political orientation may have been in effect when both Havana directors repeatedly insisted to me that *empresas* and state officials had nothing to do with their artistic decisions.

Clave y Guaguancó director Amado attributed his group's repertoire expansion to the desires both of musicians to play diverse Afro-Cuban repertoires and nurture their creative impulses, and of audiences to see varied performances. Yoruba Andabo director Geovani del Pino focused on the issue of access to instruments in creating the conditions of possibility for an expansion of repertoire, and thus highlighted the impact of material culture on artistic decisions. Geovani also noted that although the expansion of repertoire by rumba groups was not unheard of before Yoruba Andabo, none of the other popular rumba groups – he mentioned Clave y Guaguancó, Los Papines, and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas – had made this change before the mid-1980s. The only prominent rumba group who had expanded their repertoire in this fashion before Yoruba Andabo was, to my knowledge, Afrocuba de Matanzas in 1980.[57] In some senses, Yoruba Andabo's repertoire decision may also have been a result of the fact that Geovani inadvertently committed the group to performing Yoruba-based traditions when he blurted out to Pablo Milanés a group name that meant "friends of Yoruba." Finally, both directors of the Havana groups discussed the desires of audiences, demonstrating that spectators can also exert power on creative choices and that rumba groups are cognizant of the important role played by reception.

Los Ibellis are different from the other rumba/folkloric groups I have discussed in an important respect: according to Daniel's narrative the group has always performed a variety of genres, including rumba and Yoruba-derived music. They may not have originally been able to

[57] The fact that Geovani did not mention Afrocuba suggests that he does not consider them to be a rumba group, and may not remember or be aware of the fact that they began as such.

perform other Afro-Cuban religious genres, such as *Palo*, for which several dancers are needed, and/or *Abakuá*, which requires at least one soloist dancer in addition to a few percussionists. However, unlike the other groups, there was no clear repertoire shift from rumba to the domain of sacred music because they were already performing *Lukumí* traditions alongside rumba from the group's inception. This difference may be partly due to the fact that Los Ibellis was formed in the 1980s, as compared to the other groups, which emerged between the 1940s and early 60s. *Espectáculos* were coming into vogue during the 1980s, and proliferated even more in the 1990s. Thus, Los Ibellis emerged at a moment when it was becoming common to perform rumba alongside Afro-Cuban sacred genres.

The impact of post-Soviet state policies on the repertoire expansions of rumba groups

In addition to the valuable perspectives provided by musicians about rumba groups' repertoire expansions, I believe it is crucial to consider the impact of the Special Period and the subsequent enormous changes in Cuban society that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990.[58] While the rumba groups with whom I conducted research began their repertoire expansions during the 1980s, when Cuba still enjoyed large-scale subsidization by the former Soviet Union, there has been a noticeable proliferation of folkloric *espectáculos* since the early 1990s. In the last two decades the government has turned to tourism and foreign investment as a solution for Cuba's economic crisis. Since then, the cultural tourism industry has influenced in many ways the decisions and livelihoods of rumba and folkloric groups all over the island, but especially in Havana, where musicians have the most regular contact with foreigners and the easiest access to tourist dollars. Although Afro-Cuban culture, music and religion have almost single-handedly nourished the cultural tourism industry since the 1990s, black Cubans – many times the religious and musical practitioners themselves – have seen the fewest economic gains from the influx of tourist dollars (de la Fuente 2001; Sawyer 2006). Nonetheless, the Cuban government's recognition of Afro-Cuban culture as a significant attraction for foreigners has created new performance and financial opportunities for folkloric musicians. As I detailed in chapter two, the primary manners in which they engage directly with the tourist economy are through professional performances and through teaching private music and dance lessons to foreigners.

Repertoire decisions of rumba groups have become entangled in certain ways with the agendas of the state vis-à-vis the expansion of cultural tourism. *Empresas*, and even group leaders, tend to assume that foreign tourists, the large majority of whom do not have prior knowledge of these repertoires, are seeking diversity in performance and a representative display of various Afro-Cuban traditions. I believe this assumption largely corresponds to the actual desires of audiences – not only for tourists but, as the musicians underlined, for national audiences – although there are knowledgeable aficionados, both Cuban and foreign, who prefer to see more depth within one genre in performance. Moreover, in addition to appealing to foreign and national audiences, *espectáculos* are a crucial means of obtaining contracts for foreign tours, which provide supplemental hard currency income not only to musicians, but to the Cuban state, as the *empresas* always collect a percentage of the groups' earnings. Since the 1990s, foreign tours by rumba groups have invariably necessitated an expansion of repertoire in order to put together an

[58] See chapter two for an in-depth discussion of the Special Period and its wide-ranging effects on the Cuban economy and society, and particularly on cultural workers.

"all-in-one" show. *Espectáculos* thus serve a vital function on these foreign tours, providing the variety of repertoire that is essential in holding the attention of a less knowledgeable public.

While attending *la rumba más larga del mundo* (the longest rumba in the world), an unprecedented rumba event that took place in May 2008 that I discuss in my concluding remarks, I became further convinced of the impact of the cultural tourism economy, and specifically foreign tours, on the repertoire decisions of rumba groups. I happened upon a publicity brochure for Rumberos de Cuba, a group formed in the late 1990s that has gained widespread acclaim by performing more traditional Havana-style rumba and that seems to have resisted the vogue of *espectáculos*.[59] The brochure indicated that the group would be moving in the direction of a repertoire expansion to the Afro-Cuban sacred domain, a decision apparently designed to secure contracts for foreign tours.

In addition to the expansion of a cultural tourism industry centered around Afro-Cuban musical and religious practices, and the broader impact of neo-liberal economic policies following the Special Period (see chapter two), the increasing prominence of *espectáculos* must be considered in light of the socialist state's shifting ideologies vis-à-vis religious practice in the last two decades. Ethnomusicologists María Teresa Vélez (2000), Katherine Hagedorn (2001; 2002), and Robin Moore (2006) discuss the criminalization of religious practice and the marginalization of *creyentes* ("believers" or religious people) during the first three decades of the Revolution, when ideologies of scientific atheism were hegemonic. As Hagedorn (2002) notes, during this period both Catholics and Afro-Cuban religious practitioners were considered to be counter-revolutionary and "deviant," and were often referred to psychologists. Vélez recounts that religious affiliation often negatively affected one's chances for occupational advancement (because Communist Party members, who were prohibited from having a religious affiliation, were favored), and for admission to universities and prestigious high schools (Vélez 2000: 89). In 1991, however, the Cuban Communist Party decriminalized religious practice for their membership, and the following year the Cuban Constitution was revised to declare the country a secular, rather than atheist, state. These policy shifts have undoubtedly resulted in the greater displays of religiosity by Cuban citizens and an increased relevance of the sacred domain in the public sphere. Hagedorn states, "Afro-Cuban religions such as Santería have been catapulted from the target of both persecution and prosecution to the focus of national pride and the destination of foreign tourism" (Hagedorn 2001: 10).

Beyond the government's involvement with the commercialization of Afro-Cuban religion, exemplified in the phenomenon of *santurismo* (Hagedorn 2001), religious practice has become increasingly entangled with the daily realities of Cubans in post-Soviet Cuba: many people have turned to *Santería* and other Afro-Cuban religions to help them cope with the extended economic crisis.[60] Furthermore, it has become fashionable among Cubans to be initiated into *Santería* – especially since it has been reimagined as one of the main signifiers of authentic *Cubanidad* – and one's ability to complete all of the necessary steps and rituals for an initiation depends greatly on

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[59] One example of their "traditional" style of rumba is that during their performances of the rumba style *columbia*, they have the improvising drummer come out on the center of the stage to have a "conversation" with the solo male dancer, that is, he attempts to "copy" all of the dancer's movements in rhythm with the dancer. This is the traditional way of performing *columbia*, but in the performances of most Havana groups today, the drummer and dancer tend to solo independently of each other.

[60] See Hagedorn 2002 for an account of the increased popular reliance on divine entities to solve economic and health problems in the aftermath of the Special Period. The article discusses the widespread devotion to San Lázaro/Babalú Ayé, a saint/*orisha* who is revered by both Catholics and Afro-Cuban religious practitioners due to his association with disease and epidemics, and thus suffering, and for his curative powers.

their economic resources. The introduction of commercial incentives into the practice and initiation of *Santería* has been controversial among religious communities and has created a rift between elders who critique this commercialization as destroying the precepts of the religion, and those who recognize an opportunity to make a living through initiations. This is a complex issue that I cannot treat at length. Rather, I want to argue that the economic and ideological changes in the 1990s have prompted the revision of several state policies and that, while other factors may have incited musicians to expand their repertoires to the sacred domain, the rearticulation of Afro-Cuban religion as a symbol of the nation and the expansion of *espectáculos* cannot be fully explained without taking into account the role of the Cuban state.

Conclusion

The histories of these four groups – Afrocuba de Matanzas, Clave y Guaguancó, Yoruba Andabo, and Los Ibellis – have illuminated the diverse forces that can impact repertoire changes by rumba groups and the ways that power can be deployed in diffuse forms. Afrocuba de Matanzas' transition from rumba to folkloric group is illustrative of the influence of state power on the creative decisions of musical groups, although this exercise of power was not necessarily repressive, and instead had productive effects: it paved the way for the birth of a highly esteemed folkloric group. In contrast, the directors of the two Havana groups challenged the assumption of an all-powerful state in their narratives, and focused on non-governmental forces. Nevertheless, one might interpret their negation of state power also through a Foucaultian lens, as an example of the effects of disciplinary power, where musicians regulate themselves by performing variety shows oriented towards tourists, thus fulfilling the statist agenda of profiting from cultural tourism. One could ask, in other words, is it merely a coincidence that the musicians' desires to expand their repertoire dovetailed perfectly with the Cuban state's agenda to create more diverse folkloric shows so as to attract and hold the attention of tourists? While I certainly do not want to argue that the musicians are the state's unknowing pawns, I think their perspectives and opinions on this matter cannot be divorced completely from the agendas of the state. On the other hand, the expansion of repertoire by rumba groups seems to serve everyone's interests – the musicians, the state, foreign audiences, and domestic/local audiences – and thus, even an analysis that views the state as the main agent of change must consider the productive effects of this deployment of power.

While the group histories I have detailed in this chapter illuminate the diverse factors that contributed to a turn towards the folkloric *espectáculo* in previous decades, it appears that in the current era of cultural tourism in Cuba, economic forces have become increasingly predominant. Whether or not there are other forces at play, it may not be economically viable for a rumba group to dedicate itself to playing rumba alone. Rumba performance is now inextricably tied to the folkloric *espectáculo*, and it seems that the performative blurring of the sacred and secular realms may be the most effective way to thrive in the tourist economy. Seen in a less cynical light, the Revolutionary government's renunciation of scientific atheism in the wake of the Special Period and the increased popularity of the *espectáculo* may also provide an opportunity to leave behind the colonial legacy of Enlightenment ideals of rationalism, and the related discursive schism between the sacred and secular realms.

CHAPTER SIX

Localizing Hybridity

In the preceding chapters, I have elucidated the politics of place in detail, highlighting the pervasive influence of regionalism both on social relations within Havana and on Cuban popular music. I have also examined the ways that racialized discourses of place both impact folkloric musicians' livelihoods and material realities, and are in many ways constitutive of regional and/or local identity formation. The previous chapter presented in-depth narratives about the histories and repertoires of the various groups with whom I conducted research, focusing specifically on the introduction of Afro-Cuban sacred music genres into their performance practices. As noted in my introduction and chapter five, I frame these repertoire expansions as one manifestation of the hybridization of sacred and secular traditions within contemporary Cuban rumba performance. The phenomenon of *espectáculos* is thus one of the recent rumba innovations, or what I call *hybridizing practices*, that I have aimed to explore in my dissertation.[1]

My final chapter details two other important rumba hybridizing practices that have emerged in the last three decades, one associated with Matanzas and the other linked primarily to Havana. The first hybridizing practice I investigate is the 1973 creation of *batarumba* by the Matanzas-based folkloric group Afrocuba de Matanzas. *Batarumba* fuses Yoruba-derived *batá* drumming with secular rumba rhythms, creating an especially dense polyrhythmic texture. The second hybridizing practice is an innovation in rumba percussion and performance style called *guarapachangueo*, which was created during the 1970s in a municipality on the outskirts of Havana called San Miguel del Padrón and disseminated in the capital in the following decade. This relatively free-form approach to percussion playing has revolutionized Havana-style rumba, particularly rumba *guaguancó*, to such an extent that it is now rare to hear local groups playing the traditional interlocking conga drum rhythm that has functioned for so long as rumba's primary sonic signifier. While I concentrate specifically on *batarumba* and *guarapachangueo*, as the most prominent rumba innovations to have emerged in the last three decades, I will also briefly discuss other hybridizing practices in both cities.

This chapter also aims to draw together the two central concerns of this dissertation, i.e., recent rumba innovations and the politics of place. In speaking about hybridizing practices here, I wish to problematize the uncritical celebrations of hybridity that have been hegemonic in Caribbean and Latin American nationalist discourses since the nineteenth century, and that have become fashionable in Euro-American academic and popular arenas since the explosion of the "world music" phenomenon in the early 1990s. Thus, my analysis of the particular, locally defined musical hybridizations emerging respectively from Havana and Matanzas, employs Stuart Hall's notion of *situated hybridity*, which views hybrid identities as anchored in a particular place and time. I argue that the rumba innovations are specific – in the sense that musicians make particular choices about which genres to fuse – and situated, in the sense that they are informed strongly by the social and cultural histories of the locales from which they emerge.

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[1] As I note in chapter five, rumba is an inherently hybrid practice. Thus, when I use the term *hybridizing practices*, I do not mean to suggest that hybridity is something new in the performance of rumba, only that I will be discussing more recent innovations.

Furthermore, I view *batarumba* and *guarapachangueo* as illustrative of the different approaches towards rumba-based fusion in Havana and Matanzas respectively, and will elucidate how the racialized discourses of place discussed in chapter four inform local hybridizing practices.

Situated hybridity: a challenge to the Cuban nationalist hybridity discourse

While the recognition of the inherent hybridity of all cultural practices is relatively new in the Euro-American academic milieu, the promotion of this concept has a very long history in the Caribbean and Latin America. *Mestizaje*, which translates roughly to racial mixing, has been the conceptual centerpiece of Latin American nationalist discourses since the nineteenth century.[2] The nationalist hybridity discourses of these countries vary with the racial makeup of their respective populations.[3] Nonetheless, one overriding similarity among them has been, as race theorist David Theo Goldberg (2008) points out, the goal of promoting homogeneity, paradoxically through the auspices of racial hybridity and the assertion that "we are a country of mixed race people." Thus, national hybridity is conceived in totalizing terms with the presumption being that there are no more "pure" white, black, or indigenous populations and that, if they do exist, they cannot be recognized as a part of the hybrid national body. Beyond constituting an exclusionary definition of the nation that renders non-mixed race people invisible – particularly blacks and Indians – hybridity discourses also serve to maintain Eurocentric ideologies and colonial structural conditions in the postcolonial context by denying the role that racial difference plays in access to political power and economic and land resources. In addition, while these discourses of hybridity have been successful in discursively distancing nationalist elites, largely white, from their former colonizers, they have been utilized to proclaim the triumph of racial equality as an automatic result of decolonization, thus marginalizing and sometimes silencing any debate on race.

In his writings during the late nineteenth-century Wars of Independence, Cuba's most celebrated hero and poet Jose Martí was the first intellectual not only to assert the uniqueness of hybridized *Cubanidad* (Cubanness), but also to proclaim *mestizaje* as a symbol of pride for all nations of the Americas (Isfahani-Hammond 2005). In *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and artistic revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (1997), ethnomusicologist Robin Moore problematizes the nationalist promotion of hybridity, profoundly influenced by Martí's ideas, that was asserted in the decades following the 1902 establishment of the Cuban Republic. He discusses how Martí's idealistic vision of racial progress in post-independence Cuban society was appropriated by the white Cuban elite as a way of denying the continuing socio-economic inequalities experienced by Afro-Cubans after independence from Spain (Moore 1997: 28). Caribbeanist scholar Shalini Puri issues a more pointed critique, accusing Martí himself of manipulating the notion of hybridity for his nationalist agenda: "Martí's claim of racial transcendence is beyond doubt false…elsewhere

[2] See Wade 1993, 2000; Moore 1997; Marx 1998; Sheriff 2001. Related promotions of hybridity can also be identified in the Francophone Caribbean with the concepts of *antillanité* and *creolization*, and in the Anglophone Caribbean with the notion of *creole* or *callaloo* (Bernabé et al. 1990; Hintzen 2002; Puri 2004).

[3] The most significant distinction in Latin America should be made between the countries that retained large indigenous populations – like Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, and Guatemala – and those located in the circum-Caribbean area where native groups were almost completely exterminated within one century of the arrival of the Spanish. In the former group, the *mestizo* (person mixed with indigenous and Spanish blood) is held up as the national ideal, while in the latter it is the *mulato* (person mixed with African and Spanish blood) who discursively represents the nation.

in the essay, he himself betrays the residual discursive pull of racial types" (Puri 2004: 54). She also identifies a civilizing impulse within Martí's writings, stating "the primary agency in 'Nuestra América' [Our America, the famous 1891 essay in which Martí first advocated *mestizaje*] seems reserved for elite white and mulatto Christians who would 'rescue the Indian' and 'make a place for the competent Negro'" (ibid.).

The persistence of nineteenth-century Eurocentric racial thinking is evidenced in a particular paradox found in Cuban hybridity discourses: while they apparently advocate racial equality and eschew racial difference, there has been a consistent attempt by nationalist scholars to parse out the different elements of Cuban identity and culture into hierarchical, neatly bounded categories of Spanish and African influence, thus reifying notions of racial purity and distinct racial categories like "white" and "black."[4] In subscribing to these racial/cultural taxonomies, promoters of Cuban nationalism simultaneously deny *and* maintain racial difference: they assert the uniquely hybrid identity of *Cubanidad*, while at the same time assuming the a priori cultural purity of the different elements that constitute Cuban national identity and culture.[5]

Moore and other Latin Americanist scholars have also highlighted the fact that, while proclaiming the victory of racial harmony, early twentieth-century governments in Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, and elsewhere simultaneously pursued policies of *blanqueamiento* (whitening) by encouraging European immigration to their respective countries (Wade 1993; Moore 1997; Marx 1998; Delgado 2001; Sheriff 2001). *Blanqueamiento* was intended to literally embed European values and physical traits within the racially hybrid population for the purposes of diluting and eventually expunging "atavistic" African features, traditions, and superstitions from the national body and culture. This literal and figurative move towards whiteness was thought to be a necessary step for these postcolonial nations to enter Western modernity.[6]

Although the political orientations of Cuban governments changed markedly in the periods before and after the 1959 Revolution that ushered in the current socialist regime, the *mestizaje* discourse has remained hegemonic. Unlike the governments of first half of the twentieth century, however, Fidel Castrotook an active role in highlighting African contributions to Cuban culture and in redefining *Cubanidad* as "Latin-African" (Castro 1976).[7] Castro's rearticulation of national identity was undoubtedly linked to the heavy Cuban intervention into and support of African liberation struggles in the mid-late 1970s, particularly in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. This discursive Africanization of Cuba has been interpreted by some critics of the Revolution, like black Cuban exile Carlos Moore (1988), as a calculated move designed to gain support, especially among Afro-Cubans, for the military campaigns. The Revolution's proclaimed commitment to desegregation and racial equality in the public sphere has undoubtedly resulted in higher literacy rates and living standards among Afro-Cubans. However, post-Revolutionary nationalist discourse has continued to gloss over socio-economic inequalities between different racialized groups, and Afro-Cubans are still underrepresented in positions of power and, as I

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[4] The work of Cuban nationalist composer Emilio Grenet (1939) offers a clear example of a racialized taxonomy of Cuban music, but there are also hints of it in the works of Fernando Ortiz (1998[1950]) and Argeliers León (1952).
[5] Anthropologist Peter Wade (2000) has also identified this contradictory tendency in Colombia's *mestizaje* discourse.
[6] Caribbeanist scholar Percy Hintzen suggests that the desire for whiteness is in fact inherent in the conception of Caribbean Creole (hybrid) identity (Hintzen 2002).
[7] The redefinition of *Cubanidad* as "Latin-African" is exemplified in Cuban writer Roberto Fernández Retamar's 1971 essay "Caliban: Notes Toward a Discussion of Culture in Our America." Here he uses the Shakespeare play *The Tempest* as a metaphor, arguing that the character Caliban (the original "noble savage") can be viewed as a symbol of both Latin American identity and its historic oppression by European colonizers, which are represented by the character Prospero (Fernandez Retamar 1989[1971]).

detailed in chapter two, suffer from disproportionate poverty, racial profiling, and high incarceration rates (de la Fuente 2001; Sawyer 2006; Blue 2007). Furthermore, as black Cuban scholar Pedro Pérez Sarduy and British historian Jean Stubbs write (1993), the socialist government's claims to have eradicated racism and other forms of discrimination have had the impact of shutting down public debate on issues of race in contemporary Cuba.[8] Carlos Moore has argued that asserting a *black* Cuban identity in a "raceless" society has often been interpreted by the government as counterrevolutionary (C. Moore 1988).

