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Dancing in Place

An Introduction

Sydney Hutchinson

I began dancing salsa as a teenager in Tucson, Arizona. My formal training consisted of a single dance lesson in a nightclub, which was soon shut down (perhaps my age—only sixteen at the time—had something to do with the closure). More important for my early salsa learning was the simple practice of spending many, many nights dancing with partners from all over the globe, not only in Tucson but also wherever I traveled, and sometimes taking opportunities to learn in a more structured way from especially skilled friends or from visiting professionals brought in by local aficionados of Cuban *rueda* dancing, a kind of salsa in the round (see Chapter 6). Eventually, after years of practice, I was regarded as a skilled dancer myself, and I taught classes in salsa and rueda while studying at Indiana University, also leading a salsa band on piano.

At age twenty-five I moved to New York and had to learn to dance salsa all over again. Nothing was the same there: not the steps, not the turns, not the timing or count, and not the relation of dance to music. It did not even have the same social qualities: in Tucson the diversity afforded by salsa clubs was one of the dance's principal attractions,[1] but in New York the salsa scene, very much dominated by New York–born Puerto Ricans, had a strong element of ethnic pride.

Most surprising to me, however, was that my Puerto Rican housemates told me I danced "Colombian." It seemed that this evaluation rested on my frequent use of a basic step in which I crossed behind with my foot on the first count, rather than stepping straight backward or forward, and my tendency to slightly kick on the rest count in preparation for that crossed step. Intriguingly, I had never been to Colombia or had much—if any—contact with Colombian dancers. These were movements I had picked up through social dancing

in Tucson—they were taught neither in my one nightclub dance class nor as part of Cuban rueda.[2] Thus, it seemed the explanation was the geography of my learning experience: in Tucson as elsewhere in the Southwest, salsa is strongly flavored by the long-standing popularity of *cumbia* music and dance, one of many links between Mexican and Colombian popular cultures.[3]

Over the next year, I worked hard to retrain my body to dance New York style. In exchange for teaching his beginner classes, I received private lessons from lifelong New York *salsero* Ivan Rivera, during which I learned how to style my arms, execute lifts and aerials, perform an entire syllabus of "shines," or solo footwork—something that did not yet exist in Arizona—and most importantly, count and step to the more syncopated "on-2" timing. Eventually I joined and performed with Razz M'Tazz, one of the foundational New York salsa-mambo companies, and taught others how to dance New York style in classes and workshops. Even though I lost that Colombian touch through retraining, my former style would continue to resurface on visits home, underscoring the intimate ties between body and place as constructed through dance.

Studying Salsa Dance

I begin this chapter with a personal anecdote for two reasons. First, I wish to illustrate how dance creates a sense of place that is felt in the dancer's body, learned and experienced through interactions with other dancers on and off the dance floor. That Puerto Ricans in New York City could read the bodily movements of a southwestern U.S. dancer as "Colombian," a connection made possible through long-term affinities between that South American country and the northern Mexican border area, affinities so deep-seated that they affected the bodily style, or habitus, of even an urban Anglo, is just one indication of the complexity of those interactions. That those same dancers could recognize perhaps a half dozen such geographically denominated salsa styles, often by minute bodily cues, demonstrates how popular social dances like salsa become deeply localized. The anecdote also shows how my interest in the interplay between dance and place developed, an interest that led first to my work on *quebradita* and other border dances[4] and eventually to this book. *Salsa World* is about a particular dance genre, but it is also a study of how and why some forms of global popular culture become localized and, in particular, how dance and place relate to one another through the body.

Salsa has a particular history and a particular discourse about that history, one bound up with competing claims of ownership and ties to a different sort of place, that of the nation-state. Although dance has played a central role in Latin American nationalisms for over a century—who can imagine Argentina without tango or Brazil without samba?—in recent years it has also come to play a role in establishing pan-Latino identifications and in bringing Latino popular culture to even broader audiences. Salsa, for instance, began as a symbol of Nuyorican (New York Puerto Rican) pride, later became an emblem of

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pan-Latinism, and is today a globalized form of popular culture. At the same time, because dance is a participatory activity that relies on face-to-face interactions, or more precisely body-to-body ones, salsa (like other forms of popular dance) has not become a homogenized, mass-mediated product but has instead assumed intensely local forms in many communities. New Yorkers, Angelenos, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Colombians, Dominicans, and others all have their own, unique ways of dancing salsa that distinguish them as much as their spoken accents do. In fact, I suggest that those minute cues of bodily movement, posture, and musical timing that allow dancers to identify those who come from elsewhere be termed "dance accents."[5] As with speech, losing one's accent—in other words, adapting to the habitus of a location that is not one's home—is difficult.