Given this history, to reify a depoliticized and celebratory conceptualization of hybridity would be, in my mind, to endorse the use of nationalist hybridity discourses to deny and perpetuate practices of racial inequality within Cuban society. Hence the title of my dissertation, "Localizing Hybridity," is meant to counter the aspecificity and uncontested nature of normative uses of the word "hybridity." To this end, my analysis of rumba hybridizing practices draws on Stuart Hall's alternative theorization of hybridity, which he views as heavily influenced by situated practice. Hall states, "I think cultural identity is not fixed, it's always hybrid. But this is precisely because it comes out of very specific historical formations, out of very specific histories and cultural repertoires of enunciation, that it can constitute a 'positionality', which we call, provisionally, identity. It's not just anything" (Chen 1996: 502). Ethnomusicologist Jocelyne Guilbault makes a similar point in the context of the French Caribbean, stating, "*Métissage* [creolization], I want to stress, happens selectively. It is precisely what is being combined and how a so-called hybridized music like *zouk* maintains itself as a signifying system that makes a fusion process and product unique" (Guilbault 1994: 175). I hope to illustrate that recent innovations in rumba performance constitute precisely this type of situated, specific hybridity, in that they are informed greatly by the socio-economic and cultural histories of, and racialized discourses attached to, the locales from which they emerge. I thus argue that rumba fusions are illustrative of the entangled relationship between local identity formation, racialized discourses of place, and musical hybridizing practices.

Hybridizing practices in Matanzas-style rumba

Batarumba

The most influential innovation to come out of the Matanzas rumba scene in the last three and a half decades is *batarumba*, a hybrid created by Afrocuba de Matanzas in 1973, sixteen years after the group's foundation. *Batarumba* marked the group's identity to such an extent that it inspired a temporary name change to Afrocuba con su Ritmo Batarumba (Afrocuba with its

[8] In a recent article, Cuba historian Alejandro de la Fuente (2008) asserts that in the last few years black artists and intellectuals have succeeded in pushing the Castro regimes to publicly recognize and begin to address issues of racial inequality, and to admit that full equality for blacks was never achieved under the Revolution. However, there have yet to be instituted any policy changes to counteract racist and discriminatory practices, particularly those that have arisen with the introduction of neo-liberal economic conditions (see chapter two). In addition, the defensive response on the part of Cuban intellectuals to a recent public condemnation by African American leaders – including Cornel West and actress Ruby Dee – of the racism that blacks have faced under the Castro regimes, suggests that the Cuban government is still not ready to fully acknowledge the extent of the problem. See <http://afrocubaweb.com/actingonourconscience.htm> for the declaration/petition, which was organized by Carlos Moore, and <http://www.lajiribilla.cu/2009/n447_11/447_29.html> for the response by Cuban intellectuals.

Batarumba Rhythm). In concise terms, *batarumba* is a fusion of rumba percussion and rhythms, particularly rumba *guaguancó*, with sacred Yoruba-derived *batá* drumming, used to accompany worship in the *Lukumí* religion, popularly known as *Santería*. Afrocuba director Francisco "Minini" Zamorra Chirino described the combination as "revolutionary" because until their innovation, *batá* drums had only been used in ceremonial contexts (personal communication, February 2007).[9] He asserted that *batarumba* emerged from the musicians' desire to create a new sound within rumba performance, and to differentiate their group from other rumba groups in Matanzas. The oft-quoted definition of *batarumba* in the few published sources in which it is mentioned describes it as a rhythmic innovation that fuses the *guaguancó* rhythm with the most popular and "all-purpose" *batá* drum *toque* (rhythm) within the *Lukumí* pantheon, *chachalokofún*.[10] This *batá toque*, unlike many, can be utilized in *Santería* ceremonies to honor every *orisha*, and is often placed at the end of a song due to its upbeat and infectious rhythmic matrix that impels both worshippers to dance and *orishas* to "come down" and possess the body of a practitioner. In her book *Divine Utterances,* Katherine Hagedorn states, "The *chachalokofún* rhythm can be played for any *oricha* as a 'breakout' dance section (imagine that a *toque* is becoming too stayed [staid], too reserved, and that the drummers want more audience participation – *chachalokofún* is the rhythm that makes people get up and dance" (Hagedorn 2001: 124).

The aforementioned definition has circulated widely, particularly abroad in places like the United States where *batarumba* is likely to be taught to a student of rumba. For example, Kenneth Schweitzer states, "In this style, a *batá* toque like chachalekefon is juxtaposed over the tres golpes rhythm that defines the medium-tempo rumba, guaguancó" (Schweitzer 2003: 157). Nonetheless, through my extensive fieldwork with Afrocuba, I have come to believe that a more nuanced definition is needed to describe this complex innovation.

Batarumba does not only or necessarily entail a particular combination of rumba and *batá* rhythms, for in many Afrocuba *batarumbas*, either the *guaguancó* or *chachalokofún* rhythms, or both, are replaced by other rhythms, some of which have been invented by Afrocuba percussionists for particular songs. In his pre-concert explanations, Afrocuba director Minini has often stated that *batarumba* is basically the union of *batá* drums with *tumbadoras* (conga drums), thus defining it as a particular instrumental ensemble (see Figure 6.1) rather than a particular rhythm. Furthermore, *batarumba* also involves percussion instruments from other genres, specifically the *bombo* drum (roughly corresponding to the bass or tom-tom in a standard drum set) and *campana* (cowbell) used in *comparsa* (Cuban carnival music). Finally, several *batarumba* songs are appropriated from Cuban popular music repertoires of the 1960s and 70s, an issue I address later in the chapter.

[9] Unless otherwise noted, all of the information pertaining to *batarumba* was gleaned through interviews with five Afrocuba musicians – Francisco "Minini" Zamora, Pedro "Pello" Tápanes, Dolores Pérez, Reinaldo "Wichichi" Alfonso, and Miguel Angel "El Negro" Dreke – during October 2006, February and March 2007, and through my own observations.

[10] Yvonne Daniel's book on rumba dance (1995) is probably the first published mention of *batarumba*. Unlike the few other sources, she discusses it in some depth, albeit primarily as an innovation in rumba dance.



Figure 6.1: Afrocuba de Matanzas *batarumba* ensemble – the *batá* drums are in front of the conga drums, the *campana* can be partially seen at far left and the *bombo* drum is not visible

Pedro "Pello" Tápanes, a founder of Guaguancó Neopoblano (Afrocuba's original name) who retired in 2003, is the percussionist most closely associated with the creation of *batarumba*. Although most people attribute the innovation to him, Pello credited Hector Alfonso, a founder and dancer with the original group, for the idea of uniting rumba and *batá* percussion and rhythm (p.c., February 2007). In fact, Pello asserted that he doubted whether this innovation would be successful, and worried that introducing the *batá* drums into a secular genre might be viewed by religious elders as profaning the *Lukumí* religion. Nonetheless, the group began to experiment with different rhythmic combinations, the first of which was indeed the fusion of *guaguancó* with *chachalokofún* or the *Iyesá* rhythm. Like *chachalokofún*, *Iyesá* is a highly danceable rhythm originating from the *Iyesá* culture and religion, a sub-ethnic group under the umbrella of the Yoruba whose traditions are maintained today only in Matanzas.[11] Pello stated that while usually *guaguancó* would be used within the song, the *batá* rhythm would vary according to the song. Dolores Pérez, a veteran singer who retired in 2004, is also associated strongly with *batarumba* since it is her songs that have most often appeared on commercial recordings.[12] She added that it was not only the *batá* rhythms that vary significantly from song to song, but also the point in the song where the *guaguancó* rhythm is introduced, i.e., not always at the beginning (p.c., March 2007). Finally, longtime Afrocuba percussionist Reinaldo "Wichichi" Alfonso described the process of creating *batarumbas* as *una ensalada mixta* (a mixed salad), in which the percussionists would look for different *toques* (rhythms) that fit well with each other polyrhythmically for each song (p.c., March 2007).

[11] See Delgado 2001 for details on the *Iyesá* religion and percussion tradition. One of Hagedorn's interviewees, Carlos Aldama (founder of the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional), asserts that *chachalokofún* actually emerged from a combination of *Iyesá* and *bembé* rhythms, both of which are Matanzas-based traditions (Hagedorn: 125).
[12] For examples of Dolores' *batarumbas* entitled "Caridad" and "Tambor," see Afrocuba's *Raíces Africanas* (Shanachie, 1998) and the compilation album *Real Rumba from Cuba* (Corason, 1994).

Group director Minini characterized the original *batarumba* rhythm as "rudimentary," in that it was basically the fusion of *guaguancó* with *chachalokofún* (introduced in the *montuno* or call-and-response section), which was meant to encourage the audience to dance. However, he emphasized that *batarumba* kept evolving and becoming more complex throughout the 1970s and 80s, to the point that the pieces came to be like "compositions": specific rhythms were used to fit with the particular songs, and different *toques* – such as those for the *orishas* Obbatalá, Changó, or Ochún – were brought in and out in different sections of any one song. As an indication of the variety that characterizes Afrocuba's *batarumba* repertoire, Minini noted that songs can begin with a certain *batá toque*, traditional *guaguancó*, or rhythms that the group has invented which he characterized as *bolereado* (bolero-derived) or *soneado* (*son*-derived).[13] While he stressed that each *batarumba* has a distinct rhythmic configuration, he generalized that all have *cierres* (stop-time sections or rhythmic breaks) and that *chachalokofún* is generally played at some point within the song, but that *guaguancó* was not a feature of all songs. The *bombo* (tom-tom) drum and *campana*s (cowbells) are featured in the *cierres*, in which the percussionists playing conga drums drop out and pick up the *campana*s. The original three idiophones used to accompany the two sets of drums (congas and *batá*) were a cowbell and the standard rumba idiophones: claves (which play the clave rhythm, the timeline around which all rumba percussion is structured) and *catá* (a hollowed-out piece of sugarcane against which drumsticks are beat to play a complementary rhythm with the clave). Later the group added another cowbell, in line with the Carnival *comparsa* tradition of *campanas jimaguas* ("twin" cowbells that play an interlocking rhythm). The final addition to the *batarumba* ensemble in the early 1990s was the *bombo* drum, also taken from the *comparsa* ensemble, illustrating that *batarumba* currently entails a fusion of rumba not only with a sacred Afro-Cuban practice, but also with another secular Afro-Cuban tradition.[14] In fact, there is one *batarumba* that Afrocuba regularly performs that incorporates not only the instruments – the cowbell rhythms and the *bombo* drum – but also the conga drum rhythms of *comparsa*. In short, Afrocuba's *batarumba* songs are very elaborate and require rehearsal in order to get the timing right; Minini often counts the percussionists in and out of the *cierre* sections.

All of the Afrocuba musicians I interviewed asserted that *batarumba* caught on very quickly, first with local audiences in Matanzas, and then later in the 1970s when the group began to tour nationally. *Batarumba* gained widespread attention with the group's international tours, the first of which was to Angola and the Congo in 1987, and the second of which was a trip to Washington, D.C. in 1989 to perform at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife. With national and international success, however, came imitation, with some groups even claiming *batarumba* as their own creation. Wichichi explained that veteran musicians of the group are hesitant about providing rhythmic details because of this possibility of imitation by other groups; they see *batarumba* as their *plato fuerte* ("main dish") and their *arma estratégica* (strategic weapon), something that sets them apart. He also asserted that it was due to *batarumba*'s complex percussion and rhythmic configurations, which involve at least seven percussionists, that groups who have attempted to reproduce Afrocuba's innovation have been unsuccessful. It is interesting that Afrocuba defines itself so closely with this fusion, since their reputation as the best conservers of Afro-Cuban tradition seemingly negates this association. I offer some possible explanations for this incongruity below.

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[13] *Bolero* and *son* are two important Cuban popular musical practices. The former is a balladic genre while the latter is a traditional dance genre.

[14] The histories and musical elements of rumba and *comparsa* are very much intertwined, as exemplified by the fact that the conga drum was first associated with *comparsa* and Carnival music and then made its way into the rumba ensemble by the mid-1940s (Alen Rodríguez 2002).

Musical analysis of three *batarumbas*

In this section I provide a musical analysis of three *batarumba* songs recorded by Afrocuba in order to showcase the variety entailed in this fusion. I do not provide transcriptions of the specific rhythmic elements of any *batarumba* song, in accordance with the aforementioned wishes of the group not to publish specific rhythmic details. I do, however, provide descriptions of the various rhythmic combinations and changes in each song, which is information that I have gained primarily through musical analysis of commercial recordings, with a few details provided to me by Afrocuba musicians about the specific songs. Because these three songs have been commercially recorded and released, unlike those that I recorded during fieldwork, I feel that it is not unethical to discuss the specific rhythmic combinations, as this is information that anyone with musical analysis skills and knowledge of these traditions might be able to ascertain from the recordings.

Before discussing the specific songs, I want to outline some of the generalized formal and rhythmic elements of Afrocuba's *batarumba* repertoire, based on my observation of various performances of thirteen different *batarumbas*. I recorded live performances of most of these songs, including three that have been released commercially. *Batarumba* songs are based loosely on the tripartite rumba song form, which includes an introductory *diana* section characterized by the use of vocables to establish the song's tonal center, the *canto* or narrative section, and the *montuno* or call-and-response section, where the tempo generally increases and couples come out to dance. While many of the *batarumba*s include some sort of introductory section, they often do not involve the standard vocables of the *diana*, and some go straight into the *canto* section. Moreover, the *montuno* section in *batarumba* songs is usually introduced earlier than in the standard rumba song; most songs last from six to nine minutes and the *montuno* section often comes in before the two-minute mark. The fact that the majority of *batarumba* songs are constituted by the *montuno* section, in which all of the dancing takes place, correlates to the notion of it being "para guarachar" (to party), as Afrocuba percussionist Wichichi told me. Another common element of Afrocuba's *batarumba* songs is that they often maintain one *coro* (choral refrain) throughout the *montuno* section, instead of changing the refrain two or three times, as is the case in Havana-style rumba. Seven of the thirteen *batarumbas* I analyzed included only one *coro* within the *montuno* section. My Matanzas song teacher and Afrocuba singer Miguel Angel "El Negro" Dreke explained that the group prefers to maintain one *coro* throughout most of their rumba songs, but particularly in *batarumbas*; this consistency in the vocals allows the audience to hear and focus on the rhythmic changes within the percussion section of any one given song that constitute the essence of *batarumba*'s novelty (p.c., October 2006).

I was able to detect the *guaguancó-chachalokofún* rhythmic combination in the *montuno* section in eight out of the thirteen *batarumba* songs, meaning that it is indeed the most typical combination. There are usually two, sometimes three, *cierres* (stop-time sections) within one *batarumba* song, always within the *montuno* section, although the number and placement of *cierres* within one song can vary from performance to performance. In most of the songs I analyzed, the first *cierre* involved the conga drums dropping out, regardless of whether they were playing *guaguancó* or not, leaving the *batá* drums, added *campana*s, the *catá,* and clave. The subsequent *cierre*(s) most often involved all of the drums dropping out, leaving only clave and handclapping to accompany the

singing. The *bombo* drum, which is always played by Minini, is usually introduced in the second or third *cierre*, although it is not an obligatory element of the stop-time sections.[15]

Batarumba #1: "Tambor"

The first *batarumba* I will discuss is a song called "Tambor," recorded in Matanzas, Cuba in 1985 and released on the album *Real Rumba from Cuba* (1994, Corason).[16] The song's theme revolves around the harsh conditions of plantation slavery in general, and as suggested by its title, which is the generic word for "drum" in Spanish, alludes to the fact that slaves were generally prohibited by their masters from playing their drums. The *montuno* section of "Tambor" features a fusion of the *chachalokofún* and *guaguancó* rhythms, and is thus an example of the most common rhythmic combination found in *batarumba* songs. During our interview, Dolores spoke about the opening *batá* rhythms of two of her most famous *batarumbas*, "Tambor" and "Caridad" (analyzed below) noting that neither of them use established *toques*, that both of them were inventions of Pello and were loosely based on the *Iyesá* rhythm. Nonetheless, the opening *batá* rhythm of "Tambor" is so sparse that it is difficult, in my mind, to link it to any established *toque*. As in many *batarumbas*, there is only one *coro* that is maintained throughout the *montuno* section. Following is a table displaying a chronological sequence of the song with rhythmic changes.[17] For all of the song charts, when there is no text entered into either the song section or percussion box, this indicates that there is no clear change at that moment.

TIME	SONG SECTIONS AND LYRICS	PERCUSSION CHANGES
0:00	Main *coro*: "Adonde está mi tambor?" (Where is my drum)[18]	Intro with drum rolls
0:10		Enter *batá* drums and *campanas* with sparse percussion (invented rhythm)
0:22	**Verse 1: "**Yo trabaja la mañana, yo trabaja mediodía, yo trabaja por la tarde, y por la noche…" (I work all morning, I work at midday, I work all afternoon, and at night…)	
0:39	*Coro* (slightly altered): "Yo quiere bailar tambor" (I want to dance [to the] drum) (3x)	

[15] In fact, none of the recorded *batarumbas* that I analyze below include the *bombo* drum. This may be due to the fact that the *bombo* was introducted to the ensemble two decades after *batarumba* emerged.

[16] My friend and fellow student of Afro-Cuban percussion Frank Davis was of tremendous help to me in conducting the analyses of these *batarumbas*. Whether confirming my analyses, as with "Tambor" and "Baila mi guaguancó," or contributing substantive information for my analysis of "Caridad," which has a more complex rhythmic matrix, his knowledge about Matanzas-style *batá* drumming was invaluable.

[17] For all three songs, I reproduce the verse lyrics in their entirety, but I do not present all of the improvised soloist's phrases in the *montuno* section, just the main refrain.

[18] The whole *canto* (narrative) section is performed in call-and-response style, where the chorus repeats or responds to each of the lead singer's phrases.

0:54	"Tambor" (Drum) (3x) and then *coro* "Adonde está mi tambor?" (3x)	
1:16	**Verse 2**: "Aquí no pagan dinero, latigo, na' ma' " (Here they don't pay money, they just whip us) (2x)	
1:34	"Tambor" (3x), then *coro*, "Yo quiere bailar tambor" (4x)	
1:55	***Montuno* section**: *Coro* contines, "Yo quiere bailar tambor"	Enter *chachalokofún* on *batá* drums and *guaguancó* on congas
2:44		***Cierre***: congas drop out, extra *campanas* added; congas play little drum flourishes intermittently
3:12		Drum flourish to signal congas reentry with *guaguancó*
3:45	**END**	

Batarumba #2: "Baila mi guaguancó"

"Baila mi guaguancó," released on Afrocuba's album *Raices Profundas* (Shanachie, 1998), chronicles the singer's love for rumba and *guaguancó*, and in a larger sense expresses pride in her African roots, exemplified in the famous proverb repeated twice right before the *montuno* section: *Él que no tiene de Congo, tiene de Carabalí* (He who doesn't have Bantu ancestry/blood, has Calabar ancestry).[19] Like "Tambor," the *montuno* section consists of *chachalokofún* and *guaguancó*, and the *coro* never changes. However, the rhythmic combinations in the body of the song are much more complex, in that as the song phrases change (they are so short that I do not consider them to be full verses), so does the rhythm.

TIME	SONG SECTIONS AND LYRICS	PERCUSSION CHANGES
0:00		Song begins with very quick flourishes on *batá* drums and congas
0:20		Enter clave and *catá*, congas play *guaguancó*
0:25	**Intro phrase**: "Señores presente, oigan bién" (Ladies and gentlemen, listen up) (2x)	No *batá* rhythm, only the *iyá* (large drum of the *batá* ensemble) is heard

[19] The meaning of this popular proverb can be interpreted in many ways. Although I have never asked members of Afrocuba what it means to them, my observations concerning the way that this proverb is used in rumba song and popular discourse lead me to believe that it asserts that everyone in Cuba has some kind of African ancestry. The fact that Bantu and Calabar slaves were brought to Cuba in the largest numbers as compared to other African ethnic groups – particularly in the crucial period of the late 18th century through the late 19th century (Klein 1978; Bergard et. al 1995) – also seems pertinent to the proverb. Furthermore, Bantu and Calabar-derived music and dance practices are the primary African influences on rumba.

	"Soy cubana y me gusta el *guaguancó*" (I'm Cuban and I like the *guaguancó*) (2x)	punctuating the *bombo* (2nd beat of the clave rhythm)
0:55	"Como me vas a decir, que es una cosa vulgar?" (How can you tell me that [rumba] is something vulgar?) (2x)	
1:18	"Si cuando pasa la conga detrás de la puerta, te pone a bailar" (When you hear the conga behind the door, it will make you dance) (2x)	Percussion changes to 6/8 polyrhythm
1:31		Drums play clave rhythm, feels like it's going to *montuno* section
1:33	"Yo te enseñaré un viejo refrán" (I'm going to teach you an old saying) (2x)	Percussion slows down, plays a different, slow and funky, invented rhythmic combination with *batá* drums and congas (not *guaguancó*)
1:59	**Proverb**: "Él que no tiene de *Congo*, tiene de *Carabalí*" (He who doesn't have Bantu ancestry, has Calabar ancestry) (2x)	Back to 6/8 polyrhythm
2:18	***Montuno* section**: *Coro* "Baila mi *guaguancó*" (Dance my *guaguancó*)	Drums play clave rhythm, then *chachalokofún* on *batá* drums, *guaguancó* on congas
3:06		***Cierre***: congas drop out and *batá* drums play *guaguancó*[20]
3:50		Drum flourish signaling congas reentry with *guaguancó*, *batá* drums back to *chachalokofún*; gradual acceleration of percussion
4:54		Percussion back to opening polyrhythm/flourishes, acceleration until end
5:12	**END**	

Batarumba #3: "Caridad"

The final *batarumba* I detail is "Caridad," which presented more of a challenge than the other two songs, partly because I analyzed two different recorded versions of the song and found some rhythmic differences. The song's title alludes to the Catholic Virgen de la Caridad (the Virgin of Charity, patron saint of Cuba), who is syncretized with the Yoruba *orisha* Ochún. The lyrics are centered around the process of a *Santería* initiate being assigned a patron *orisha*, with the choral refrain "Que santo le quiere dar?" (Which saint/*orisha* will they give her?). The first version was recorded in 1985 and released on the same album as "Tambor," while the second – which I present below – was released on the later 1998 album with "Baila mi guaguancó." Interestingly,

[20] This is a very interesting choice, to have a rhythm so intimately associated with secular rumba percussion and its standard conga ensemble, be played by the sacred *batá* drums.

the main difference between the two versions of the song is that while in the first version the *Iyesá* rhythm played on the congas can be heard in the *montuno* section, I could not clearly identify it in the second, more recent version. It is important to note here that the *Iyesá* rhythm for the congas (which often substitute for the *Iyesá* drums because of the similarity in form and construction) is not the same as the *Iyesá* rhythm for the *batá* drums. While there is only one *coro* that is maintained throughout the *montuno* section, as in the other two *batarumbas*, this song does not feature the combination of *chachalokofún* and *guaguancó*. Afrocuba singer Dolores told me that the *batá* rhythms are based on *Iyesá*, and I concluded that the congas are playing an invented polyrhythm that complements the *batá* rhythm. As my fellow student of Afro-Cuban percussion Frank Davis pointed out, there are different styles of playing *Iyesá* in Matanzas and Havana-style *batá* drumming respectively (p.c., May 2009), and he heard both styles, or at least echoes of them, in the second, more recent version of the song. He also suggested a reason why Afrocuba may have decided not to use the conga drum *Iyesá* rhythm, stating that playing it alongside the Matanzas-style *Iyesá batá* drum pattern would not make sense because there would be no rhythmic tension or polyrhythm created; the rhythms would just be "on top of each other" and cover up each other's melodies. This seems plausible, considering that on the first version, where the congas are in fact heard playing the *Iyesá* rhythm, the *batá* drums never shift to the Matanzas-style *Iyesá* rhythm as they do on the second version.

TIME	SONG SECTIONS AND LYRICS	PERCUSSION CHANGES
0:00	"Changó, Yemayá, Hekua" (names of *orishas*)[21] (2x)	Intro with drum rolls
0:17	**Main *coro***: "Que le pasa a Caridad, que santo le quiere dar?" (What's going on with Caridad, which saint/*orisha* will they give her?) (2x)	
0:20		Enter *batá* drums with unknown rhythm[22] and *campana*
0:28	**Verse 1**: "Todas las negritas se han de electriza'" (All the [black] girls have been electrified [possessed]" (2x) "La pasa la tiene dura, la bemba tá gurruña'"(Her [kinky black] hair is standing on its end, her lips are puckered) (2x)[23] *Coro*: "Que santo le quiere dar Caridad, que santo le quiere dar" (Which saint will Caridad be given, which saint will she be given?)	

[21] The phrase "Hekua hey" is often used to salute the fierce female *orisha* Oyá, deity of the winds and guardian of the cemetery.

[22] Frank thought this was an established *toque*, although he didn't know its name; he presented me with a recording from Matanzas-born ritual drummer Francisco Aguabella where the same rhythm is used, suggesting that it is an existing *toque*.

[23] This verse was difficult to transcribe and translate because of its idiomatic nature, so I don't consider it to be a definitive translation. What is fairly clear to me, is that these lyrics are alluding to the image of a woman in a state of possession by an *orisha*. While attempting to find a clearer transcription of the lyrics of this song on the web, I came

0:48	**Verse 2**: "Amalia va uruque" (2x), "ina que ina la ma (2x)[24] *Coro*: "Que santo le quiere dar Caridad, que santo le quiere dar"	
1:00	***Montuno***: "Ay Caridad, ay Caridad" (lead, Oh Caridad, oh Caridad), "Que santo le quiere dar" (chorus, Which saint/*orisha* will she be given?)	*Batá* drums shift to a rhythm that sounds like Havana-style *Iyesá,* congas play a polyrhythm that interlocks with the *batás*
2:13		**1st *cierre***: congas drop out, *batás* and added *campanas* continue
2:59		Conga flourish to signal re-entry, play same interlocking rhythm
3:31		**2nd *cierre***: congas drop out, *batás* change to traditional Matanzas-style *Iyesá* rhythm and accelerate, added *campanas*
4:15		Conga flourish to signal re-entry, play same interlocking rhythm
5:00	**END**	

As the various rhythmic combinations and changes within these three *batarumba* songs make evident, Afrocuba de Matanzas' percussion innovation is quite complex, and involves much more than a simple fusion of *chachalokofún* and *guaguancó*. Other *batarumbas* that I have observed invoke rhythms from *comparsa* or the traditional dance music genre *son* (think of the music associated with the documentary and CD *Buena Vista Social Club*), and specific *batá* rhythms for particular *orishas*. Now I turn to a discussion of *batarumba* song, which incorporates Cuban popular repertoires, and thus displays another layer of complexity and illustration of how Afrocuba's hybridizing practice engages with non-rumba elements.

across no search results related to Afrocuba, but instead discovered that famed Cuban exile Gloria Estefan released a song called "Morenita" that reproduces the lyrics and melody of the introduction and first verse of "Caridad." This song can be found on her album *90 Millas* (Sony BMG, 2007), whose title clearly references the physical and figurative distance between Cuba and Miami (90 miles). This is not the first time Estefan has borrowed from traditional Afro-Cuban music: the last song of her first Spanish-language album *Mi Tierra* (Sony Music, 1993) begins with a rumba that eventually becomes a *comparsa*.

[24] I was simply not able to translate this phrase, but I believe it is at least partly in *Lukumí* as the second part of the phrase is reminiscent of a *Santería* song with which I am familiar.

Batarumba song's engagement with Cuban popular repertoires

Despite the heavy reliance on what are considered by many academics to be "folkloric" practices – rumba, *batá* drumming and *comparsa*[25] –*batarumba* also incorporates mass-mediated popular music, particularly the songs of Celia Cruz.[26] In fact, from its inception rumba repertoire has borrowed songs or phrases both from traditional popular Cuban genres – such as *guaracha*, *son*, *bolero*, and *canción* – as well as from sacred Yoruba-, Bantu- or Calabar-derived repertoires (Grasso González 1989: 9).[27] Furthermore, the rumba groups with whom I worked have often adapted non-Cuban popular songs for rumba performance, such as an Afrocuba rumba song that draws from Colombian salsa star Oscar D'León's repertoire, and Los Ibellis' adaptation of the song "La Media Vuelta," popularized by Mexican pop sensation Luis Miguel on his album *Segundo Romance* (WEA, 1994). I have noticed that Afro-Cuban secular music in general is characterized by a large degree of recycling/quotation among the various genres. For example, rumba *coros* often draw directly from the *comparsa* repertoire, and both rumba and *comparsa* songs incorporate refrains from *Lukumí* and other religious practices. Yoruba Andabo almost invariably opens their shows with a song from the *Espiritismo* repertoire adapted to *guaguancó*, the lyrics of which are taken from the standard Catholic liturgy used in *cajón de muertos* ceremonies.[28] A large proportion of the group's songs either incorporate *Lukumí* refrains in the *montuno* section, or speak about or allude to common practices and rituals within the religion.

I have identified six songs within Afrocuba's *batarumba* repertoire that are adaptations of the recordings of Celia Cruz (1925-2003), the legendary black Cuban singer who would come to acquire the moniker the "queen of salsa." Cruz is an interesting choice for creative appropriation because she defected from the island in 1960, shortly after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. Cruz came to be considered one of most outspoken critics of the Castro regime in the United States, an ironic twist given the overwhelmingly white composition and overtly racist mentality of the early waves of Cuban migrants. Cruz's songs were subsequently subjected to absolute censorship on the island, banned from radio and all public media circulation. However, tapes of her music have been in constant clandestine circulation across the island since she defected, and she is held in high esteem by Cubans of all ages who claim her as their own. My first trip to Cuba coincided with Cruz's death in July 2003, and the fact that the state-controlled press made almost

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[25] Two of these genres – rumba and *comparsa* – were considered to be *popular* (literally, "popular," but also "of the people") during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the sense that they were (and still are) practiced primarily by poor or working-class Afro-Cubans and constituted the main "party music" for these populations at the time (rumba for house and spontaneous street parties, and *comparsa* for Carnival celebrations). However, since the 1960s rumba, and to a lesser extent *comparsa*, have undergone a process of folklorization, in that the government and certain folkloric groups have seen their mission as preserving traditional Afro-Cuban percussion practices and have included rumba in this purview (Daniel 1995). Nonetheless, as I discuss in my introduction, rumba is still not uniformly viewed as a "folkloric" genre, particularly by musicians.

[26] Based on Yvonne Daniel's assertions (1995) and my own observations, *batarumba* choreography is also highly hybrid and mirrors the musical fusion of rumba, *Santería* and popular dance styles, particularly *son*-derived *casino*, which is the basis for salsa dance. During one Afrocuba rehearsal, for example, I observed a *batarumba* dance choreography that included rumba steps, movements associated with the *orishas* Obbatalá, Ogún, and Yemayá, and *casino* steps.

[27] *Guaguancós* tend to draw more from the Yoruba-derived repertoire, while *columbias* (which are often described as the most Africanized rumba style) draw heavily from Bantu-derived *Palo* and Calabar-derived *Abakuá* repertoires. *Yambús* generally include only Spanish lyrics.

[28] See chapter three, footnote 3 for an explanation of the hybrid religious practice called *Espiritismo*. A *cajón de muertos* is a ceremony revering one's dead ancestors, and is sometimes held in honor of a particular *orisha*.

no mention of it is an indication of the enduring inflexibility of the Cuban state towards Cruz's political declarations and, thus, cultural production.

Ultimately Cruz was able to transcend her political identity as an anti-Castro Cuban exile in the sense that she is now recognized as a principal figure in the popularization of New York-based salsa. Beginning in 1974, she recorded countless albums with Fania – the recording company that is inextricably tied to the birth and popularization of salsa – teaming up with some of its leading purveyors, such as Willie Colón and Johnny Pacheco, and constituting salsa's only female and black ambassador. Nonetheless, before she became the "queen of salsa" in the United States, she had established a very successful career in the 1950s through her association with prominent dance band Sonora Matancera, one of the oldest surviving Cuban dance bands.[29] Thus, although she was from Havana, she had a clear link to the most prominent dance band to come out of Matanzas, a fact that I believe may have influenced Afrocuba's decision to use her songs in their *batarumbas*, instead of the many other Cuban popular songs/singers they could have chosen that would have constituted a less politically controversial choice.

The Celia Cruz songs that have been adapted by Afrocuba for use in the group's *batarumba* repertoire include: "Quimbara" from *Celia & Johnny* (1974, Vaya Records); "Óyeme Agayú," "Chango ta' veni," and "Lalle lalle" from her recording with Sonora Matancera entitled *Homenaje a Los Santos* (1964, Seeco Records);[30] "Rinkinkalla" from *Cruz & Colon – Only They Could Have Made This Album* (1977, Vaya Records); and "Mata Siguaraya" from *Azucar! Caliente* (1993, Seeco Records).[31] While Afrocuba has not commercially recorded these *batarumbas*, I have heard four of them performed live by the group: "Quimbara," "Chango ta' veni," "Lalle lalle," and "Mata Siguaraya," indicating that these are the Cruz-derived *batarumbas* that are currently being performed. While I have never heard the *batarumba* version of "Óyeme Agayú," there is a commercial recording of Afrocuba's "Rinkinkalla," although it is not performed by the group. One of Afrocuba's celebrated ex-singers, Teresita Domé Pérez, currently lives in Los Angeles and has recorded this song with a local Afro-Cuban folkloric group called Ritmo y Canto on their self-titled album (Everloving, 2004).

Celia Cruz is only one in a long line of influential Cuban popular musicians associated, either by birth or professionally, with the city of Matanzas. As noted in chapter four, the creator of *danzón*, Cuba's most important social dance genre from the 1880s through the 1930s (when *son* emerged as the dominant popular music), was an Afro-Cuban native of Matanzas, Miguel Faílde. Aresenio Rodríguez, the blind black *tres* player/composer who revolutionized *son* both through the introduction of conga drums to the ensemble and through the incorporation of African-derived religious themes and texts, was also born in Matanzas. Yet another Matanzas native was bandleader/composer Damaso Pérez Prado, who became famous and received credit for the

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[29] The band was founded in 1924 in Matanzas (under a different name) and came to be one of the most popular bands on the island during the "golden era" of Cuban popular music, the 1940s and 50s. Cruz joined the band in 1950. The band, including Cruz, went to Mexico for a tour in 1960 and never returned to Cuba. In 1961 they moved to the United States, and Cruz stayed on as their principal singer until 1965 (Diaz Ayala, http://latinpop.fiu.edu/about.html).

[30] According to Cristobal Diaz Ayala's *Enciclopedia Discográfica de la Música Cubana 1925-1960* (date of print publishing unknown, book accessed at http://latinpop.fiu.edu/about.html), "Lalle lalle" was originally released on the 1960 Seeco recording *La dinámica Celia Cruz-acompañada de la Sonora Matancera*.

[31] "Rinkinkalla" was originally released on the 1964 Sonora Matancera LP *Sabor y ritmo de pueblos - Celia Cruz con la Sonora Matancera* (Seeco), and "Mata Siguaraya" was originally released on the 1964 Sonora Matancera LP *Canciones inolvidables – Celia Cruz con la Sonora Matancera* (Diaz Ayala). I have not been able to access the original LP recordings of the songs released by Seeco, but instead have found them on different compilations of Celia Cruz's music. Except for the song "Mata Siguaraya," none of these songs were composed by Celia Cruz or Sonora Matancera.

invention of mambo in the 1950s, but who is now recognized not as its creator, but its principal disseminator in Mexico and the United States. Thus, Matanzas musicians and composers have had a vital impact on the emergence and/or evolution of the three most important Cuban dance music genres of the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. In this context, it is perhaps understandable that Afrocuba turned to a "native" daughter (so to speak) and Matanzas-based dance band, for creative appropriation in their *batarumba* songs.

Afrocuba's mixed *toques*

While *batarumba* is the main Matanzas-based hybridizing practice I focus on in this chapter I also want to briefly discuss another innovation by Afrocuba de Matanzas, this time in the performance of Afro-Cuban sacred traditions. The *Lukumí* tradition boasts the most variety of all Afro-Cuban sacred practices in terms of the diverse instrumental ensembles used to accompany songs and ceremonies. These include the *batá* drums, the most revered *Lukumí* instrumental ensemble; the *güiro* ensemble, characterized by the use of three *shékeres* (hollowed out gourds covered in beads), a cowbell and one or two conga drums; the *bembé* drums; and the *Iyesá* drums. In their *espectáculos*, Afrocuba often performs *Lukumí* songs with at least two or three of these ensembles in order to show the musical variety of the Yoruba-derived pantheon. However, the group has also employed two or three ensembles within one song, resulting in what are called *toques mezclados* (mixed rhythms), which might feature the *batá* drums and the *güiro* ensemble or some other combination of ensembles.

According to former singer Dolores Pérez, it was her husband, former Afrocuba artistic director Juan García – who was brought in from Havana to choreograph Afro-Cuban sacred dances when the group transitioned from a rumba to folkloric group in 1980 – who had the initial idea for the *toques mezclados* in the early 1980s. Minini asserted that the *toques mezclados* emerged from a desire both to display the variety and richness of the *Lukumí* instrumental ensembles that can accompany an *orisha* song, and to experiment with the polyrhythms that were created by playing two different rhythmic matrices at the same time. As detailed in chapter five, Afrocuba has also created set pieces like their Coro Folklórico, that mixes the rhythms from two religious practices: *Lukumí* and *Palo.* Their folkloric dance for the highly revered *orisha* Yemayá is perhaps their most innovative and timbrally rich *toque mezclado* in terms of its incorporation of different ensembles and rhythmic changes. The musical accompaniment begins with the *batá* drums, switches in the middle of the song to the *bembé* ensemble, then morphs into a combination of *bembé* and *güiro*, and finishes with a mix of *bembé* and *batá* accompaniment. I have witnessed Havana groups, such as Clave y Guaguancó and Los Ibellis, employ *toques mezclados* in their folkloric shows, but in considering the respective dates of professionalization of these groups as compared with that of Afrocuba, I am strongly convinced that it was the Matanzas group that first performed this innovation in a folkloric context.[32] Like *batarumba* then, *toques mezclados* are evidence of the innovative spirit that resides in Matanzas, and thus challenge the essentialist notions of the city (as only a keeper of tradition) that are embedded in the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" trope.

[32] This is an innovation that can *only* be performed in a folkloric context. To do this in a ritual context would violate religious precepts.