In this book, I and the other authors examine how salsa dance is localized—or how the body acquires an accent—and how concepts of geography, ethnicity, and local and national identities interact with the globalized salsa industry. While some of these topics have been treated in earlier works on salsa music (e.g., Waxer 2002a; Quintero Rivera 1999), to date no book in English has dealt specifically with salsa as a dance practice, despite the centrality of the body and movement to the genre. This book collaboratively constructs a multisited ethnography of salsa dance, by including multiple authors who write about the places they know best, while attempting to answer a common body of questions: How and why do salsa dance practices vary? At what points does this salsa scene connect with others? What disconnects still exist, and why? What role does salsa play in local cultures, contexts, and identity constructions? What do people in a location get out of dancing salsa? Our observations have wider implications for understanding the localization of popular culture in general.

Elsewhere (Hutchinson 2009), I have discussed the sidelining of dance in the social sciences, a situation that often continues in the present despite the early importance of the topic to foundational figures such as Franz Boas. Thus, another task of this book is to implicitly address the issue of reintegrating dance into the ethnographic fields by presenting studies of dance coming out of a variety of disciplines. I argue that although recent currents of theory have been successful at dismantling, or at least seriously questioning, many of the long-standing dualisms of Western thinking, such as nature/culture and mind/body, the division between music and dance has remained and even been reinforced by entrenchment in the respective scholarly disciplines. However, for many—perhaps even most—people, communities, and cultures, music and dance are inseparable as cultural forms, so that drawing lines around them distorts people's actual experiences.[6] It is therefore important to acknowledge the interdependence of the two fields, to recognize the contributions that different academic disciplines can make to their study, and to attend to the interactions of dance practice and music.

Salsa World challenges traditional disciplinary boundaries not only by combining these two areas but also by including Latin American scholars from

very different traditions, ones less familiar to those of us in the northern academy. Because this book emerges primarily from the ethnographic disciplines, particularly ethnomusicology and anthropology, it will perhaps be of most interest to scholars in these fields. It may show them that focusing on dance can reveal previously untold stories about issues of concern across the social sciences such as nationalism, identity, ethnicity, and globalization and that it can do so precisely because of the intensity with which place and community are produced through bodily practices.

Anyone who has trained as both musician and dancer can attest to the very different points of view each side holds over the other's subject matter—for instance, when reconciling musicians' and dancers' counts: each side has a unique point of view that can lead to revealing observations about the other. I therefore believe this book has something to say to dance scholars as well. In the 1990s Jane Desmond noted that gaps within the dance literature included the "commodification of movement styles, their migration, modification, quotation, adoption, or rejection as part of the larger production of social identities through physical enactment" (1997: 30). This book adds to the work done on such issues in the intervening years through its focus on the migration and modification of a particular popular social dance and its inclusion of perspectives from outside the northern English-speaking academy. It shows dance to be a significant part of the migration and flow of ideas, capital, and even people around the world.

Salsa Music: History and Literature

The history of salsa music is well known and extensively documented in widely available books; thus I present here only a brief outline, which contextualizes the discussion of dance, our main topic, in the existing salsa literature. The music we today know as salsa emerged in New York City in the 1960s. It was a combination of Cuban musics like *son*, *guaracha*, and *guajira* with a little bit of flavor from Puerto Rican *plena* and *música jíbara* and a touch of Latin jazz. It also depended on the networks and tastes already set up by previous Latin music crazes in the city, particularly the 1950s mambo. Fania Records was the driving commercial force behind the music, popularizing the term "salsa" and making sure virtually all the artists playing the style were a part of their Fania All Stars ensemble.[7]