Matanzas' situated hybridity

The main theoretical thrust of this chapter, and my dissertation, is that rumba-based hybridizing practices are entangled with the politics of place, both in terms of musicians' regional/local identities (related to the regionalist antagonisms I discussed in chapter one), and the racialized discourses of place that I discussed in chapter four. Here I want to emphasize that the particular rumba innovations detailed in this chapter are delimited and defined in part by the musicians' understandings of the ways that their place-based identities are intertwined with their creative practices. In this case, I argue that the moniker attached to Matanzas, the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture," informs the desire and sense of duty many local folkloric musicians feel to preserve and faithfully represent the various traditions associated with their city and province. Many *Matancero* musicians associate themselves with the traditional, and in turn disparage the tendency of *Habanero* folkloric musicians to *inventar* (make things up, or stray from a traditional style). Alternatively, and in line with the various meanings of *inventar* – which can also mean to invent, innovate or create something new – this might be viewed from a *Habanero* perspective as a positive attribute. However, the trope of place that ties Matanzas to racialized tradition is not simply a reflection of an already formed identity, for there is no one *Matancero* or fixed identity; local musicians do not construct their city as the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture" because their identity is inherently "traditional." Rather this discourse of place is constitutive of the identity formations of particular musicians who *do* identify with tradition. Needless to say, other Matanzas musicians may not feel bound by tradition or feel an obligation to preserve an "authentic" style, just as some musicians in Havana define their identity around tradition, despite the discourse of place that associates the capital with continual innovation and cultural hybridity.

Throughout my dissertation, I have alluded to *batarumba* as a hybrid creation that challenges the essentialization of Matanzas' identity as the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture," a trope that cannot discursively accommodate fusion practices. Nonetheless, following the assertions of Stuart Hall and Jocelyne Guilbault, *batarumba* does not entail indiscriminate mixing. Afrocuba has drawn on musical practices – folkloric and popular, sacred and secular – that have historical foundations in their city, and the creation of *batarumba* is the result of specific artistic choices. Thus, while I argue that Matanzas' folkloric musical scene is a diverse entity that includes the preservation of traditions as well as hybridizing practices, I also find that local conceptions of fusion tend to be more limited and tradition-oriented than those of Havana.

The fact that *batarumba* is an innovation largely constituted from local musical practices provides an excellent example of situated hybridity. In chapter four I discussed at length the intimate associations of Matanzas both with rumba (the city is considered to be rumba's birthplace), and with Afro-Cuban sacred practices, *Lukumí* being the most well-known and widely practiced. Above I suggested that Afrocuba's decision to adapt Celia Cruz and Sonora Matancera's songs for some *batarumbas*, of the many popular dance bands they could have chosen, may have been a gesture intended to pay homage to Matanzas-based popular musicians. I cannot declare with certainty that the group was making a decision based upon place-defined affiliations. Nevertheless, Cruz and Sonora Matancera's association with Matanzas suggests that Afrocuba may have acted with a desire to "stay local," and to draw from the local well of Matanzas' musical traditions. Thus, I would argue that the fusion of rumba percussion, form, and songs with sacred-derived *batá* drumming, and (in some cases) popular repertoire from a Matanzas-based band, illustrates a situated, locally-oriented approach towards hybridizing practices.

It is not only the musical elements of *batarumba* that constitute an invocation of the local, but also the larger conceptions of rumba-based fusion displayed by various Afrocuba musicians – particularly the importance they place on tradition in their creative practices – that elucidate a process of situated hybridity. Afrocuba director Minini told me that some people have suggested adding in piano and/or bass to their instrumental ensemble, but that this would betray the essence of *batarumba*, which was to stay within the realm of Afro-Cuban folklore. Minini felt that the sonic emphasis should be on the percussion and the polyrhythms created by the various instruments. In terms of the vocal elements, he stated that the arrangements should not include complex harmonies, as this was not in line with the folkloric tradition, and that the voices should not sound too trained or professionalized, but instead must maintain the nasal timbre and guttural techniques characteristic of Afro-Cuban folkloric song.

Minini's declarations display a desire to reaffirm both a Matanzas identity linked to tradition and the notion that Matanzas is the "cradle of Afro-Cuban culture." For, even the fusions produced by the group are governed by certain principles that will not permit incorporating just anything. Veteran percussionist Wichichi went a step further in tying *batarumba* to tradition, discussing the innovation as "pure," despite its clear identity as a hybrid practice. This comment suggested to me not a literal belief that *batarumba* is "pure" in terms of its musical elements, but rather an attempt to discursively construct *every* cultural practice that emerges from Matanzas, as "unpolluted," even those that are a conscious and direct result of fusion.

Hybridizing practices in Havana-style rumba

Guarapachangueo

> *Guarapachangueo* does not have a [rhythmic] pattern. *Guarapachangueo* is all about *bomba*, the heart or personal expression of the percussionist when he's inspired, or the percussionist's musical chops. *Guarapachangueo* means playing rumba on the *cajón*.[33] *Guarapachangueo* is the bass tone pattern on the *tumbadora* or *cajón*. *Guarapachangueo* is about "filling up" the empty spaces of the singer. *Guarapachangueo* is traditional rumba mixed with contemporary sounds. *Guarapachangueo* is mixing the sound of conga drums with the *cajón*.[34] *Guarapachangueo* is a conversation between the *quinto* (high-pitched improvising drum) and the low-pitched conga or *cajón*. *Guarapachangueo* is like free jazz – the conga drum has no set rhythm, it's free. *Guarapachangueo* is any variation or improvisation performed on the low-range percussion instrument. *Guarapachangueo* is improvisation. *Guarapachangueo* means a reduced number of percussionists. *Guarapachangueo* is nothing and everything.

These are some of the definitions of *guarapachangueo* provided to me by various Havana-based rumba musicians with whom I conducted fieldwork. As is evident, the term *guarapachangueo* does

[33] *Cajones* are wooden boxes of various sizes that served as rumba's main percussion instruments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, before the introduction of the conga drum to rumba's instrumental ensemble.

[34] The standard rumba ensemble includes threecongas: the low-range *mayor* (or *tumbador*), the mid-range *tres dos* (or *segundo*), and the high-pitched *quinto*.

not have any one meaning, but rather is an exceptionally polysemic utterance that is almost impossible to pinpoint because there is so little consensus among its practitioners about its definition.[35] Ethnographers are traditionally trained to investigate particular phenomena and discern their meaning(s), but this case not only defies any attempt at definition (meaning). It also presents a quandary in terms of classification: it is not even clear what sort of entity *guarapachangueo* constitutes. One of the only constants among the countless definitions I have heard relates to the particular instrument with which it is inextricably associated: the *cajón* (see Figure 6.2). In his 2003 B.A. thesis investigating the persistence and revitalization of the *cajón* as a percussion instrument in Havana, Dutch scholar Paul Van Nispen outlines the history of the instrument, which dates back to the emergence of rumba in the late nineteenth century. He concludes that the *cajón* has re-emerged as an important instrument in the late twentieth century within a variety of sacred and secular practices for several reasons. In terms of religious uses of the *cajón*, the most notable increase in its use has been with the growing popularity of the *cajón de muertos* ceremonies, principally because they are less expensive than *tambores* (the most common and venerated ceremony within *Santería* worship).[36] Referring to the revitalization of the *cajón* within rumba, Van Nispen opines that the deep (and I would add, boomy) sound of the *cajón* as compared with the conga drum, provides a very strong, penetrating bass sound. He also adds that the *cajón*'s capability to produce amplified volume makes it an ideal instrument for the *guarapachangueo* style, as one of its characteristics is an increase in improvisation in lower registers (Van Nispen 2003: 120).[37]

[35] Some might argue that this inability to pin down a meaning for *guarapachangueo* is evidenced in most musical practices in their emergent years, before they become standardized. Standardization may well happen eventually with *guarapachangueo*, but currently it lacks a stable definition.

[36] Van Nispen adds that at the time of the *cajón*'s emergence, it was often used in many different Afro-Cuban religious ceremonies to substitute for the particular percussion instruments associated with each practice that were not available and/or prohibited due to the racist criminalization of these practitioners (Van Nispen 2003: 29).

[37] Pioneering Cuban musicologist Argeliers León explains that in West and Central African percussion traditions the low-range drum, rather than the high-pitched drum, usually functions as the lead and improvising drum of the ensemble. This African approach is still evidenced in Afro-Cuban sacred practices such as the *batá* and *Palo* musical traditions, where the largest, lowest-pitched drum is the main improviser of the ensemble. León suggests that the transition from the African philosophy of low-register improvisation to the tendency in Afro-Cuban secular music to improvise on the high-pitched drum relates to the influence of Western music, where instruments/voices in higher registers tend to perform with more ornamentation (León 1984: 141-42).



Figure 6.2: *Cajones* of different sizes at rumba event in the home of *guarapachangueo* creators Los Chinitos: at center is the mid-range conical *cajón*, at left is the *quinto cajón*, held between the knees of the percussionist

Returning to the problems of definition, most musicians seem to agree that, in contrast to rumba *guaguancó*, *guarapachangueo* does not refer to a specific composite rhythmic pattern. It is often characterized by a pattern of bass tones (known as *tukutukum*) performed with the palm of the hand in the middle of the mid- or low-range conga drum or *cajón*, which I present in a transcription below. However this pattern (consisting of three or four notes, depending upon whom you ask) cannot alone define *guarapachangueo*, especially because the bass tones are often inaudible in many live and recorded performances due to the large amount of simultaneous improvisation on different instruments. Beyond this, some musicians viewed *guarapachangueo* as a particular feeling, *bomba,* the inspirational or improvisatory spirit emerging from the percussionist. A few musicians defined it in terms of its musical function within the rumba ensemble, i.e., to fill up the spaces left by the singer. Others defined it in terms of a mix of components – whether musical genres or percussion instruments. One definition of *guarapachangueo* viewed it as improvisation, absolute rhythmic freedom for the percussionist, while another delimited its meaning to improvisation on a percussion instrument of a particular range. Finally, *guarapachangueo* was defined in terms of the number of percussionists performing. Notwithstanding my belief that all of these definitions are valid and contribute to a constellation of meanings surrounding *guarapachangueo*, for the purposes of clarity I choose to discuss it as a style of percussion playing associated with contemporary rumba performance that generally involves four elements: the use of the *cajón*, either with other *cajones* and/or with congas; the *tukutukum* bass-tone pattern; increased rhythmic improvisation on the low-range conga or *cajón*; and a higher degree of simultaneous improvisation on different instruments.

Guarapachangueo was invented by a group of brothers known as "Los Chinitos" (the little Chinese men), which presumably refers to the noticeable physical markers of Chinese ancestry on both sides of their family, although they are racially mixed. Los Chinitos are four *rumberos* from the spatially and economically marginalized, primarily black municipality on the outskirts

of Havana called San Miguel del Padrón, a place that has intimate associations with rumba. In my interview with the youngest of the four brothers, Irián López Rodríguez recalled that his father moved to La Corea neighborhood of San Miguel del Padrón around the 1940s, when this part of the province of Ciudad de la Habana (Havana City) was *monte* (roughly, a backwoods area).[38] Contrary to the hopes of Irián's father that the area would become industrialized due to its proximity to the train station, it became another *barrio marginal* (marginal/poor neighborhood). Irián asserted that San Miguel del Padrón became a site for the migration of *delincuentes* (delinquents) and many Afro-Cuban religious practitioners. It was a particularly attractive destination for men initiated into the male secret society/religion called *Abakuá*, who were fleeing from the authorities and the criminalization of Afro-Cuban religious practice until the 1990s that derived from the dogma of scientific atheism promoted by the Revolutionary government. This migration of poor, black, marginalized people contributed to the area's emerging reputation as a *barrio rumbero* (rumba-rich neighborhood).

This association of San Miguel del Padrón with particular racial, cultural and social attributes – blackness, criminality, rumba performance, and *Abakuá* practice – constitutes another example of the racialized discourses of place that I discussed in chapter four. This trope of place, however, highlights the micro-practices of local identity formation within the sprawling and diverse geography of the Havana metropolitan area. Needless to say, each municipality and neighborhood in Havana has its own character and population, which is often discursively linked to race, class, and even religious practice. During my fieldwork, I had a spontaneous conversation with my Havana-based percussion and song teacher, Daniel Rodríguez, in which he discussed the localized practice of different Afro-Cuban religions within Havana. For example, he asserted that while the municipality of Cerro had a strong *Lukumí* presence, *Abakuá* practice had particularly strong roots in Marianao, Pogolotti, and San Miguel del Padrón, which he also claimed had a strong presence of *Palo* (p.c., October 2006). Some municipalities are associated with multiple Afro-Cuban religions, such as Guanabacoa, where *Lukumí*, *Palo*, *Abakuá*, and *Espiritismo* are all practiced widely.[39] Referring to the fact that San Miguel del Padrón had strong links with *Abakuá* and *Palo*, both considered to be very intense in terms of their specific ritual practices and associations with the dead, Daniel stated that the municipality was *tierra de mambises* (land of rebels/insurrectionists).[40] According to Irián, San Miguel del Padrón has never had a particularly high incidence of *Santería* worship, which is the main reason why he and his brothers began playing the *batá* drums relatively late in their careers.

Irián was somewhat of a child prodigy on the conga drums, especially the *quinto*, although he and his brothers would often play rumba on furniture drawers because they did not own congas before they became professional musicians in 1980. It was in this year that master folkloric dancer and member of the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional Juan de Dios Ramos, asked them to join a new group that he was founding, the now highly revered Raíces Profundas. Los Chinitos were brought in as rumba specialists, while other percussionists were tapped to play the *batá* drums and Afro-Cuban sacred music.

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[38] Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Los Chinitos and their creation of *guarapachangueo* is drawn from an interview with Irián on May 8, 2007 at his home in San Miguel del Padrón.

[39] Although Daniel drew connections between different Afro-Cuban religions and particular Havana municipalities and neighborhoods, this is not to say that these practices are not widespread in more centralized parts of the Havana, such as Habana Vieja, Centro Habana, and the Vedado neighborhood. Havana has a high proportion of *Santería* and *Abakuá* practitioners in general.

[40] *Mambises* refers specifically to the Cuban rebels who rose up against the Spanish colonial regime in the late nineteenth-century wars of independence.

Guarapachangueo emerged, however, while Los Chinitos were amateur musicians, around 1973-74. Irián described the very resourceful creation of the new style, which was first conceived of using a makeshift *cajón* that was constructed from parts of a homemade wooden house fan.[41] He attributed the very short rhythmic ostinato associated with *guarapachangueo*, called *tukutukum* and played with bass tones, to his older brother, Pedro López Rodríguez and a cousin, Luis Ramon Zuleta López, stating "Sale ese ritmo, no se crea" (This rhythm simply emerged, it wasn't created). Here is a transcription of the *tukutukum* rhythm as demonstrated to me by Irián, which I present in the context of the clave rhythm:[42]

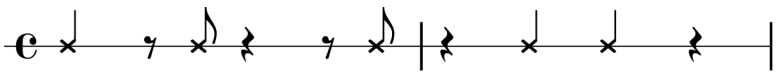


Figure 6.3: Rumba clave rhythm



Figure 6.4: *Tukutukum* pattern (bass tones of *guarapachangueo*)

While the basic pattern is known as *tukutukum*, an onomatopoeia referring to the four notes of the bass tone pattern, Irián demonstrated that there are slight variations on the pattern, i.e., three (*kutukum*) or two notes (*tukum*), with the accent always on the *kum* or last tone, which falls in the middle of the clave cycle.



Figure 6.5: *Tukutukum* variation #1



Figure 6.6: *Tukutukum* variation #2

[41] This is just one of countless examples of the famed Cuban resourcefulness, born of necessity and a lack of resources. Common examples include building homemade fans with motors taken from washing machines or other appliances, and using motors from appliances to keep the 1950s American cars running.

[42] I am profoundly grateful to Eliot Bates, a colleague during graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley, who digitalized my transcriptions for this chapter.

Irián stressed that the *tukutukum* pattern must be initiated in the middle of the clave cycle, between beats two and three (see Figures 6.3 and 6.4), and not, as many people perform it, on the upbeat that leads into beat one or the start of the clave cycle. Indeed, I have noticed that many rumba groups, including Yoruba Andabo and Los Ibellis, do place the *tukutukum* pattern on the other, "wrong" side of the clave, i.e., leading into beat one:

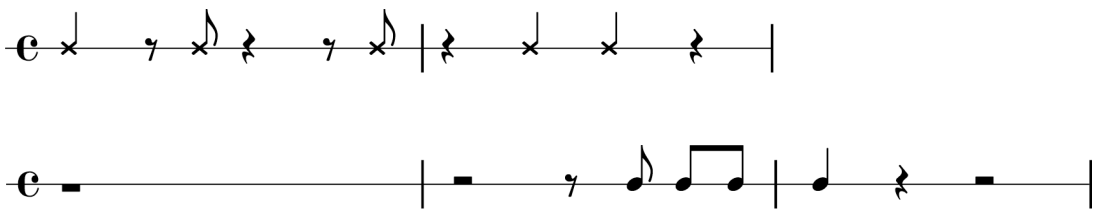


Figure 6.7: Rumba clave and *tukutukum* on the "wrong" or two side of the clave

At the moment of its emergence the new style created by Los Chinitos did not have a name, nor was the term *guarapachangueo* invented by them. Irián recalled that it was a *rumbero* called "El Llanero" (someone from the plains) who came up with the name, which he used not positively, but in a disdainful manner to assert that the *guarapachangueo* style represented neither traditional nor good rumba. Thus, as with innovations within musical practices throughout the world, this one was considered to be a degenerate version of the original before it became popularized. By 1975-76 the term *guarapachangueo* had become widespread as a way of referring to Los Chinitos' new style, although there were (and still are) variations on the name, such as *guarapachanguero* and *guarapachanga*.[43]

Not surprisingly, the style did not enjoy immediate success after its emergence. In fact, it was not until roughly ten years later, the mid-1980s, that it gained acceptance and began to be disseminated widely within the Havana rumba scene. Irián asserted that *rumberos* were hesitant to connect themselves with this innovation, afraid that it might fail or was not traditional enough. He specifically pinpointed the wariness on the part of musicians to implement musical changes in rumba percussion that were intrinsic to *guarapachangueo*, particularly concerning the relationship of the *quinto* to the other percussion instruments. He stated that the *quinto* loses some of its freedom, "esta esclavizado" (it becomes a slave) to the *guarapachangueo*, because it has to respond to the improvisation on the low-range *cajón* or conga in order to have a "conversation," and thus has less space to solo. He recalled that Los Chinitos were playing at a rumba party where many master *rumberos* were in attendance (year unknown), and that it was not until a musician from *Oriente* got up to sing with them that big names in rumba – principally Luis "Aspirina" Chacón Mendivel, Gregorio "El Goyo" Hernández Rios, and Raices Profundas founder Juan de Dios – took notice and began to view the new style as something to emulate. It was after El Goyo and

[43] Most of the rumba musicians I know use the term *guarapachangueo*, as does Van Nispen (2003) in his thesis. The comprehensive encyclopedia of Cuban instruments, the *Atlas de los Instrumentos de la Música Folclórico-Popular de Cuba* (1997), uses the variant *guarapachanguero*, but mentions the style only once in a passing reference.

Juan de Dios threw their support behind the style, and in part due to the increased attention for Los Chinitos after they joined Raíces Profundas and became professionals, that *guarapachangueo* began to gain widespread support.

Although *guarapachangueo* seems inextricably tied to the *cajón* (and to the instrument's revitalization within rumba), Irián described Los Chinitos' original instrumental ensemble as consisting only of conga drums. He asserted that it was only in the early 1980s, when Los Chinitos were playing with Raíces Profundas, that his brother Pedro came up with the idea to develop the *guarapachangueo* style on the *cajón*, outside the context of their professional work. At this time they were playing rumba in a more traditional style in Raíces Profundas, and the only *cajón* they were using was the *cajón maleta* (literally, "suitcase" or the large and low-pitched *cajón*), which is a wooden box on top of which the percussionist sits, executing his strokes on the front and side panels (see Figure 6.9 below). Pedro adapted the *cajón maleta* to add more timbral variety, specifically to play *guarapachangueo*. In 1982, the Raíces Profundas ensemble downsized from thirty-odd performers to around eighteen. Four percussionists remained, so it became imperative to play in *guarapachangueo* style, which would have the maximum sonic effect with a minimum of personnel. Irián stated that the style allowed them to play rumba with only four people: one percussionist playing the *tres dos* (mid-range) conga drum, including the *tukutukum* bass tones; a second percussionist improvising on the *quinto*; a third percussionist playing the *catá*; and a singer playing clave.