Early salsa artists came from a variety of backgrounds, but New York–born Puerto Ricans were the most numerous and among the most influential of this new crop of Latin musicians. Stylistic innovations such as Eddie Palmieri's addition of trombones to the Cuban *charanga* ensemble, Rafael Cortijo's experiments with *bomba* and plena, and Willie Colón's use of jíbaro music produced a distinct musical sound. Jorge Duany explains that salsa differs from its close relative, the Cuban son, in its emphasis on brass instruments, the addition of the timbales, more "violent" arrangements, and the influence of jazz harmonies (Duany 1984: 198).

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Debates over salsa's Cuban or Puerto Rican origin are ongoing. Salsa's indebtedness to Cuban styles is indubitable: even Tito Puente, considered a salsa progenitor, frequently stated, "I play Cuban music, not salsa." But as Johnny Pacheco explained the Fania artistic process, "What we were doing was taking Cuban music and adding more progressive chords, emphasizing rhythms, and highlighting certain aspects" (quoted in Washburne 2008: 20). The music produced in this way sounds far different from both its Cuban predecessors and current Cuban styles such as *songo* and *timba*. It thus became an important symbol of Nuyorican identity and culture (see Berríos-Miranda 2002), although Chris Washburne argues that it should more properly be viewed as "inter-Latino" or "trans-Caribbean," because it is consumed, performed, and produced by many groups and has roots in other Caribbean musics as well (2008: 11).[8] As we will see, the debate over origins is also very much a part of the dance scene.

Fania's phenomenal success led to the creation of numerous local salsa scenes and labels in various parts of Latin America, decentralizing production and, ironically, leading to Fania's own demise (Washburne 2008: 22). The label was eventually embroiled in lawsuits related to its brutal treatment of artists and neglect of royalty payment, and it was sold off in 1997. Nonetheless, the hard-driving, rootsy style and gritty lyrics of the early Fania artists endure; this style, termed "*salsa dura*," is the one preferred by most New York salsa dancers today, many of whom vehemently reject newer styles.

The decline of Fania opened the door for other labels, promoters, and styles. In New York, Ralph Mercado Management began promoting a new, softer style with romantic or erotic lyrics, a focus on star singers, and a de-emphasis on improvisation; this style is known as *salsa romántica*. While music critics and scholars lambaste it for its depoliticized content, blatant commercialism, and less adventurous, pop-driven sound, Washburne rightly notes that salsa romántica succeeded in attracting listeners not previously involved in the music—particularly women, who had been largely excluded from salsa dura's masculine ethos. This style dominated the market in the 1980s–1990s, gaining extensive airplay just when some observers had been lamenting merengue's gain on salsa's territory in New York (see Washburne 2008: 183).

Meanwhile, other histories of salsa were developing elsewhere. The ones Alejandro Ulloa Sanmiguel (Chapter 8) and Rossy Díaz (Chapter 9) contribute to this volume give alternative perspectives on the typical salsa narratives, which tend to position the music as a "new" style emerging in New York and later spreading throughout Latin America. In fact, salsa was frequently experienced not as a break with but as a continuation of earlier dance practices in these countries, as salsa culture grew out of son culture in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and out of the *champú* dances in Cali, Colombia.

Perhaps the most influential alternative was being developed in that distant neighbor Cuba. A distinctive circle dance called *casino*, *rueda*, or *rueda de casino* developed in social clubs there in the 1950s and resurged in the 1980s, partly a result of the influence of U.S. salsa, alongside a new musical form called

timba (see Perna 2008: 12). With its technically demanding, ultrasyncopated jazz- and funk-influenced arrangements and the combination of the violins and flutes of the charanga ensemble with drum sets and multiple synthesizers, timba sounded unlike any U.S., Caribbean, or South American salsa; it also developed outside the world capitalist system, although today it participates in that system.

On a musical level, salsa is fairly simple to define because of its rhythmic structure; in New York, at least, both this structure and salsa performance practice have been relatively stable since the 1970s (Washburne 2008: 166–167). The basic steps, counts, and bodily movements of salsa are also clearly recognizable, despite their innumerable variations and permutations. Nonetheless, in the discourse surrounding the music, salsa appears undefinable and unlocatable: it is Nuyorican and pan-American; it is revolution and resistance, and it is conformity and commercialism; it is an exotic encounter with the Other, or it is our own. This ambiguity has a purpose, because salsa must serve many different affiliations, as Washburne argues, so that regional, national, and international levels are mixed and constantly interact in salsa. Therefore, salsa continues to be marked today, as it has always been, by the tension between commercial interests and lived experience, between Anglo-American and Latin American cultures, between U.S. imperialism and Latin American resistance.

Salsa Dance Panorama

Just as salsa music functions on many different levels to serve different affiliations, so does salsa dance. Throughout the developments just described, salsa dancing continued to grow and change in New York (see Chapter 2). The result was a split between those who danced for fun and to socialize, often termed "social dancers" or "street dancers," and those who also had the goals of performing and competing, often termed "studio dancers." (In Spanish, the respective terms are "*bailador*" and "*bailarín*"; see Chapter 8.) Street dancers may or may not feel connected to a global community of salsa dancers, but studio dancers certainly do. They are connected to one another virtually, through dance websites, discussion groups, and online social networking, and also in person at various times throughout the year. The discursive separation of the two groups parallels the debates over politicized and commercialized salsas, like salsa dura and salsa romántica. Studio dancers are the primary focus of this book: their practices most clearly reveal the tensions, arising through bodily movement, between the global and the local.

Washburne sees a decline in interest in salsa music in the twenty-first century that has resulted in the closing of many clubs and declining opportunities of gigs for musicians. It might, then, seem paradoxical to note salsa dancing's growth in the same period, except that competitive salsa dancers generally prefer to dance to recorded music. In New York, at least, the venues such dancers gather at are "socials," informal parties for serious dancers inspired by ballroom

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studio practices, and "congresses," large conventions often featuring both theatrical performances and competitive events. The first are local in scope, the second transnational.

The number of congresses has increased drastically in the past decade. In 2003 I noted events occurring on the West and East Coasts of the United States, in Canada, in Puerto Rico, and in Italy, among other locations. At the Berlin Salsa Congress in 2008, the information table had flyers for congresses in Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Munich, as well as Athens, Amsterdam, Istanbul, Marrakech, Slovenia, Monaco, Estonia, Switzerland, and Poland, each brought by dancers representing those locations. The instructors at the same event had African American, Latino, East Indian, Polish, Moroccan, and even Iraqi British backgrounds. Meanwhile, the 2009 World Salsa Championships in Fort Lauderdale advertised participation by dancers of thirty nationalities. Congress advertising tends to announce dancers' country of origin as a nod to diversity but eliminates any discussion of politics or difference. Yet even as this kind of salsa was increasing its globalizing tendencies, other, more local kinds of salsa were emerging. Just as local salsa music industries have sprung up in diverse locations, so have local varieties of salsa dance, even more varied than the musical styles available.

Salsa dance today is clearly a commodity, being sold though dance lessons, videos, recordings, and attire. But movement is a slippery sort of commodity, not easy to pin down or package. As Juliet McMains writes of ballroom dance, it is limited in its reproducibility because of its dependence on one-to-one interaction (2006: 56). One might add that touch, a necessary component of that interaction, still cannot be transmitted through any standard mass communication technologies, limiting the ability of marketers to commodify dance. So while music is easily transportable through recordings, meaning that people anywhere can reproduce it with exactitude and hear exactly the same song in any place and time, the dance experience is less replicable. Even though one can learn dance steps from videos, a practice made even easier now by the advent of YouTube and similar sites, most people still learn to dance through face-to-face, body-to-body transmission, and in a partner dance like salsa, direct contact with others is a prerequisite for dancing. In addition, while today music listening is often conducted in private, dance is a social activity.

For these reasons, dance, unless subjected to standardizing regimens (as in competitive ballroom dance), is supremely susceptible to localizing processes. When one learns any dance, prior bodily dispositions enter into a performance of that dance, intentionally or not. This reliance on muscle memory means that when a new community adopts a dance, the prior movement experiences of the members of that community may enter and become part of that dance. As Ángel Quintero Rivera explains, dance is not just virtuosity; it is "corporeal intercommunication of emotions and knowledges" (2009: 29).