A few changes emerged within the *guarapachangueo* style in the late 1980s. First, a new *cajón* was developed around 1987-8, the *cajón cónico* (conical *cajón*), which was meant to be a substitution for the *tres dos* conga drum[44] and included extra protruding side panels that would allow for more timbral possibilities on the instrument.[45]

[44] The *maleta cajón* can be substituted for the *mayor* and the conical *tres dos cajón* can take the place of the *tres dos* conga drum. I did not ask Irián when the *quinto cajón* emerged, but it is now quite common in rumba performance to see a *quinto* conga drum be replaced with or played in addition to a *quinto cajón* (which also has a conical shape but is smaller and shorter than the *tres dos cajón*; see Figure 6.2).

[45] It was not clear to me during my interview with Irián whether the first conical *cajón* was created or developed first by his brother Pedro, who adapted the *maleta cajón* for their *guarapachangueo* style, or by Yoruba Andabo percussionist Pancho Quinto. In his B.A. thesis, Paul Van Nispen asserts that the *tres dos cajón* was introduced by Pancho Quinto in 1970, and that before that time there only existed two *cajones* – the *maleta* and the *quinto cajón* (Van Nispen: 41).



Figure 6.8: Conical *cajón*, as played by Irián López

In addition, Los Chinitos decided to add one mid-range conga drum and one *quinto* to the ensemble, which before had involved only two *cajones* or congas. The added conga was placed in the middle of the two percussionists so that both the player of the lowest conga/*cajón* and the *quinto* player could have easy access to it. Thus, two percussionists would be playing four, instead of two, instruments. Regarding this reduced number of percussionists, Irián stated that when other groups heard the recordings of rumba played in *guarapachangueo* style, they assumed they were listening to four percussionists, and that this led many Havana rumba groups to add more percussionists in order to play the style. He opined that many of the groups best known for playing *guarapachangueo* with three to five percussionists, including Yoruba Andabo and Clave y Guaguancó, are not technically playing *guarapachangueo* but instead *un gran poliritmo* (a great polyrhythm) with the bass tones characteristic of the style. He emphasized that this comment was a clarification, and not a criticism. Below I will outline a few instrumental configurations of *guarapachangueo* as interpreted by different rumba groups.

The dissemination and popularization of *guarapachangueo*

Although *guarapachangueo* has not been the subject of an in-depth investigation until now, all of the published mentions of the style speak not about Los Chinitos as its creators, but of its intimate association with famed Yoruba Andabo founder and former percussionist Francisco Hernández Mora (1933-2005), known to all as "Pancho Quinto."[46] For example, in his D.M.A. dissertation, Kenneth Schweitzer states, "With the late 1980s emergence of another fusion genre,

[46] Some works (Elí Rodríguez 1997; Wielecki 2001; Schweitzer 2003) do not mention Los Chinitos in their narrative about *guarapachangueo*, leading the reader to believe that it was Pancho Quinto who invented the style.

guarapachanguéo, Pancho Quinto positioned himself as a cutting edge musician…In the guarapachangéo, Pancho incorporates *batá* within rumba" (Schweitzer: 157-8).[47] Pancho Quinto, whose name may reference his skills on the *quinto*, was a founder in 1961 of Guaguancó Marítimo Portuario, the group that would become Yoruba Andabo, and a key figure in the group's critical and popular ascent in the mid-late 1980s. Like the majority of the founders, Quinto was a dockworker until the group went professional. Cuban scholar Rosa Esther Álvarez Vergara asserts that in the period of the group's relative dormancy in the 1970s, Quinto became known as a master whom aspiring percussionists would approach to gain knowledge in *cajón* and *batá* playing techniques (Álvarez Vergara 1989). In fact, when Los Chinitos decided to expand their knowledge to *batá* playing in the 1980s, they chose Quinto as their teacher. Alluding to the Yoruba Andabo's creative adaptation in the face of a dearth of instruments before they attained professional status, Quinto is quoted as stating, "Yoruba, *Arará*, *Palo*, *Abakuá*, rumba…can all be played on three *cajones*" (ibid.: 23, my translation). Because of this unconventional philosophy, he is remembered as a percussionist who pushed the generic boundaries of rumba, particularly as concerns his role in the popularization of *guarapachangueo*.

Quinto and fellow Yoruba Andabo percussionist Jacinto Scull Castillo, known to all as "El Chori," met and became friends with Los Chinitos in the mid-1970s at a rumba party, a relationship that would have longstanding repercussions for Havana-style rumba. Irián credited El Chori with helping establish Los Chinitos' *guarapachangueo* ensemble: they were playing with a standard rumba ensemble at the party – the three conga drums of various sizes and functions – and El Chori suggested removing the *mayor* (low-range drum) and leaving the other two drums, with the *tres dos* playing the bass tones of *guarapachangueo*. Yoruba Andabo was the first group to disseminate this new percussion style in the center of Havana, which is presumably why Los Chinitos have been practically invisible in the few published mentions of *guarapachangueo*. Irián opined that people tend to speak more about Quinto because he established himself in *el arte* (the professional artistic world), and that it is for this reason that many associate the style with professional rumba groups such as Yoruba Andabo and Clave y Guaguancó. I encountered one example of this discursive amnesia at a show in Havana's Teatro América in early January 2007 called "Rumba del Nuevo Siglo" (Rumba in the New Century). The host dedicated the show explicitly to Pancho Quinto, referring to him as the "founder" of *guarapachangueo* and the current style of rumba played in Havana today. In contrast to the widespread lack of awareness (in some cases, obfuscation) in the academic and popular realms about Los Chinitos' role in the creation of this style, I was reassured by the fact that all of the Havana musicians whom I interviewed recognized Los Chinitos as the creators of *guarapachangueo*.

Far from attributing this absence of attention to malicious intent on the part of Yoruba Andabo, Irián emphasized the close relationship Los Chinitos had with Pancho Quinto and other members of the group. During our interview, he stated, "No me interesa quién lo haya inventado, si no quién lo toca bien" (I don't care who invented, only who plays it well). Similarly, in an interview conducted with a French percussion student, Irián's brother Pedro credited Quinto and El Chori with helping facilitate widespread acceptance of *guarapachangueo*, and commented on their role in its popularization:

[47] Quinto features prominently in Schweitzer's dissertation, although the focus is on Quinto's role as a teacher of ritual *batá* drumming rather than his membership in and innovations with Yoruba Andabo. Schweitzer studied with Quinto before his death.

> Nevertheless Yoruba Andabo keeps going, with my brother Bertico, the oldest, who started to work with them, and was a founder of Yoruba Andabó with Pancho Quinto (in 1981?). And [the one] who brought the 'kinpakin-pakin-patokotón' [the rumba *guaguancó* rhythm followed by the bass tones of *guarapachangueo*] was Bertico. Chori, and Julio "El Gordo" still do that…So it was Berto who kept that tradition of the *guarapachangueo cajón*, with Pancho Quinto and his invention with the spoon and the three *batá*, a very particular style. That was Pancho Quinto, that's lost already, the *guarapachangueo* format, that was Pancho Quinto's thing. But you see, the *guarapachangueo* comes from here, from la Corea [their neighborhood in San Miguel del Padón] (http://manleycvespanol.blogspot.com, English version).

Thus, despite the obvious goodwill between Los Chinitos and Quinto, the end result, as Pedro implies in his statement, is that musicians from a fairly isolated municipality have been marginalized discursively and instead, a celebrated musician from the center of Havana has received most of the credit. This can be viewed as another example of the politics of place imposing itself upon the historiography of a musical style, or the ways that being from a remote municipality within the Havana metropolitan area delimits musicians' conditions of possibility for widespread success.

Another explanation for this issue is related to the hegemonic status of professional musicians within the state cultural apparatus, and the related disregard of musicians who play *en la calle* ("in the street," i.e., earning their living illegally without state-sanctioned permission; see chapter two for more details). While Los Chinitos were professional musicians for a number of years, beginning with their role as founders of Raíces Profundas, they made a decision sometime in the 1990s to leave *el arte* due to disillusionment with the state cultural bureaucracy regarding permission to travel and perform abroad. Irián expressed the opinion that an official document stating that one graduated from the Escuela Nacional de Arte (National School of the Arts), which has often been required to gain professional status, should not be the measure of a musician's talent. He spoke of the difference between *el arte* and *la calle*, noting that in artistic performances it was necessary to adhere to certain European-derived criteria of musical competence, such as singing in tune. However, in *la calle*, the definition of a good musician has more to do with one's *bomba* (heart or personal expression in their improvising). He concluded by asserting that musicians playing in *la calle* are condemned to eternal marginalization in the sense that "History" will never mention their names and their accomplishments. The fact that *guarapachangueo* did not enjoy widespread acceptance until after well-respected professional *rumberos* had endorsed it, substantiates these claims about the hegemony of *el arte* and the related marginalization of non-professional musicians.

As stated by Pedro, Pancho Quinto is known for his unique style of *guarapachangueo*, particularly his instrumental ensemble that features the three double-headed hourglass-shaped *batá* drums. As is evident in Figure 6.9, his configuration consisted of the three *batá* drums tied together, the *maleta cajón* (on which the percussionist sits and strikes with a spoon), and a cowbell, all of which were played by one percussionist (himself). Describing Quinto's way of interpreting *guarapachangueo*, Kenneth Schweitzer states,

Pancho plays all the drums by himself. This provides him the freedom to shape and control the drum conversation and allows him to borrow rhythmic ideas from the rumba genres – yambú, guaguancó, and columbia – as well as from the *batá* repertoire…Sitting on a *cajón* (Sp. wood box), he holds a spoon in his left hand, which he alternately strikes against the front of the *cajón* and a cowbell that is firmly held in place by his right foot. His right hand may strike any of the enú [large] heads of the three *batá* that are stacked to his right, the side of the *cajón*, or the conga that is laying on its side behind him, barely visible in this photo (158).[48]



Fig 6.9: Pancho Quinto's *guarapachangueo* ensemble
Photo courtesy of Steve Bloom

While Yoruba Andabo continues to use Pancho Quinto's *guarapachangueo* format in most of their songs,[49] the three *batá* drums have now been replaced by three conga drums tied together on their sides next to the percussionist playing the *maleta cajón*.

[48] Interestingly Schweitzer conceives of both *batarumba* and *guarapachangueo* as *batá*-based fusions, no doubt because he attributes *guarapachangueo*'s creation to Pancho Quinto, who introduced the *batá* drums to the style. He states, "Unlike the Afrocuba de Matanzas creation, which requires three *batá* players in addition to the normal complement of rumba drummers, Pancho plays all the drums by himself" (Schweitzer: 158).
[49] Although Quinto died in 2005, he left Yoruba Andabo around 1994-95 (p.c. with Geovani del Pino, January 2007).



Fig 6.10: Yoruba Andabo's current *guarapachangueo* ensemble

The group's percussion ensemble currently includes the following instrumental configuration: on the right side (facing the stage) sits the percussionist playing *guarapachangueo* (the *cajón*, congas on their sides, *campana*, and spoon), in the middle is the *quinto* player with both a *quinto cajón* and *quinto* conga to allow him to switch back and forth, and on the other side sits the percussionist playing both the *tres dos cajón* and *tres dos* conga. This percussionist is responsible for playing the traditional *tres dos* rhythm of rumba *guaguancó* on the conga. I present here a rhythmic composite of the *guaguancó* rhythm (which is itself traditionally played as a compound rhythm on two drums, the *mayor* and *tres dos*) and the *tukutukum* bass tone pattern in the context of clave. As noted above, Yoruba Andabo plays the *tukutukum* on the "two" side of clave, leading into beat one, which Irian deems to be an erroneous placement.
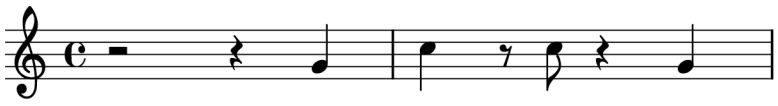


Figure 6.11: Rumba *guaguancó* rhythmic composite
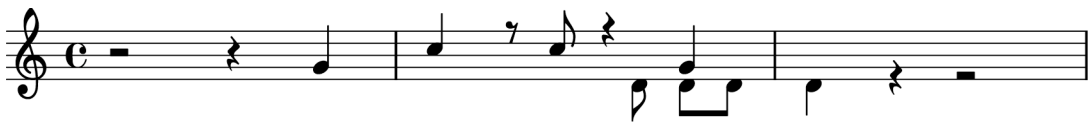


Figure 6.12: Composite of rumba *guaguancó* with the *tukutukum* (on the two side of clave)

Pancho Quinto and Yoruba Andabo also altered the placement of *guarapachangueo* within the standard tripartite rumba form as performed by Los Chinitos. Originally Los Chinitos would begin a song in a more traditional style, and then switch to the more improvisatory *guarapachangueo* style in the *montuno* section. In contrast, Yoruba Andabo (and other groups) play in *guarapachangueo* style throughout the whole song, with the simultaneous improvisation increasing in the *montuno* section. In their recordings, the *tukutukum* bass tones are often all but inaudible due to the large amount of simultaneous improvisation.

Although there are some common denominators, each rumba group with whom I conducted research has its own particular format for playing *guarapachangueo*, most likely in order to differentiate itself from other groups Los Ibellis, for example, plays a style that Daniel calls "rumba ligada con *guarapachangueo*," rumba mixed with *guarapachangueo* (p.c., September 2006). This style mixes elements of the traditional rumba *guaguancó* rhythm with *guarapachangueo* rhythms and a variation on the *guaguancó* rhythm that is similar to that of *rumba matancera* (a style of rumba from Matanzas that is comparable to *yambú*, the slowest style of rumba).



Figure 6.13: Los Ibellis *guarapachangueo* ensemble

Los Ibellis' *guarapachangueo* format includes four percussionists playing the following instruments: one plays the *mayor* rhythm of *guaguancó*, one plays the *quinto* (either *cajón* or conga), another plays the *tres dos* rhythm of *guagauncó* and the *guarapachangueo* bass tones utilizing both a *tres dos cajón* and a *tres dos* conga (like Yoruba Andabo), and the fourth plays a rhythmic variation on *guaguancó* using the *tres dos* and *mayor* congas. Daniel noted that the percussionist playing *guarapachangueo* uses the *tres dos cajón* to play the bass tones, while the *tres dos* conga is used to play the open tones of *guaguancó* and to *lucir*, "shine" or improvise.

Clave y Guaguancó's *guarapachangueo* style is characterized by a heavy presence of *cajones* (see Figure 6.14) and is quite free rhythmically in the sense that the group conforms less to a particular composite rhythmic pattern than the other groups.



Figure 6.14: Clave y Guaguancó *guarapachangueo* ensemble

Group director Amado Dedeu asserted that the only imperative for their style is that the *mayor* play the bass tones of *guarapachangueo*; beyond that rule, the percussionists are free to improvise around the tones (p.c., October 2006). The *quinto* then fills the spaces left by the *mayor*. Clave y Guaguancó has also adopted the style of Pancho Quinto in using the three *batá* drums tied together on their side for added timbral variety (in the above picture, you can see the largest *batá* behind the percussionist with the red visor). Finally, the group's percussionists often perform short prepared "routines" in which all four of them play a 30-second rhythm pattern simultaneously at the beginning of a rumba song, a sort of showpiece of coordination.[50]

While favoring a relatively free *guarapachangueo* style, Amado recognized the hazard of playing with such a large amount of improvisation, stating "se puede formar una pelea de perros" (a dogfight can ensue). In other words, so much simultaneous improvisation risks losing the "conversation" that should always be maintained between the percussionists playing the low-range instrument and the *quinto* respectively, and it could disintegrate into a lot of percussion playing not really "saying anything," or making a statement through improvisation. As is evident from the descriptions of the various Havana rumba groups' percussion configurations and adherence to rhythmic patterns or not, there are many variations on and interpretations of the

[50] For examples of these routines, see "Capricho de Abuela" and "Ña Francisca" on their album *Déjala en la Puntica* (Egrem, 1996).

guarapachangueo style, a phenomenon that is undoubtedly linked to the many meanings attached to and nebulous definition of *guarapachangueo*.

Although *guarapachangueo* is unequivocally associated with rumba in Havana, the style has been disseminated to other provinces in Cuba in the last ten to fifteen years and influenced local rumba styles in Santiago and other cities. Rumbatá, a young and highly talented rumba group from Camagüey that has gained national and international acclaim in the last few years, plays in *guarapachangueo* style. The group attributes its percussion and singing style largely to Clave y Guaguancó, who they refer to as their *padrinos* (godfathers), although I would add that there is also clear influence from both Los Chinitos and Yoruba Andabo. Rumbatá's *cajones* have a front panel added on, like Los Chinitos, in order to give the percussionist an extra surface with which to produce different timbres. In addition, they perform with a set of *batá* drums tied together on their side and placed in between two percussionists, revealing an obvious influence from Pancho Quinto and Yoruba Andabo.

Finally, despite the Matanzas province's reputation as the primary site of conservation of traditional styles of rumba, I witnessed several groups play rumba in *guarapachangueo* style there, too. The young rumba group Los Reyes del Tambor (the Drum Kings) bases their playing style around *guarapachangueo*, and I observed the celebrated rumba group from Cárdenas, Columbia del Puerto, play in *guarapachangueo* style at a folkloric festival in their hometown in early March 2007. Even Afrocuba director Minini, who is viewed as one of the main actors in the preservation of Matanzas-based Afro-Cuban traditions, expressed admiration for *guarapachangueo* as a rhythmic and stylistic innovation, singling out the style of Pancho Quinto and Yoruba Andabo for praise (p.c., February 2007). He stated that although Afrocuba might play *guarapachangueo* in an isolated performance, the group could never perform it as well as the "originators" in Havana since the latter were "cultivating it every day." This declaration suggested both that Minini sees musical practices as inherently tied to the places from which they emerged and that one's local identity determines how well or not he/she can perform a given style. He viewed Afrocuba's maintenance of tradition as going against the current trend in rumba of adopting the *guarapachangueo* style in order to appeal to younger audiences, and framed tradition, paradoxically, as the exception instead of the norm. Nonetheless, he concluded his remarks with a fascinating declaration, asserting that if a (foreign) producer approached Afrocuba to record a commercially released album where the group would be asked to play *guarapachangueo*, he would agree to it for the purposes of economic gain. That does not mean, he clarified, that he or the group would change the "essence" of their rumba style, only that he would be willing to perform *guarapachangueo* for an isolated project.[51] Thus, financial opportunities – whether in the form of recordings or international tours – can and do inform creative decisions in the context of economic instability, and in some cases can lead to a group temporarily contradicting its own artistic mission or expanding beyond its place-based repertoire for the sake of earning much-needed supplementary income.

[51] It is possible that, given my stated interest in *guarapachangueo*, Minini was hinting that I should find a foreign producer for the group to record such a project.

Reggaetón's influence on rumba vocals

There are certain changes in rumba singing that have accompanied the dissemination of *guarapachangueo* in Havana, specifically the influence of reggaetón on rumba's vocal style. I do not see these changes in vocal style as necessarily linked to *guarapachangueo*, partly because they have emerged only in the last few years. In fact on Yoruba Andabo's celebrated first solo album, *El Callejón de los Rumberos* (Ayva Music, 1993), the vocal configuration of most of the songs is fairly traditional in that it corresponds to the format introduced by the legendary Los Muñequitos duo "Saldiguera" and "Virulilla" in the 1950s (see chapter four). In other words, Yoruba Andabo retained a traditional vocal style despite the fact that their percussion style, *guarapachangueo*, was highly innovative. Notwithstanding, recent innovations in rumba song do seem to dovetail with the larger ideology of *guarapachangueo*, that is, to expand the boundaries of rumba by incorporating non-traditional musical elements, which has contributed to a redefinition of the Havana rumba sound and demonstrates another example of place-based hybridizing practices.

Reggaetón is a highly hybrid popular music genre, emerging in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean in the early 1990s, that includes elements from American hip hop, Jamaican dancehall, Dominican *merengue,* and other Latin American popular musics like salsa and *bachata*.[52] It has become an international phenomenon in the new millennium, and not only enjoys near universal appeal among Latin American and Latino youth, but has also in the past several years made major inroads in popular music markets oriented towards non-Latino youth in the United States. Cuba's reggaetón profile has been rising in the last five years, both in terms of its audience on the island and the emergence of artists who have become internationally known.[53] Moreover, it has had a tremendous influence on a variety of Cuban music genres, most notably *timba*; many top-notch *timba* groups have recorded collaborations with reggaetón artists/groups and some have even sought out vocalists who can sing in both styles.

In the last several years, reggaetón refrains have been creeping into rumba songs in Havana, primarily in *guaguancó* songs, and the singer at the forefront of this movement is Ronald González, lead singer for Yoruba Andabo.[54] He joined the group in late 2005 and began to introduce refrains from popular reggaetón songs in circulation on the radio in order to "renovate" rumba (p.c., April 2007), and presumably to expand rumba's audience to young adults by quoting lyrics from a popular hit that they recognize.

[52] There are ongoing debates about whether it emerged first in Panama or Puerto Rico, but in the last decade or so, it has become intimately associated with the latter and Puerto Rican reggaetón singers currently enjoy the most popularity and economic success.

[53] A few of the most well-known Cuban reggaetón artists/groups are Gente de Zona, Eddy K, Cubanito 2002, and Elvis Manuel.

[54] See chapter five for more details about Ronald's career.



Figure 6.15: Ronald González

Most often Ronald inserts the reggaetón refrains in the *montuno* section of the rumba song, when the tempo of the song increases and the couple comes out to dance. One of the biggest reggaetón hits of 2006-07, "Se me parte la tuba en dos" by Elvis Manuel, was the most frequent quotation Ronald used in rumba songs.[55] This sampling of popular reggaetón refrains has had precisely the desired affect of getting younger audience members to participate, both by singing along with the catchy, familiar refrains and by dancing. In addition to Ronald's keen sense of how to appeal to a young public, he also happens to be an extraordinary improviser. In his improvising "calls" he often manages to bring in references to current events – such as the 2007 national baseball championships between the Havana and Santiago teams – and even makes publicity announcements for Yoruba Andabo's future gigs.

While Ronald's incorporation of reggaetón refrains into rumba songs clearly appeals to certain sectors of Yoruba Andabo's audience more than others, specifically the younger members, his influence on contemporary rumba vocals cannot be denied. Not only has it become trendy in the last few years for other Havana rumba groups to quote reggaetón refrains in the *montuno* sections of their songs (and at times at the beginning of the songs, eschewing completely the traditional introductory *diana*), but this phenomenon has taken hold, like *guarapachangueo*, in other locales in Cuba. Columbia del Puerto, the same group from Cárdenas that I witnessed playing *guarapachangueo*, also introduced the popular refrain "Se me parte la tuba en dos" at the end of the aforementioned performance, providing an example of how this percussion style is often linked performatively with reggaetón influences in rumba vocals. Even more surprising was an Afrocuba de Matanzas all-rumba performance in Havana in which the group played a song

[55] The word "tuba" (like the band instrument) is used here as a metaphor for "penis." In April 2008 Elvis Manuel, his mother, and fifteen other Cubans left the island on a raft bound for Miami. The U.S. Coast Guard rescued Manuel's mother and thirteen others two weeks later and returned them to Cuba. Manuel and several others, however, were never found and were eventually presumed dead.

that included elements of both reggaetón and the influential Colombian popular music genre *cumbia*. Given the fact that Afrocuba director and members self-identify as traditional musicians whose aim is to preserve Matanzas musical traditions, this performance constituted an anomaly.[56] Nonetheless, it illustrates the significant impact of Havana-based hybridizing practices on rumba and folkloric groups across the island, and the related cultural hegemony of Havana styles within Cuba.

Havana's situated hybridity

The almost limitless improvisational potential of *guarapachangueo* and the incorporation of elements of reggaetón, a non-Cuban popular genre, into rumba songs suggests that Havana-based folkloric musicians have a much broader conception of fusion practices than their counterparts in Matanzas. The discourse of place that circulates about Havana constructs the capital as the locus of cultural and racial hybridity, and the principal signifier for the hybrid nation's population and culture. Correspondingly, musicians from Havana are assumed to have weaker ties to traditional styles of performing Afro-Cuban music, and to view Matanzas styles of playing as "too slow," "too repetitive," and too hostile to creative innovation. While these assumptions do not accurately reflect the wide range of opinions regarding tradition and innovation among Havana musicians, my conversations with various *rumberos* from the capital suggest that they do tend to feel less obliged to preserve traditional styles of playing and to have less restricted conceptions about which genres can be mixed.

When speaking about *guarapachangueo*, Yoruba Andabo director Geovani del Pino displayed somewhat surprising views on tradition and innovation. While buttressing my argument about the influence of discourses of place on identity formation and hybridizing practices, his assertions did not conform to assumptions about the attitudes of older generations of musicians and the tendency to police the boundaries of tradition.[57] Geovani stated:

> As a living genre rumba also has the right to evolve…and it does not stop being rumba. There are those who are tied to the idea that if it's not played like it was in the old days, it's not rumba. I don't agree with this standard of judgment. Because then we would have to say that what [Cuban dance band bandleader] Adalberto Álvarez plays currently is not *son*. No one would dare tell Adalberto Álvarez that what he plays isn't *son*, just because he doesn't play like the [Trio] Matamoros [popular Cuban son group of the 1930s]…No one would dare tell Arsenio Rodríguez that what he did later with *son*, to which he introduced piano, to which he introduced conga drums, to which he introduced trumpets, that what he was playing wasn't son…There were those who thought it…but he prevailed. And 'the new' will prevail, even if many old guys don't want it to happen…you know why? Because they don't have the ability to perform [technically] in the way that a young person can. And because they don't have the ability to do it, they don't want that

[56] The group's identity (as preservers of tradition) does not always go uncontested. Notably, it was a younger singer who inserted the reggaetón lyrics into this performance, someone who has expressed the desire to inject new styles and trends into Afrocuba's repertoire.

[57] I have not examined in depth the issue of generational difference in speaking about the views of Havana and Matanzas musicians respectively, a factor which, in many cases (not that of Geovani), is more influential than one's regional/local affiliation.

> [change] to happen. But the youth prevail, and they always will… Rumba hasn't died because of this, because it evolved, it changed with the times (p.c., 12/1/06).[58]

In line with these views on the necessity of rumba's adapting to its contemporary musical and cultural context, Geovani opined that rumba is linked to any Cuban genre that emerged after it because of the important role that the clave rhythm, a hallmark of rumba, plays in virtually all Cuban musical practices. He stated that because the basis of rumba is clave and drums, rumba can be fused with basically anything, rumba fits into any style.

Los Ibellis director Daniel displayed a similar viewpoint, asserting that while tradition needs to be maintained, rumba should be a site of innovation, which implies that by "tradition" he refers specifically to Afro-Cuban sacred music and that rumba innately constitutes a space of musical fusion (p.c., October 2006). He also framed the discussion of tradition in terms not only of musical practice, but also of reception. He considered his group to be "traditional," but added that they adapt their style to the specific audiences that they have in front of them in any given venue; they perform in a more traditional style for older audiences, particularly ones that include many religious elders, and employ more "innovative" techniques for younger audiences, such as faster *batá* playing and inserting reggaetón refrains into their rumba songs. This statement suggests that musicians' notions of tradition and innovation can be quite flexible according to the specific circumstances of any given performance. Furthermore, as exemplified in my discussion of Clave y Guaguancó's repertoire in chapter five, rumba groups can include both "traditional" songs and *guarapachangueo*-influenced or fusion-based songs within any one performance.

Clave y Guaguancó's conception of rumba-based fusion is undoubtedly the broadest and least restricted of all the groups I have discussed. More than any other rumba group on the island, the group is associated with fusion, mixing rumba not only with other Afro-Cuban genres – such as *batá* drumming, *timba,* and *tonadas*[59] – but also with foreign genres, such as rap, flamenco, and jazz. Each of their rumba hybrids has a specific name/title that refers to the genres being fused together. The album they recorded with the late *Reina del guaguancó* (queen of *guaguancó*) Celeste Mendoza called *Noche de la Rumba* (1999, Tumi) includes songs classified as: *flameguanbatá* (a fusion of flamenco, *guaguancó,* and *batá*), *tonadaguaguancó* (*tonada* with *guaguancó*), and *bataguancó* (*batá* with *guaguancó*). Clave y Guaguancó's most recent album, *La Rumba Que No Termina* (2007, Cuba Chévere Musikproduktionen) takes rumba fusion to new heights, introducing

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[58] "Como género vivo también [la rumba] tiene derecho a evolucionar…y no deja de ser rumba. Hay quién está abrazado a que, si no se toca como aquel tiempo, no es rumba. Yo no estoy de acuerdo con ese criterio. Porque entonces diríamos que lo que toca Adalberto Álvarez hoy no es son. Nadie se atreve a decirle a Adalberto Álvarez que lo que toca hoy no es son, porque no toca igual que, que el Matamoros…No hay quién se atreva a decirle a Arsenio Rodríguez que lo que él hizo después con el son, que le incluyó piano, que le incluyótumbadoras, que le incluyó trompetas…que lo que él tocaba no era son...Hubo quién lo pensó…pero se impuso. Y se impondrá lo nuevo, aunque muchos viejos no lo quieran..tú sabes porqué? Porque no tienen las posibilidades de ejecutar de la manera que lo hace un joven. Y como que no tienen las posibilidades de hacerlo, no quisieran que eso sucediera. Pero los jóvenes se imponen, y se impondrán siempre… La rumba no ha muerto por eso, porque evolucionó, evolucionó con la época."

[59] The *tonada trinitaria* is a lesser-known Afro-Cuban folkloric genre that emerged in the mid-late nineteenth century in the Valle de los Ingenios (Valley of the Sugar Mills), near the city of Trinidad, now a major tourist destination, in the southern central province of Sancti Spíritus. Like rumba, it involves only percussion and song and has been likened to the *coros de clave* that are thought to be a predecessor of rumba *guaguancó* (see chapter five), but it has remained a regional tradition that is not even widely practiced anymore in Trinidad. Interestingly, one of Afrocuba's most popular *yambú* songs, "Pa' los mayores," recorded on their *Raices Africanas* (1998), seems to have its origins in the *tonada trinitaria* repertoire (http://esquinarumbera.blogspot.com/2008/08/tonadas-trinitarias.html).

elements from *timba* and incorporating melodic instruments such as trumpet, piano, bass, and *tres* (Cuban three-stringed guitar). Some of these hybrids have titles such as *guan-politimba* (suggesting *guaguancó* with elements of *timba*), *guan-polirritmo* (suggesting *guaguancó* with extra polyrhythms), *catumba-rap* (featuring Cuban female rapper Telmary),[60] *jazz-batá* (featuring prominent female *timba* singer and member of Los Van Van Jenny Valdés), and *guan-batá* (which also features elements of *comparsa*). In addition to Clave y Guaguancó's recorded rumba hybrids, I have witnessed other fusions in live performance, such as a rumba-*lambada* fusion and another one (more successful to my mind) that combined Cuban *comparsa* rhythms with Brazilian *batucada* and sacred songs for the *orisha* Ochún.[61]

In my interview with Amado, he stated, like the two other Havana rumba group directors, that rumba can be fused with any other genre of music. He asserted *La nada, nada inspira* (a proverb that translates roughly to "nothing (no musical creation) comes/is inspired from nothing", adding *todo está hecho* (basically, all music already exists). He suggested that the job of musicians now is not to create, but to recreate by mixing genres. Thus, in his mind, no musical practices were off-limits for creative appropriation.

It is particularly productive to highlight the contrasting perspectives on rumba-*batá* fusions expressed by the directors of Afrocuba de Matanzas and Clave y Guaguancó. While the former explicitly spoke about his opposition to introducing non-percussion instruments and European-derived vocal aesthetics into the *batarumba* ensemble, Clave y Guaguancó's recent album features the use of several melodic instruments and all of their albums have elaborate vocal harmonies, both of which are elements that branch out beyond the domain of Afro-Cuban folkloric music. When I asked Amado whether Afrocuba's *batarumba* influenced their later fusions, he denied any connection with Afrocuba's innovation, stating that although the instrumental format is basically the same as that of Afrocuba, Clave y Guaguancó's fusions are not "*batarumbas*" as such. Instead, Amado asserted, each of their rumba-*bata* fusions has its own rhythmic basis and concept, which is what identifies each and inspires their specific names like *jazz-batá* or *flameguanbatá*. He contrasted this naming process with that of Afrocuba's, noting that the Matanzas group's name for their fusion, *batarumba*, denotes a generic complex (rumba) instead of specific rumba styles like *guaguancó* and *columbia*. He added that Afrocuba uses only a limited number of *batá* rhythms in their *batarumbas*, the most popular ones, namely *chachalokofún, ñongo*, and *Iyesá*, and that Clave y Guaguancó, in contrast, aimed to use more obscure and difficult *batá* rhythms, as well as incorporate the *cajón* for added timbral variety. Beyond displaying a conception of fusion that contrasts sharply with that of the Matanzas group in terms of its almost limitless approach, Amado's implication that Afrocuba's *batarumba* repertoire is fairly homogenous and uniform, i.e., that each song does not have its own specific rhythmic combinations, reinforced the one-dimensional definition of *batarumba* that circulates so widely.

One last vignette from my fieldwork illustrates an interesting commentary on different conceptions of fusion practices, especially when they involve the incorporation of sacred instruments or songs. I witnessed Clave y Guaguancó perform a fusion in October 2006 that invoked three separate Afro-Cuban traditions: rumba, *Lukumí*, and *Abakuá* music. Specifically, the song involved a mix of rumba and *batá* drumming in terms of its percussion elements, and a fusion of rumba song, Yoruba chants for the *orisha* Oyá, and *Abakuá* refrains. The song seemed to

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[60] I have never heard of *catumba* as a style of rumba or distinct Afro-Cuban drumming tradition. I have not been able to find any references to this term in the context of Cuban music.

[61] *Lambada* was a Brazilian dance craze from the late 1980s. *Batucada* is a Brazilian drumming tradition and the sub-style of samba that includes strong African influence; its sound is similar to Cuban *comparsa*, and thus the rhythms complement each other well.

suggest a parallel between the traits of this particular *orisha*, who is known as the "owner" of the cemetery and is thus associated with the dead, and the ritual principles on which *Abakuá* worship is centered, i.e., dead ancestors. During the performance two dancers came out, one representing Oyá and the other as the *Abakuá iremé* or "little devil," the masked figure who embodies this practice.



Figure 6.16: Folkloric representation of *Abakuá iremé*

Feeling that this piece seemed to be an example of fusion for fusion's sake, I consulted other musicians about it. One Yoruba Andabo percussionist reacted with disparagement, stating that the *Lukumí* and *Abakuá* traditions should not be mixed, according to the religious precepts of the former (p.c., October 2006). While *Abakuá* initiates can be initiated subsequently into *Lukumí,* the reverse cannot occur, i.e., people already initiated into la *Lukumí* are forbidden from becoming initiates in *Abakuá*. *Lukumí* is considered to be the apex of Afro-Cuban religious practice; no other religion is valued more highly and thus initiation into other religions – principally *Palo* and, for men, *Abakuá* – cannot come after one's initiation into *Lukumí*. While Oyá is the *orisha* associated with the dead, and this was presumably the point of Clave y Guaguancó's fusion, the percussionist stated that the fusion was not appropriate in a theological sense. He then spoke about the close relationship between *Abakuá* and *Palo* and the fact that both religions are centered on revering and establishing contact with dead ancestors, and thus a fusion of the two could be justified. He concluded that the only Afro-Cuban genre that can truly be mixed with any of these

religious practices is rumba. From his perspective, then, fusion has its limits, especially when it involves more than one Afro-Cuban religious practice. While my assessment of the fusion concerned aesthetic issues, this percussionist, like others, framed his critique in relation to religious precepts.[62]

Another folkloric musician concurred with this perspective, stating that *Lukumí* and *Abakuá* are two completely unrelated traditions and that fusing them profanes the former (p.c., October 2006). He stated that while each *Abakuá* society has a patron *orisha*, an *Abakuá iremé* cannot come out to dance during the performance of a *batá* rhythm for an *orisha*. Furthermore, while the different religious traditions could be performed in a folkloric context alongside one another, they should not be mixed within any one piece. Thus, he too drew the fusion line at mixing religious representations. When I consulted with one of the Afrocuba musicians in Matanzas about the fusion, he wholeheartedly concurred with the two previous opinions, although he also inserted a regionalist comment. He declared that *Habaneros* are always making things up in order to sell their culture to tourists, thus clearly homogenizing folkloric musicians from the capital who display distinct opinions on the matter (p.c, October 2006).

A third Havana-based musician reinforced the others' statements that the two traditions have nothing to do with each other, but added that within the context of an *espectáculo*, it is a fusion that can be performed and does not constitute a bad idea conceptually (p.c., December 2006). He alluded to the history of slavery, stating that Africans of different ethnic origins were thrown together on the plantations, and that distinct traditions and religions were not only practiced alongside each other, but also often adopted, whether consciously or not, certain ritual practices from one another. He distinguished between *espectáculos* and ritual contexts, asserting that while this fusion cannot occur within the latter, there was no reason not to do it in the former. Finally, he emphasized a further separation between these two contexts that makes this fusion permissible in a folkloric show: the *batá* drums used in *espectáculos* are not consecrated and most often the *Abakuá* songs are not even performed on *Abakuá* drums, but rather on conga drums. Thus, while this musician may be in the minority in terms of his lack of condemnation for the Oyá-*Abakuá* fusion, his nuanced perspective is evidence of the wide range of views concerning the boundaries of hybridizing practices within rumba performance.

The portrait I have painted of Havana-based musicians' views on rumba fusion practices is not that of a neat and easily categorizable group of people who hold uniform notions about which genres can and cannot be mixed. Many musicians, most of whom practice one or more Afro-Cuban religion, do not feel it is appropriate to mix sacred traditions within folkloric performance, even when both or all are being incorporated into a rumba context. Others feel that there are inherent and significant differences between ritual and folkloric contexts, such as the consecration or lack thereof of the percussion instruments and, as Katherine Hagedorn theorizes in her book *Divine Utterances* (2001), the different intents of the musicians in each context. In other words, they find that religious precepts governing ceremonies do not necessarily have to be adhered to in *espectáculos*. Notwithstanding these differences in perspective, Havana musicians tend to feel less restricted in their hybridizing practices as compared with Matanzas-based musicians, as illustrated by the formers' declarations that rumba can be mixed with anything. This observation leads back to the main objective in this chapter, which has been to elucidate the ways that musicians' conceptions of fusion, as exemplified by the two innovations I

[62] To contextualize this discussion one must understand that this percussionist is initiated into *Lukumí* and perhaps other Afro-Cuban sacred religions, as are the director of Clave y Guaguancó and all of the musicians I spoke with regarding this fusion.

have discussed, are informed both by their local identities and the discourses of place attached to their respective cities.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I want to point out that, as with all stereotypes and essentializing discursive formations, there is an element of truth in the notions that Havana is locus of cultural and musical hybridity and that Matanzas is the principal site for the maintenance of Afro-Cuban tradition. These tropes of place reflect the social histories of each city in various ways. For example, the capital has long been what Mary Louise Pratt would term a "contact zone" (Pratt 1992), a meeting ground for a variety of peoples from Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and China, and thus more susceptible to racial and cultural mixing. Conversely, the Matanzas province was the site of the largest plantations and most numerous concentrations of African slaves and their descendants during the nineteenth century and thus, has a historic connection with blackness. However, the discourses of place that are constructed in accordance with these histories have also informed the historiography on the two cities. For example, modern histories that discuss the Matanzas province tend to focus almost exclusively on its slave past, and to downplay the fact that European-derived culture, literature, poetry and music flourished in the city of Matanzas in the nineteenth century, in part due to the wealth white elites accumulated from the slave-driven plantation economy. Thus, the histories of these places and the discourses that circulate about them mutually constitute each other, and in turn influence the formation of musicians' local identities and their notions about the limits or lack thereof of hybridizing practices.