What all this means for salsa is that, although a commercialized, mass-mediated, and transnational product, it is also something that many people in

disparate locations experience as their own (cases in which dancers take up salsa as an exotic Other are discussed below). This is the case for street as well as studio dancers. Some believe this ownership to be natural: for instance, some Puerto Ricans and Cubans feel the dance originated with them. Others, like Colombians, acknowledge that it came from elsewhere but still internalize it. They turn it into part of their local culture, transforming the dance and their relationship to it through repeated social interactions (at parties, nightclubs, concerts, or classes) and the effects their bodily experience (dance training, social dancing, or socially acceptable postures and ways of walking) bring to bear on it. These prior movement experiences may vary widely (I may have training in ballet, while my partner is into hip-hop), but some shared experiences may also predominate (cumbia is popular in Colombia and the United States–Mexico border area; U.S. dancers are likely to be familiar with movie musical conventions; most Dominicans can dance some merengue). Dancers' attitudes and understandings of these experiences may likewise vary from place to place, causing them to accept or reject practices.

Concurrent with the commercialization and spread of salsa music, as I have mentioned, salsa dance became commercialized and professionalized, processes detailed in several chapters in this book. The dance was also standardized, so that a few basic steps are taught in a couple of different but easily recognizable forms around the world. Beyond the basics, teachers may develop a syllabus of steps particular to their school. This practice is not unique to salsa and indeed was adapted from ballroom dance, but it is particularly extensive in this genre. So while Karen Backstein found that New York teachers of Brazilian and Afro-Caribbean dance were just beginning to develop teaching methodologies around 2000 and they were not yet standardized (2001: 469), among New York salseros this process has been under way since the 1980s.

While New York (on-2) and L.A. (on-1) styles have dominated the transnational salsa scene for some years, particularly at congresses, the so-called Cuban style is also danced in many locations and presents an important alternative. This style, with more focus on bodily movements and isolations and with rounded turn patterns in place of the slot form that characterizes North American salsa,[9] derives from Cuban casino or rueda, a round dance in which multiple couples exchange partners and perform coordinated moves according to a leader's calls. It is appearing increasingly often alongside the other two styles at congresses, and it even seems poised to overtake the aforementioned styles in some areas. Meanwhile, in Cuba itself *despelote*, a kind of autoerotic display by women dancing solo, may be more common, sometimes interspersed with newly created rueda moves (see Chapter 6). Rueda has become known internationally as Cuban salsa, and while this is clearly a misnomer, since it existed before New York salsa and came from an entirely different socioeconomic system, the term is now used to lend weight to the Cuban-origin argument.[10]

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Looking at the styles named in salsa congresses shows that studio salsa dancers around the world categorize salsa styles in two principal ways: by nationality or region (e.g., Cuban, U.S. West Coast, or Colombian style) or by musical relationships (generally, on-1 or on-2, referring to the count on which the dancers break, or change direction). As with many classifications, this one simplifies, obscuring (a) historical connections between locations, (b) the very recent emergence of emic theories of dance counts, and (c) local meanings of music and dance styles. This book provides important correctives to all three errors.

First, Ulloa and Jonathan Marion concur that United States–based on-1 dancing depended on Colombian-style salsa, which emphasizes the downbeat and provides a counternarrative to the Puerto Rican focus on Cuban clave and its off beats. Ulloa adds to this his own hypothesis, which is that Colombian dancers gained their predilection for dancing on-1 from Mexican films of the 1940s–1950s and the *guaracha* and mambo dance styles they featured. In this description, we see a dialectical relationship between Colombian and Mexican dance practices, often via outposts like Los Angeles and including input from Cuban and other Caribbean sources. Such a hypothesis surely complicates any simple view of salsa as evolving in linear fashion through the unidirectional movement of Caribbean Latinos to New York, for example. As Cindy Garcia (2008) and Joanna Bosse (Chapter 5) point out, however, these transnational interactions occur within a framework of power relations in which Mexican dance styles may not be as highly valued as Caribbean ones.

Second, Sydney Hutchinson and Ulloa demonstrate that on-2 and on-1 counting systems are recent phenomena dating back no further than the 1980s, much as Washburne's recent (2008) work has shown that salsa musicians' dogmatic adherence to the clave rhythm is a 1960s Nuyorican preoccupation possessing few Cuban precedents. Meanwhile, Díaz and Priscilla Renta show how little the count matters to the many Caribbean dancers who value freedom and spontaneity over a close fit with clave.[11] Codification of steps and standardization of counts is thus a matter for professionals hoping to sell dance to students and audiences. That such an elaborate theorization of music and dance interrelationships has arisen in this community before scholarly intervention (the first scholarly publications to discuss on-2 dancing were Hutchinson 2004 and Renta 2004) is striking and demands attention.

Third, although all the chapters in this volume describe dance scenes that participate to some degree in a transnational dance community, they also demonstrate the vastly different meanings dance practices acquire locally. Salsa can mean upward mobility for working-class Latinos in New Jersey (Chapter 3), a cosmopolitan connection to others for middle-class midwesterners (Chapter 5), Puerto Rican pride to New Yorkers (Chapter 2), a competitive challenge for Angelenos (Chapter 4), an alternative, nonviolent imaginary to Caleños (Chapter 8), a tropical vacation for Parisians (Chapter 10), national differentiation in Barcelona (Chapter 11), or even socialist resistance to capitalism in Cuba (Chapter 6).

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Globalized Salsa

The choice of the cities we examine in this volume—Tokyo, Paris, Barcelona, Havana, Santo Domingo, San Juan, Los Angeles, and New York—by and large reflects the fact that salsa culture is an urban culture that has been transnational since its inception.[12] While drawing its style and its means of legitimization from earlier, rural styles like Cuban son, guajira, and guaracha and Puerto Rican música jíbara, salsa's typical origin stories, when unraveled, reveal connections not only between Cubans and Puerto Ricans but also among African Americans, Italian Americans, Anglo-Americans, Mexicans, Colombians, Dominicans, West Africans, and many others. Just before the emergence of salsa, Latin American popular music was being disseminated throughout the Americas through Cuban recordings and Mexican films, often making its way from there to West Africa, where it contributed to or directly spawned a vast array of local popular musics, including Congolese rumba, Nigerian highlife, Angolan *kizomba*, and Guinean *maringa* (see, e.g., Charry 2000: 263). These styles themselves rest on an earlier layer of African-Caribbean genres like *gumbe* (or *goombay*), once found in Jamaica, Louisiana, Cuba, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and beyond (see Bilby 2011).

Transnational connections and interchange are thus nothing new in Caribbean music and dance. Such processes have been described variously as creolization, *créolité*, *mestizaje*, hybridity, and transculturation by analysts. Each term has a different history and connotation. For instance, numerous scholars have rejected "hybrid," "mestizo," and "creolized" for their racial implications, but others have recently found emancipatory potential in reclaiming such terms. For instance, Quintero Rivera suggests that "mulatto" music and dance styles like salsa demonstrate the value of hybridity to a "world obsessed with the idea of only one governing, centralizing principle" (2009: 65), and his analysis of such styles is thus a kind of decolonization project. Yet among the several options, the term "transculturation" may be particularly apt for the case of salsa. It is proposed by Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz to describe the uneven "process of transition from one culture to another" that involves both loss and new creation (Ortiz [1947] 1995: 102–103). He sees transculturation as being particularly typical of the Caribbean because of the diversity of cultures involved, the prolonged intensity of their interactions, and the speed and thoroughness with which it occurred, all of which made the region distinct from Europe (99). Today, however, such intensive interactions of multiple cultures have spread to many—if not most—urban areas around the world. Transculturation, like salsa, is thus a part of globalization, but it is a part that is rooted, theoretically at least, in a Caribbean past.