Finally, I believe that these discourses of place do not only function negatively, i.e. to essentialize the city's cultural identities; they also function in a "productive" manner in the Foucaultian sense, by informing the creation of situated rumba innovations. *Batarumba* is a complex and fascinating hybrid, whose specificity and situatedness derive from the particular racialized histories of and discourses about Matanzas that infuse the local identities of native musicians. If not for these notions about Matanzas, *batarumba* would likely be a completely different entity. Similarly, such a diversely conceived practice as *guarapachangueo* would likely not have been possible in a place where the majority of local musicians felt obliged to preserve traditional styles. It is precisely Havana musicians' propensity to *recoger todo lo que está en el ambiente* (soak up everything around them), as one musician told me, that sets the stage for the creation of innovations like *guarapachangueo* and the incorporation of foreign genres into their local practices.

It is my hope that this chapter has contributed to a conceptual tightening of and critical perspective on the notion of hybridity by viewing fusion practices as emanating from specific and situated positionalities vis-à-vis musicians' artistic choices. This process of situated hybridity need not be identified only in terms of the racialized politics of place and musicians' local affiliations, as I have posited here, but also in terms of other axes of identity formation such as class, sexuality, religion, and generation. This way of conceptualizing hybridity thus seeks to highlight, rather than obscure, the inherently political nature of fusion practices, precisely because they are entangled with issues of representation and processes of identity formation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

"Aquí entre las flores"

My last chapter was designed to pull together the different theoretical points I have made in chapters one through five concerning the politics of place and its relation to hybridizing practices in contemporary Cuban rumba performance. Thus, instead of presenting a traditional conclusion that encapsulates all of my theoretical points, here I would like to offer some concluding remarks on the current situation of rumba performance and practitioners that will retrace some issues that I have raised within this study and introduce a few new ones. The subtitle of this brief chapter, which translates to "Here among the flowers," is a common phrase sung by the lead vocalist of a rumba ensemble to signal to the other musicians that the song is ending. While I cannot speak to the origins of this phrase in rumba song,[1] I use it as a metaphor to summarize both the challenges and opportunities for rumba musicians in the context of the post-Soviet era and a more market-oriented economy in Cuba. In my concluding remarks, I will review both the detrimental and beneficial effects of the introduction of neo-liberal economic conditions and a dual currency system in the early-mid 1990s on the livelihoods of rumba and Afro-Cuban folkloric musicians. On the one hand, these changes have resulted in a sort of rat race to survive economically and in a greater policing of rumba performance due to the expansion of the tourism industry. On the other, the increased presence of tourists and foreigners on the island has introduced new opportunities for financial gain for musicians. My second goal here is to propose that that rumba music and performance have become increasingly relevant in the last two decades within the Cuban music scene, primarily on the island but also abroad. I posit that it is the incorporation of rumba elements into other genres – which, as will be evident, has a very long history – as well as the recent hybridizing practices I discussed in previous chapters, that have paved the way for an expansion of the boundaries of rumba performance and a resultant greater visibility and audibility of the practice.

Challenges and opportunities for rumba musicians

As I have emphasized throughout this study, rumba and Afro-Cuban folkloric musicians have spent almost twenty years adapting to the significant changes brought about by the introduction of a market-oriented economy on the island after the fall of the Soviet Union. In many cases they have endured less favorable treatment, shabbier performance conditions, and greater instability than musicians who play *timba* and other mass-mediated Cuban genres. In addition, many musicians have felt marginalized by the continuing racialization, and at times criminalization, of rumba. The longstanding disparagement of the practice by many state authorities and middle-class Cubans who view rumba as *una cosa de negros* (a black [inferior/criminal/vulgar] thing) has

[1] Although he never discusses the phrase's origins, Cuban musicologist Leonardo Acosta mentions a slightly altered version of this phrase, "Aquí entre las flores cantaremos, hermano" (We'll sing here among the flowers, brother), which he asserts is reminiscent of the Nahuatl people (Acosta 1991[1983]: 61). Actually, "Nahuatl" was the language of the Aztec kingdom, concentrated in modern-day central Mexico.

been exacerbated by the increased presence of foreigners at performances. Foreigners tend to draw the attention of local police officers, whose main duty in the post-Soviet era seems to be thwarting attempts by *jinteros* (hustlers) to cheat, assault, and/or rob tourists, and attempting to control the relationships between Cubans and foreigners more generally. Thus, as its audience composition has become more international, rumba performance has been subject to greater state control due to lingering stereotypes that link rumba to criminality, abuse of alcohol, and violence. To be fair, in my experience, police officers present at rumba events rarely intervene just because a Cuban strikes up a conversation with a foreigner, or vice-versa; they usually stand back and are a bit separated from the crowd unless a local seems to be harassing a foreigner. Nonetheless, their presence alone, like Foucault's Panopticon, is a disciplinary technology that involves Cubans policing their own behavior to a certain extent so as not to call attention to themselves.[2]

Despite the state's intentions to limit local-foreigner contact,[3] there has been much interpenetration between Cubans and foreigners in the context of rumba performance, which has opened the door to various types of opportunities for musicians. These include economic prospects if the musicians can recruit students for lessons, social connections with foreigners who may be able to facilitate tours abroad or want to establish friendships (which many times leads to financial help for musicians), and possibilities for undertaking romantic relationships with foreign women (which could eventually result in emigration).[4] Rumba's appeal to foreign audiences is due largely to an increase in consumption and visibility of the music abroad since the late 1980s via not only musical recordings but also international tours in North America and Europe by big-name groups like Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, Afrocuba de Matanzas, Yoruba Andabo, and Clave y Guaguancó. Many foreigners travel to Cuba already knowing how to play rumba and/or other Afro-Cuban percussion practices, or how to dance rumba or *casino* (Cuban-style salsa dance). Even if they have no practical experience with Afro-Cuban music and dance, the majority of foreigners who travel to Cuba are tourists who have consulted travel guides that tout regular rumba events in Havana, such as the Callejón de Hamel rumba and the *Peña del Ambia*, as the most authentic representations of Afro-Cuban culture that one can experience on the island.

Given the complex effects of the expansion of tourism in the post-Soviet era, it would be difficult to represent the aforementioned changes as unilaterally positive or negative. Nevertheless, while it is true that rumba and folkloric musicians have been able to capitalize on the opportunities resulting from the presence of foreigners and the global fascination with African-derived music and dance, most musicians still find it quite hard to support themselves and their family. Financial prospects present themselves in uneven ways and sporadically: musicians may have several private students or embark on an international tour for a finite period of time – a few weeks or months – but they often experience periods of economic drought that are more frequent than the periods of abundance. Sooner or later, they find themselves

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[2] Foucault scholars Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow state, "The surveillant in the tower could easily be observing a criminal, a madman, a worker, or a schoolboy. If the Panopticon functioned perfectly, almost all internal violence would be eliminated. For if the prisoner is never sure when he was being observed, he becomes his own guardian" (Dreyfus and Rabinow: 189).

[3] The policies of regulating Cuban-foreigner interactions are not only designed to protect the latter from petty thieves or *jineteros*, but also to "protect" the socialist society from the evils of neo-liberal capitalism. In other words, similar in strategy to the state restrictions on internet use by Cuban citizens, policing contact between locals and foreigners is meant to limit the amount of information from the outer world passed on both from foreigners to Cubans and vice-versa.

[4] Although female singers and dancers also frequently have relationships with foreign men, the large majority of Afro-Cuban folkloric musicians are men.

thrown back into *la lucha* (the economic struggle) due to the persistent instability of the Cuban economy and the fact that their monthly salaries have remained stagnant despite extreme rates of inflation in the post-Soviet era (see chapter two).

Moreover, the introduction of elements of neo-liberal capitalism has had an undeniable impact on societal relations. In addition to the re-exacerbation of racialized class inequalities that I discussed in chapter two, many Cubans friends have spoken of a generalized deterioration of ethics, sincerity, solidarity, and cooperation amongst citizens *por necesidad* (due to "need" or economic lack). While the situation in post-Soviet Cuba is likely to be interpreted differently in terms of the amount of economic capital one has been able, or unable, to acquire – i.e., a small business-owner who has profited from the decriminalization of private enterprise is likely to view the situation in a more positive light – one thing that all Cubans seem to agree upon, is that the nature of their society has changed fundamentally from what it was in the first three decades of the Revolution. Even those who have seen a rise in their own standard of living can never completely trust that they will enjoy long-term economic stability, as they did during the Soviet era. Some lack peace of mind because they risk their freedom every day to earn dollars without a licensed business, while others who may be running licensed businesses in dollars are dependent on tourism, which waxes and wanes, to stay afloat; at times the latter are forced to give up their businesses because the combination of weak tourism and heavy monthly taxation can leave them in debt. Either way, many Cubans express nostalgia for the Soviet era when, although no one was wealthy, everyone was assured a decent wage, plenty of food, free and good-quality medical care and education, and enough expendable income to take vacations with their family.

It is not possible, nor has it been possible for the last twenty years, to see Cuba "as it was" or, as foreigners often state in a romanticized manner, "before Fidel dies" and "before socialism ends." Cuban society has been undergoing a systematic shift during the last two decades, and although the island is still nominally socialist, capitalist mentalities and practices run rampant in many arenas. The capitalism on the island is in some ways even more detrimental to poorer Cubans than western capitalism, because it is a sort of "cowboy capitalism" that often goes unregulated: both the state and individuals working in the underground economy sell items at absurdly inflated prices, with state-run stores selling second-rate brands of televisions and other electronics for over twice their value outside the country.

I do not want to paint an idealized portrait of the first three decades of the Revolution, particularly because this period was characterized by much harsher state repression and imprisonment of political dissidents, gays and lesbians, advocates of black empowerment, religious practitioners, controversial artists, and other "undesirables," as Fidel Castro referred to those who refused to toe the party line. However, after spending two decades in economic turmoil, Cuba's population is, by necessity, obsessed with money: most people are in a constant state of angst about both their lack of economic resources and about how they are going to acquire more to cover the expenses of basic needs. In general, then, Cuban society is characterized by a state of heightened anxiety and resentment about the growing income gap among citizens. This economically-motivated frustration and desperation – a common situation in most non-Western countries – is a more bitter pill to swallow for Cubans because most of them remember a time when money was not a daily concern; the country had reached a standard of living and economic stability comparable to that of Europe and North America, and in many ways better than western countries because of the near eradication of income inequality.[5]

[5] Although there are many elements of Cuban society that cannot be compared to those of capitalist nations – such as the variety of consumer products available to the population, especially expensive items such as cars and

Cross-genre hybridizations between rumba and popular music and rumba's increasing relevance in the Cuban music scene

Despite the ongoing difficulties faced by rumba and folkloric musicians in Cuba, their situation is aided by a positive trend: rumba music and performance have become increasingly popular, visible, and audible in the last two decades, and have enjoyed a sort of renaissance owing to various agents and forces. One influential factor has been the expansion of the cultural tourism industry and the selling of rumba both in nationalist discourse as well as in travel guide discourse, as a particularly authentic Cuban cultural expression, the "heart and soul" of the people. However, it is not only the narratives of Cuban cultural officials and foreign journalists that have been responsible for the growing relevance of rumba within the Cuban music scene more generally. Musicians from both rumba and mass-mediated popular arenas have played an active role in increasing rumba's visibility by incorporating musical elements from each other's styles and thus highlighting both the historical and more recent entanglements between these musical spheres.

Far from constituting a recent phenomenon, the performative mixing of rumba with mass-mediated popular musics must be considered in light of a much longer history of multi-directional musical exchange that began a century ago (1909), when the traditional popular genre *son* migrated to western Cuba and came into contact with rumba.[6] Many scholars have discussed the structural similarities between rumba and *son* songs, noting in particular the adoption of rumba's *montuno* section as a crucial feature of *son* once it became formalized in the 1920s-30s (Manuel 1985a; León 1991; Waxer 1994; Gómez Cairo 1996[1980]; Averill 1999).[7] In terms of instrumental appropriations from rumba, the incorporation of *tumbadoras* (conga drums) into the *son* ensemble in the 1940s, which is most often attributed to blind *tres* player and Matanzas native Arsenio Rodríguez, is considered by many scholars to be a "'rumbaization' of *son*" (Robbins 1990: 188). Finally, it is important to note that many of the most influential Cuban *soneros* (*son* musicians) were also *rumberos*. Prominent examples include Ignacio Piñeiro – possibly the most prolific composer of *son*, who converted many rumba songs to the *son* format – and Beny

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electronics – I believe Cubans, before the 1990s, enjoyed a similar level of stability that was not common for other Latin American and Caribbean nations at this time.

[6] There is not a consensus among Cuban musicologists about who were the main agents that brought *son* to Havana and western Cuba. Odilio Urfé, as cited by Helio Orovio in his *Diccionario de la Música Cubana*, asserts that eastern Cuban regiments of the Permanent Army brought *son* with them to Havana in 1909 (Orovio 1981). Radamés Giro challenges this narrative, noting that the army could not have been the primary agents, and that it must have been eastern Cuban musicians who had migrated to Havana and other provinces earlier than 1909, who brought the *son* with them (Giro 1996[1994]). Jesús Gómez Cairo offers yet another version of the story: it was eastern Cuban migrant agricultural workers who brought the *son* with them when they were forced to migrate to western Cuba during the "neocolonial republic," by which he may be referring to the brief period of U.S. occupation of the island (1898-1902) after Independence (Gómez Cairo 1996[1980]).

[7] In addition, ethnomusicologist Lise Waxer characterizes *son* clave as a modified version of rumba clave, and both she and ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel discuss the "anticipated bass," a defining characteristic of *son*, as a reconfiguration of the *mayor* (lowest rumba drum) pattern heard in rumba *guaguancó* (Manual 1985b; Waxer 1994). Explaining the anticipated bass of *son*, Manuel states that it "is remarkable not only for its silent (or tied) downbeat, but also for the manner in which the final note of the bar anticipates the harmony of the following bar" (Manuel 1985b: 250).

Moré, both of whom incorporated specific aspects of rumba vocal style into *son*, such as vocal timbre, phrasing, and improvisation (Waxer 1994; Averill 1999).[8]

I find it interesting that although both rumba and the rural eastern Cuban antecedents of *son* are thought to have emerged in the mid- to late nineteenth century, I have never read any literature that discusses the possibility of *son's* influence on rumba; the flow of influence is almost unanimously discussed as moving from the latter to the former. The following quotes, the first from Cuban musicologist Leonardo Acosta and the second from late Canadian ethnomusicologist Lise Waxer, are typical of the prevailing opinion on this matter. Acosta states, "the rumba gave new life to the *son* when the latter reached Havana and Matanzas" (Acosta 1991[1983]: 67), while Waxer asserts, "While *son* has provided the musical wellspring for Cuban music in the 20th century, it in turn has drawn continual nourishment from the rumba" (Waxer 1994: 144). While I do not necessarily wish to contradict this widespread view, below I will pinpoint *batarumba* as a clear instance of rumba appropriating elements from *son.* Acosta, whose goal is clearly to recuperate rumba, offers one possibility for the lopsided nature of the literature on these two genres: "If I have insisted on the importance of the rumba in our culture, it is because the rumba has been so disparaged, and at the same time so adulterated in deformed versions, especially, though not only, in commercial Yankee music" (Acosta: 69). However, I wonder if there are not deeper issues underlyingthese narratives of unidirectional influence. Is it possible that the simplified racialized associations of these two practices that is perpetuated in most literature – rumba is black, while *son* is *mulato* (of mixed African and Spanish descent) – has led to the assumption that rumba is more authentic, because more African-derived, and thus more likely to influence other musics rather than be influenced itself by them? While in chapters one and four I discussed racialized discourses about musical practices in relation to the politics of place, in future research I would like to explore this particular relationship between rumba and *son*, the two most influential Cuban genres within the last century, and the ways in which race is mapped onto them.

Beyond Cuban *son*, rumba's influence is evidenced in more recent Latin American popular musics, such as New York-based salsa, which emerged among Puerto Ricans and other Latinos in the mid-late 1960s. Rumba's elements were primarily incorporated in a reinterpreted fashion via *son*, whose structural elements are the foundation for salsa. However, scholars have also discussed the 1950s street drumming scene that emerged in Latino neighborhoods in New York, principally "El Barrio" (East Harlem), as an important influence in the development of salsa; rumba *guaguancó* was the main style performed in these impromptu drumming sessions (Singer 1983; Manuel 1994). While musical exchanges between Cuba and the U.S. were all but severed following the establishment of the economic embargo by the Kennedy administration in 1962, on the island there were several new rhythms and correlated dance styles that emerged in the 1960s and 70s that never made it abroad. The most popular ones, such as the *mozambique* and the *pilón*, were derived from rumba and *comparsa* (Cuban carnival music) rhythms, as well as certain rhythms used in Afro-Cuban religious worship (Elí Rodríguez 1989; Moore 2006). In addition, Los Van Van, Cuba's premier dance band for the last forty years, emerged with a new and complex polyrhythm/style called *songo* in the 1970s, invented by famed percussionist José Luís

[8] In fact, *son* lyrics provide the clearest evidence of rumba's influence, and there are numerous examples of *son* songs (not including those taken from the rumba idiom) that extol the virtues of rumba in the period between 1930 and 1950 (Moore 1995). Ethnomusicologist Robin Moore suggests that many musicians who started their careers as *rumberos*, including Piñeiro and Beny Moré, formed *son* groups in response to "the constraints of the international market and the [racialized] biases of middle-class Cubans [against rumba]" (Moore 1995: 181).

"Changuito" Quintana, which set the stage for the emergence of *timba* in the late 1980s.[9] The jazz fusion band Irakere, led by prominent Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés, was also a major innovator during this period as they combined jazz, rock, Afro-Cuban folkloric (sacred) music elements and rumba. In fact, *timba* scholar Vincenzo Perna states that their sound "represents the most direct antecedent of timba," (Perna 2005: 39), noting in particular their jazz-influenced phrasing and instrumental ensemble, and their heavy reliance on rumba style and repertoire.

More than any other contemporary genre, *timba*, which has a dense polyrhythmic, syncopated texture and a harder, more aggressive sound as compared to contemporary New York/Puerto-Rican-style salsa, has contributed to the rumba's increased audibility and relevance by drawing heavily on its rhythms and performance style. First, the shortening of the *canto* or narrative section of a song and the corresponding predominance of the *montuno* section can be viewed as an influence from rumba. Vincenzo Perna attributes this lengthening of the *montuno* section to José Luís "El Tosco" Cortés (Perna: 64), a conservatory-trained flautist who honed his musical chops with both Los Van Van (1970-80) and Irakere (1980-88), before establishing his own pioneering *timba* band, NG La Banda, in 1988.[10] Second, many *timba* bands – possibly following Los Van Van's lead with *songo* – began to use the rumba clave rhythm, instead of the slightly less syncopated *son* clave rhythm, to structure the overall rhythmic texture of the ensemble. Finally, it seems that even the name for contemporary Cuban dance music – *timba* – has historical links to rumba. Both Perna and writer Philip Sweeney discuss the use of the term *timba* in traditional rumba songs, particularly those in the *columbia* style, and the fact that the terms *timba* and *timbero* were often used synonymously with rumba and *rumbero* (Sweeney 2001; Perna 2005).

One of Perna's main arguments in his study is that rumba has played a large part in the overall re-Africanization of Cuban dance music, and has functioned as an authenticating mechanism for *timba*, through its textual allusions to particular lower-class Afro-Cuban neighborhoods that are strongly associated with rumba performance. Perna's thesis regarding the relationship between the two genres can be summed up in this quote: "As a music and dance, timba is clearly and overwhelmingly black, but also because at a specific musical level timba is permeated by rumba rhythms and themes, by Afro-Cuban slang and references to life in the black neighbourhood. It is probably fair to say that timba re-interprets in modern times the rebel, anarchic and challenging spirit of rumba" (Perna: 104). I do not necessarily concur with Perna's essentialization of *timba* as unequivocally "black" – as it displays a variety of influences and elements that include European instrumentation and hybrid genres such as jazz and rock[11] – nor with his suggestion that rumba is a non-modern practice from which *timba* has drawn its oppositional character. I would argue instead, that rumba is a vibrant and contemporary genre that still has the currency to represent itself in this vein. Notwithstanding, Perna's work is crucial for its foregrounding of rumba as a highly influential practice capable of reenergizing mass-mediated popular genres.