Mixture is thus old news in the Caribbean, which means that our use of the term "globalized salsa" requires further explanation. Terms like "globalization" and "transnationalism" express the common feeling that life today is qualitatively different from life in centuries past, despite prior mixtures, fusions, and

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travels. What is new, John Tomlinson tells us, is not movement and dialogue but rather the degree of complexity in the social connectivity many take for granted today (1999: 1–3), the transformation of our experience of space and time through mass mediation and the ease of travel (3–10), the widespread use of communication technologies in all aspects of daily life, and the changing relationship between place and culture resulting from deterritorialization (106–149).

"Globalized salsa" thus means complex connections between different and distant groups of dancers facilitated by technologies like the Internet; a sense of proximity to dancers half a world away, perhaps one that is greater than what the dancer feels toward his or her own, non-salsa-dancing neighbors; and a clear sense of locality through local dance styles that are nonetheless infused with "the ghostly presence of distant influences" (Tomlinson 1999: 58). Salseros themselves actively imagine the global in their discourse, promoting the dance as "a new common element of communication around the world" and as a global unifier (Delgado 2003; my translation).

It also means increasing links to global institutions through the global capitalist system, or rather the music and dance industries that form a part of it. It is no secret that salsa music has been a commercial enterprise from the beginning, as described above. Salsa dance classes spread as a commodity on a similar trajectory. In places without a prior tradition of son or mambo dancing, introductory classes given at nightclubs before salsa band performances and included in the admission price played an important role in spreading the style. Student interest in acquiring dance competence allowed specialists to emerge and impelled them to complicate the style with a plethora of new steps and turn patterns. The more complicated style in turn helped establish a dedicated community of salsa dancers willing to invest time and money in lessons, videos, shoes, and clothing. Promoters created congresses, which made money while also enlarging and intensifying dancers' networks. Commodified salsa dancing, reified as a set of specific steps ("a dance") rather than a social practice ("dancing"), then spread even to those locations where a strong tradition of social salsa dancing already existed.

Globalizing processes in salsa today can perhaps be found even more often in dancers' outlooks and complex practices of connectivity than in the salsa music recording industry—especially since studio dancers tend to use older music rather than supporting new artists. But mass media continue to play important roles in the development, spread, and popularization of salsa music and dance by establishing connectivity between dancers and disseminating dance practices. All the chapters mention these issues, but they are particularly highlighted in the Colombian (Chapter 8) and Japanese (Chapter 12) contributions. While these two places are culturally and geographically far different, they share the practice of relating to salsa primarily through media, recordings and films being decisive in the Colombian case, Internet and print media in the Japanese one. In Spain, radio is the principal means through which a

salsa community is built. In the Dominican Republic, salsa's role in tourism and local cultural industries is another way the dance establishes connections between people and places.

Salsa is different, then, from earlier transcultural Caribbean dances in the degree of its commercialization—as long as the genre label has existed, it was always made to be marketed—and in that it was never a rural music or a purely oral tradition. In addition, it inhabits a special position as a dance that exists in both a professional, globally marketed, performance-oriented form, that of studio salsa, and an amateur, local, social form, that of street salsa. In certain places, the two forms are in constant and intense contact, even though they may serve different social groups, demonstrating that this is not a simple dichotomy but rather a scale in shades of gray. The linkages between salsa and mass communication technologies are also an important factor in establishing salsa as a globalized form of popular culture. The Internet, in particular, facilitates not only the spread of steps and styles but also dialogue between distant dancers, and it has even contributed to spreading the ways of classifying and debating salsa styles I have already mentioned.

Finally, and related to this last point, salsa is also different because of the wide audiences it reaches, which now include all classes; because of its deterritorialization and hence relatively greater distance from national discourses (even in Puerto Rico, salsa is not the national music); and because of the geographic spread of its influence, affecting every inhabited continent. Thus, in this book we look at salsa as a "globalized dance," even though it is obvious that not everyone around the globe participates in salsa dancing.

When we look particularly at studio salsa, we find that in most countries it is the practice of that select group that might be termed "cosmopolitan" (for useful discussions of the term, see Turino 2000: 7–9; Tomlinson 1999: 198–199). Salsa scenes are frequently cosmopolitan ones in several senses. In most places salsa dancing is not firmly tied to a concept of nation, with the possible exception of Puerto Rico (see Chapter 7), so that most salseros do not choose the dance for nationalist reasons. In general, salsa cosmopolitanism instead relates to a generalized concept of *latinidad*, or a sense of Latino identity (tropicalized into a stereotypical "Latin heat" for some non-Latinos) and to specific notions of locality, local pride, and localized conceptions of Latino identities. In most cases, again with the possible exceptions of Puerto Rico and New York, salsa is also not tied directly to colonial experiences, since it is not primarily spread by a colonizing power but rather by dance aficionados in conjunction with the transnational music industry. Most importantly, many salsa dancers feel connected to other salseros in disparate locations throughout the world through their dance practice. Particularly in places far from cultural centers, people may get involved in salsa precisely because it offers them a way of making a connection with cultural Others (see Bosse 2008 and Chapter 5). Yet the possibility of making those connections is limited to those with the means of doing so, for instance, by accessing the Internet or traveling to congresses. This

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means that while congresses may create an ethnically inclusive community, it is one with little class diversity—and in fact, critics of cosmopolitanism often note the tendencies of cosmopolitans to gloss over class divisions and inequalities in their imagining of the idealized coexistence of cultures.

Salsa dancers are not always cosmopolitans, however. In fact, social, or street, dancers may not necessarily feel themselves to be participating in a global popular culture, and so local salsas are still not particularly globalized or even known outside their home places, as Díaz (Chapter 9) and Bárbara Balbuena Gutiérrez (Chapter 6) show in this volume. This became especially clear to me when I was dancing with Santo Domingo salseros: although stepping forward on the left foot and back on the right is a basic tenet of international studio salsa, one that enables even those with divergent movement styles to dance together without colliding, these dancers all did the reverse—that is, they stepped forward on the right (and were surprised at my surprise). Many toes were stepped on as a result of this intensely local practice.

The division present in salsa between local social dancers and cosmopolitan, semiprofessional studio dancers is often one of class and access to cultural, economic, and kinetic capital. Nonetheless, frequent border crossings between the two realms blur the dividing line. As Katherine Borland, Díaz, and Ulloa note, becoming a studio dancer can be a strategy of upward mobility; similarly, the adoption of movements coded as "street" can be a legitimization strategy for studio dancers. Nonetheless, mobility through dance practice is often impossible for those with insurmountably low social status, like the Mexican migrant dancers Bosse describes. In addition, dance movements and bodily habits themselves change by moving across categories, as Ulloa suggests.

Thomas Turino finds that cosmopolitans are considered elite and sophisticated because they themselves define these terms (2000: 10–11). Similarly, studio salsa now functions as cultural capital because its originators had already transformed social salsa practices to fit middle-class, cosmopolitan aesthetic principles (see Bosse 2008). Its degree of complexity has been raised through the creation of numerous complicated steps and turn patterns, improvisation has been de-emphasized in favor of learned sequences (see Chapter 7), and every aspect has been codified and standardized. Now too difficult to learn at home or on the street, studio salsa is a commodity to be bought and sold. And its professionalization may be accompanied by an unwarranted devaluation of local social dancing that can reduce the dance's power to create community cohesion (see Chapters 2 and 7). Like the move from salsa dura to salsa romántica, the increasing predominance of global (studio) over local (street) salsa carries the risk of depoliticization and exclusion, even as it brings new populations into the dance.

In sum, if salsa was once thought of as a local music, this situation changed long ago. It would indeed be difficult to conceive of the "Salsa Bollywood" style created by Bangalore, India, dancers Ree and Prithvi and taught at the 2008 Berlin Salsa Congress as a local one. And the commonly told history of salsa's

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origins, which focuses on the genre's emergence in New York, itself leaves out the dance's shifting and multiple prehistories. Salsa dance epitomizes many of the features that have been associated with globalization: hybridity, deterritorialization, commodification, and cosmopolitanism. It has been spread through migration, mass media, new technologies, and tourism. But the spread of salsa is not a top-down affair in which mass-mediated popular culture is imposed on hapless locals; it is a dialogue in which the locals also impose their own tastes and priorities, changing the nature of the very commodity they are meant to consume.