Despite the overwhelming tendency to portray rumba as exclusively a *source* of inspiration for various Cuban popular music genres, two of the rumba hybridizing practices I discussed in

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[9] Among the important innovations of *songo* were the adoption of the drum kit into the Cuban dance band ensemble, and the transfer of rumba rhythmic patterns to this instrument (Perna 2005: 36).

[10] Perna views NG La Banda's sound as the hallmark of *timba* style, discussing – in addition to the rumba influences – the virtuosity of instrumentalists, particularly the horn section, and the lyrical content of their songs, which often relate to everyday life experiences of black Cubans.

[11] Furthermore, many of *timba*'s most important innovators, such as Cortés and Adalberto Álvarez, were trained in national music conservatories where the "core curriculum" is heavily oriented towards Western art music idioms.

chapter six demonstrate that rumba has also been a *recipient* of influence from these very practices. The first example of rumba drawing on Cuban popular musics is the rumba hybrid *batarumba*, in which the members of Afrocuba de Matanzas have incorporated both dance and musical elements of *son.* Afrocuba's hybrid *batarumba* choreographies often combine dance steps taken from *son* with those derived from rumba and Afro-Cuban sacred practices. In terms of musical influences, the group has appropriated several songs originally recorded by Cuban popular/*son* singer Celia Cruz for their *batarumba* repertoire. While this is but one example that counters the normative narrative of unidirectional influence from rumba to *son*, I am certain there are other instances that would demonstrate a more mutually influential relationship between the two practices.

The second illustration of Cuban popular music's influence on rumba that I discussed in chapter six is the very recent trend in Havana of incorporating refrains from popular reggaetón songs into rumba songs. This strategy, pioneered by Yoruba Andabo lead singer Ronald González, is clearly designed to expand rumba's audience to Cuban youth who might not otherwise be interested in attending a rumba show or who may view the practice as "folkloric," and thus as something old and boring. In fact, it is not only rumba's audience that has been impacted by this innovation in rumba song, but in some cases, rumba's formal structure. Yoruba Andabo and other rumba groups sometimes begin their songs with a reggaetón refrain, instead of the traditional *diana* (introductory section of a rumba song where the lead singer employs vocables to establish the song's tonal center), in order to pique interest and provoke audience participation. Occasionally the group will forego not only the *diana* but also the *canto* or narrative section of the song, and go straight into the *montuno* (call-and-response) section, stringing together several reggaetón refrains or mixing them with stock rumba refrains. While this innovation has certainly revitalized rumba performance in certain ways, it is not surprising that many *rumberos* disapprove of these changes. It is not necessarily the appropriation of reggaetón refrains in the *montuno* section that is objectionable, but rather the threat of an overall loss or replacement of traditional structural elements of rumba, such as the *diana* or the *canto*. Some musicians have expressed to me that they find the performance of a string of *reggaetón* refrains quite tiresome; there seems to be an element of "selling out" involved in omitting what can be viewed as the more esoteric elements of rumba song in exchange for a song made up entirely of a call-and-response section that draws on music already enjoying immense media dissemination. Value judgments notwithstanding, it is impossible to deny that the incorporation of reggaetón refrains and performance style - as well as Afrocuba de Matanzas' appropriation of *son* elements in *batarumba* – have been successful in raising rumba's profile in the Cuban music scene generally.

***La rumba más larga del mundo*: a brief consideration of rumba's genre boundaries**

It seems fitting to conclude my study with an account of an unprecedented event that took place in May 2008, *la rumba más larga del mundo* (the longest rumba in the world), as it raised some interesting issues concerning the porous genre boundaries of rumba, an issue I alluded to in chapters five and six in my discussion of recent hybridizing practices. This event was the highlight of the Feria del Cubadisco (Cubadisco Fair), an annual recording industry-sponsored music fair and awards presentation similar to the Grammys, which was dedicated in 2008 to "Africa and its diaspora." *La rumba más larga del mundo* entailed consecutive 24-hour rumba events in each of Cuba's fourteen provinces, moving from east to west with the finale in Havana. The

principal goal of this marathon was to perform rumba continuously for two weeks. Because the event was planned so that the preceding province's rumba would end at the same moment as the following province would begin performing, 9pm every night, it was physically impossible for me to attend the rumbas in each province. However, I was able to attend rumba events in six Cuban provinces – Santiago, Camagüey, Sancti Spíritus, Cienfuegos, Matanzas, and Ciudad de la Habana (Havana City) – which allowed me to compare both the different styles of rumba performance and the diverse approaches to programming in each province.

In addition to organizational inconsistencies during the event – which related to the adherence, or lack thereof, to the "non-stop" rule (i.e., in some provinces there were organized attempts to adhere to this rule, while in others the notion of "non-stop" was interpreted more liberally) – there were also significant differences in repertoire programming among the various provinces. In some places, such as Santiago, the groups that played during the event performed mostly rumba, with a few songs thrown in from the city's famed carnival music tradition, *conga,* which is similar to rumba in certain aspects of instrumentation and character.[12] The repertoires represented in the Ciudad de la Habana and Matanzas events were also concentrated almost exclusively on rumba performance. In other places, however, a wide variety of musical practices were performed during an event that was advertised specifically as "rumba." Afro-Cuban folkloric (sacred) music and dance practices were heavily represented in several provinces.[13] In fact, owing to their widespread critical acclaim and breadth of repertoire, Afrocuba de Matanzas was sent to perform in five other provinces in addition to their home province of Matanzas in order to shore up the local talent, and many of their performances were largely folkloric- instead of rumba-based. In the central province of Camagüey, which has been an historically important site for Haitian migration since the nineteenth century, folkloric groups performed Afro-Haitian religious and secular traditions in addition to rumba. It seemed evident that the provinces with the longest history of rumba performance – such as Havana and Matanzas – and the places where rumba has a shorter history but is currently widely practiced – such as Santiago – were better equipped to stick closely to rumba performance and did not need to "fill up" the twenty-four hours with other genres.

Because Afro-Cuban religious genres have been closely linked to rumba performance both historically and currently, as I discussed in chapter five, it is not surprising to see them being performed at an event advertised as "rumba." However, I also witnessed some performances that seemed to be only peripherally related to rumba music. In Cienfuegos, for example, the second performance of the rumba event consisted of a trio of modern dancers accompanied not by live music, but by a recording of instrumental music that included only the faintest sonic signifier of rumba. Similarly, during Camagüey's rumba event, I saw a *timba* group play quite a long set. The artistic liberties taken by some of the local organizers of this historic, nation-wide event highlight the flexibility and porousness of rumba's genre boundaries, and suggest that people have different

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[12] *Conga* is a particular type of mobile percussion ensemble within the Cuban carnival tradition (most often referred to as *comparsa*) that is associated specifically with Santiago de Cuba. It has its own repertoire and parading practices that are distinct from *comparsa*, and thus might be considered to be its own genre. Although the term *comparsa* has been used to refer to Cuban carnival music in general (see Moore 1997 for example), it actually refers to a type of group/ensemble within the carnival tradition (like *conga*) that includes both percussionists and choreographed dances. *Comparsas* are more elaborate and stylized presentations as compared with the more popular (as in "of the people") and unruly *congas*, which in contemporary Santiago include mass participation by neighborhood residents supporting their particular *conga* group by parading behind, and sometimes also ahead of, the musicians. See the various contributions in Bettelheim 2001 for more details.

[13] See the Introduction for a discussion of the politics of categorization vis-à-vis the terms "folkloric" and "popular."

ideas about what styles of music can be included within an event advertised as "rumba." Some of my musician friends were upset with the programming in certain provinces, complaining that in practice the event was more like a festival of folklore, rather than, as advertised, "the longest rumba in the world." Audiences, in contrast, did not seem to be bothered by the wide variety of performances subsumed under the banner of "rumba," but rather were happy to be able to attend a free musical event that lasted all night into the morning, and see some of the best local folkloric groups perform. As these examples clearly demonstrate, the differences in programming from province to province are intimately related to the politics of place, as they highlight the ways that local cultural formations and scenes inform and delimit particular performances within a nation-wide event.

The differing conceptions regarding what constitutes rumba and what does not, also suggest that this musical practice has been particularly adept at resisting rigid categorical definition and classification. This event, then, buttressed my belief (explained in the Introduction) that rumba occupies an interstitial space between Afro-Cuban popular (secular) and folkloric (religious) music, an issue I hope to explore in more depth in future research. This unique status has allowed for a wide variety of meanings to be attached to the genre, as demonstrated by *la rumba más larga del mundo*. In addition, this flexibility has facilitated and even inspired the rumba hybridizations that have been the subject of this study, fusions which have drawn on a wide range of sacred and secular practices that, at least in Havana, are not necessarily limited to the expressive domain of the African diaspora. After all, as many rumba musicians have told me, *en la rumba cabe todo* (everything/every style fits into rumba). In other words, regardless of the specific conceptions about fusion among Havana and Matanzas folkloric musicians that I have explored in this study, it is clear that musicians from both places, and from other locales in Cuba, consider rumba to be the quintessential platform for innovation and hybridizing practices and the framework most conducive to expressing their *inquietudes* (creative restlessness).

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APPENDIX 1: Glossary of Terms

Abakuá
Cuban term to refer to Calabar-derived male secret society/religion from present-day southeastern Nigeria

Arará
Cuban term used to denote Dahomey-derived religion, and to refer to Africans from the ancient kingdom of Dahomey, present-day Benin

Balseros
Cuban term for the fourth large wave of migrants to the United States, who fled the island on *balsas*, or homemade rafts in 1994 as a result of the economic crisis of the Special Period

Bantu
Meta-ethnic category used to refer to various ethnic groups from the area of the two Congos and northern Angola

Batá drums/drumming
Percussion ensemble used to accompany *Santería* ceremonies that consists of three double-headed hourglass-shaped membranophones

Batarumba
Rumba hybrid fusing Yoruba-derived *batá* drumming with rumba percussion

Bembé
Type of *Santería* ceremony practiced primarily in Matanzas and the central provinces than in Havana; also denotes an ensemble and a group of drums

Blanqueamiento
Literally, "whitening," the policy of encouraging European migration to Latin America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Bombo
Bass or tom-tom drum used in *comparsa* tradition; also used to refer to the second beat of the clave rhythm

Bríkamo
Rarely practiced religious tradition intimately related to *Abakuá*, where women are allowed to participate in ceremonies

Cabildos de nación
Mutual aid societies formed in 19th century by Africans and their descendants, formed along ethnic lines

Cajón(es)
Wooden box(es) used as rumba's original percussion instruments in late 19th and early 20th centuries; now associated with *guarapachangueo*

Cajón de muertos
Ceremony for dead ancestors associated with a type of *Espiritismo* called *Espiritismo cruzado*, which is mixed with the Bantu-derived religion called *Palo*; musical accompaniment consists of *cajón*-based rumba

Campana
Cowbell, used in *güiro* and in *batarumba*

Canto
Narrative or body section of a rumba song, follows the introductory *diana* and precedes the *montuno*

Capitalino
Native of the capital (Havana)

Carabalí/Abakuá
Term used to denote an African ethnic group from the region of Calabar, present-day southeastern Nigeria (second term corresponds to Cuban terminology); also denotes a religious practice

Catá
Hollowed out piece of sugar cane against which drumsticks are beat to play a complementary rhythm with the clave in the standard rumba ensemble

CFN
Conjunto Folklórico Nacional (National Folkloric Group); the group sponsors a prominent weekly rumba event in Havana, *Sábado de la Rumba*

Chachalokofún
Most popular *batá* drum rhythm in Yoruba pantheon, can be used for all *orishas*; most common *batá* rhythm used in *batarumba*

Changüí
Traditional dance music genre from the eastern Cuban province of Guantánamo; believed to be one of the rural antecedents of *son*

Cierre
Stop-time section or rhythmic break, used in *batarumba*

Clases particulares
Private lessons offered by Afro-Cuban musicians and dancers, usually to foreigners and charged in CUC

Clave
Rhythmic timeline that anchors all Afro-Cuban musics; also refers to an idiophone – two wooden sticks that are beat against each other to produce the clave rhythm

Columbia
The fastest style of rumba; solo male dance

Comparsa
Cuban carnival music; also denotes an ensemble

Congo
Cuban term used to designate people, culture, or religion of Bantu descent

Contradanza
Considered to be Cuba's first indigenous popular music and dance genre, derived from the French *contredanse* via Haiti; antecedent of *danzón*

Coro
Chorus or refrain, most often used in *montuno* section of song

Coros de clave
Literally, "clave choirs," groups of singers that would circulate in the streets of Havana and Matanzas in the late nineteenth century, particularly during the Christmas holidays; their repertoire and vocal style are thought to be an important predecessor of rumba *guaguancó*

Cubanidad
Cuban-ness, the essence of national identity

CUC
Cuban convertible peso, or the currency of exchange for foreigners, worth 24 times the Cuban peso; also known as *chavitos*

Danzón
Traditional dance music genre from late 19th century; considered to be one of Cuba's five main music complexes, which encompasses several antecedent and subsequent genres

Diana
Introductory section of a rumba song where the lead singer uses vocables to establish the song's tonal center

Divisa

Hard currency, represented by the Cuban convertible peso (CUC); introduced into the Cuban economy during the Special Period alongside *moneda nacional* and designed to be the currency of exchange for foreigners

El campo

Literally, "the countryside"; also used derogatorily to refer to the birthplace of someone perceived to be backwards and poor

Empresa

State-run artistic agency that evaluates whether music and dance groups are of professional quality and manages a number of logistical details related to performance, transportation, and performers' salaries

Espectáculo

Folkloric show, in which a variety of Afro-Cuban sacred and secular practices are represented

Especular/ando

Literally "speculating," used in popular discourse in contemporary Cuba to mean showing off or displaying conspicuous signs of wealth, such as a cell phone or gold chains

Espiritismo

Spiritism, a hybrid religious movement stemming from traditional Christianity that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, based on the idea of communicating with the souls/spirits of the dead through a medium; practiced widely in Cuba and other parts of the Spanish Caribbean

Guaguancó

The most popular of the three styles of rumba still performed today; has medium tempo in relation to other two styles; couple dance with characteristic *vacunao* (see below)

Guarapachangueo

Havana-based innovation in rumba percussion and performance style

Güiro

A type of *Santería* ceremony accompanied by three *shékeres* and one or two conga drums

Habanero

Native of the city of Havana

Inventar

Literally, "to invent," has various other meanings both negative and positive: to make things up or stray from a traditional style, or to innovate or create something new

Itótole
Middle-sized drum of the *batá* ensemble, often engages in improvisatory "conversations" with *iyá*

Iyá
"Mother" or largest drum of the *batá* ensemble; has a lead drum role, and does most of the improvising

Iyesá
Sub-group of the Yoruba whose religious practice and music is intertwined with that of *Santería* in many ways; also denotes a religion and corresponding musical style, and a rhythm

Jinetero/a
Hustler (male or female), broadly conceived, i.e., someone who attempts to establish relationships with foreigners for the purposes of financial gain, which could or could not involve a sexual relationship

Los Chinitos
Four brothers from San Miguel del Padron who invented *guarapachangueo*

Lukumí
Cuban term used to designate people, culture, or religion of Yoruba descent; also used to denote Yoruba-derived religion *Regla de Ocha* or *Santería*

Makuta
Bantu-derived dance symbolizing an erotic game between a rooster and a hen; widely believed to be a principal predecessor for rumba *guaguancó*

Marielitos
Cuban term for the approximately 125,000 Cubans who fled to the United States between April and October 1980 during the Mariel boatlifts, when Castro allowed Cubans to leave the island after large-scale rioting in Havana

Matancero
Native of the city of Matanzas

Mayor
Low-pitched drum of the rumba ensemble that plays an interlocking rhythmic pattern with the *tres dos* (middle-range drum); also known as *tumbador*

Mestizaje
Roughly, "racial mixing"; central notion of Latin American/Caribbean nationalist discourses

Moneda nacional
National currency of Cuba, which is represented by the peso

Montuno
Call-and-response section of a rumba song

Mulato
Racial term designating someone of mixed race with Spanish and African ancestors

Música campesina
Literally, "country music"; Spanish-derived music associated with rural areas of the island

Negocio
Literally "business," but often understood as non-licensed, black-market private enterprise

Occidente
Western Cuba, constituted by the provinces of Ciudad de la Habana, La Habana, Matanzas, Pinar del Río, and La Isla de la Juventud

Olokún
Rare religious practice within the *Lukumí* pantheon that honors a mysterious *orisha* (of the same name) who is associated with the depths of the ocean

Okónkolo
Smallest drum of the *batá* ensemble

Oriental
Person from the region of Oriente

Oriente
Eastern Cuba, constituted by five provinces: Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo, Holguín, Las Tunas, and Granma

Orishas
Yoruba-derived deities, each of which "owns" elements of the natural world

Palo
Bantu-derived religious practice

Palestino
Literally, "Palestinian"; derogatory term used primarily in Havana to denote eastern Cubans

Peña de rumba
Rumba event or gathering, which usually takes place weekly or biweekly

Período especial
Literally, "Special Period"; the period of extreme economic crisis in Cuba beginning in 1990, following the fall of the Soviet Union, and ending in the later 1990s

Punto guajiro
Rural Spanish-derived country music; one of Cuba's five main music complexes

Quinto
High-pitched improvising drum of the rumba ensemble

Regla de Ocha
Yoruba-derived religion, also known as *Lukumí* or *Santería*

Regla de Palo
Bantu-derived religious practice, also referred to as *Palo*

Rumba
Afro-Cuban music and dance genre involving percussion and song; one of Cuba's five main music complexes, which encompasses several genres

Rumba de cajón/rumba de tiempo España
Rumba played with *cajones* (see above)/rumba "in the time of Spain," or during the colonial era

Rumba habanera
Havana-style rumba

Rumba matancera
Matanzas-style rumba

Rumberos
Rumba participants, which I conceive of in a broad sense as not only musicians and dancers, but, in some cases, spectators

Santería
Yoruba-derived religion, also known as *Lukumí* or *Regla de Ocha*

Santiaguero
Native of the city of Santiago

Shékere
Hollowed out gourd covered in beads; featured in the *güiro* ensemble/ceremony and often used in rumba performance

Son
Traditional popular dance music, considered to be Cuba's quintessential musical practice because the music is thought to be an example of a perfect synthesis between African and Spanish/European musical elements; one of Cuba's five main music complexes, which encompasses several antecedent and subsequent genres

Tambor
The most revered and formal type of *Santería* ceremony, in which the *batá* drum ensemble accompanies the singing for the *orishas*; also known as *toque de santo*

Timba
A contemporary style of Cuban dance music that emerged in the late 1980s

Toque
Literally, "rhythm"; also used to refer to particular *batá* drum rhythmic patterns

Tres dos
Middle-range drum of the rumba ensemble that plays an interlocking rhythmic pattern with the *mayor* (low-pitched drum); also known as *segundo* (second)

Tukutukum
The bass tones played on the *cajón* or conga drum associated with *guarapachangueo*

Tumbadora
Conga drum

UNEAC
Headquarters of the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists, which sponsors an important rumba event in Havana, *La Peña del Ambia*

Vacunao
Characteristic dance move of *guaguancó*, involves the male dancer thrusting his groin or other appendages towards the groin area of the female dancer in an attempt at symbolic sexual possession

Yambú
The slowest and oldest style of rumba; couple dance with no overtly sexualized gestures, as opposed to *guaguancó*

Yoruba
Meta-ethnic category used to refer to various ethnic groups from southwestern Nigeria; also denotes a religion

Yuka
Bantu-derived secular music/dance tradition considered to be a primary antecedent of rumba