

Merengue and Bachata:
A study of two musical styles in the Dominican Republic
by
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Abstract

Music is an important part of social life, and is an important aspect of expressive culture. This thesis explores the dynamic relationship between popular music and society. Specifically, it highlights the role that music plays in understanding societies in transition through an examination of the social history of merengue and bachata music in the Dominican Republic. Both musical styles have played an important role in reflecting and contributing to social, economic, and political changes over time, though both have accomplished this in different ways.

Music is an important vehicle through which cultural identities and social values are formed, articulated, and negotiated. These are expressed through discussions about music and the value of music. Discussions regarding merengue and bachata music often reveal commonly held and contradictory social values. Both musical styles have developed alongside social changes and both have played an important role in highlighting the different and competing discourses of what is a valid expression of Dominican identity and culture. Merengue is heralded as a national symbol, while bachata music, once ostracized, has now emerged as an accepted form into mainstream Dominican society. Both musical styles provide an understanding as to how popular music is evaluated and assigned meaning and value over time within the Dominican Republic.

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Introduction

This thesis explores the relationship between popular music and society: the role that popular music plays in understanding societies in transition, as well as how music is an important vehicle through which issues regarding cultural identity are articulated. Specifically, it will look at the trajectories of merengue and bachata music in the Dominican Republic, their social and cultural significance, and the role that each musical style plays in both reflecting and contributing to social, economic, and political changes. In the Dominican Republic, merengue and bachata music are part of everyday life. Not only do they provide a cultural space in which social relations and cultural modes are expressed, but they also serve as a vehicle through which cultural identities are articulated and negotiated. This thesis will outline the complexities of the relationship between popular music and Dominican culture through an examination of the social history of both musical styles.

Music is often referred to as an aspect of expressive and communicative culture (Kaemmer 1993: 69) through which creators of culture express the values and beliefs that are consistent with and challenge those of a particular group. These values and beliefs are learned processes of socialization and are passed on from generation to generation. Music is oriented toward the cognitive and emotional needs of a culture (Kaemmer 1993: 8), that is, those needs that are “. . . commonly considered to include at least the need to make sense of experience, to express one’s self, and to obtain positive reactions from other people” (Kaemmer 1993: 8). Music is also intricately enmeshed in social processes: music both influences and can be influenced by social change. The trajectory of a musical style can reveal the processes of societies in transition, and can give expression to change while

reinforcing tradition. World views are constructed and continually change as a result of social and global changes, as ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin indicates:

Music is both deeply rooted and transient. It dissolves into space while simultaneously settling into individual and collective memory. Yesterday's songs trigger today's tears. Music harbors the habitual, but also acts as a herald of change. It helps to orchestrate personal, local, regional, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and national identity. Stable yet constantly in flux, music offers both striking metaphors and tangible data for understanding societies at moments of transition. (Slobin 1996: 1)

Expressive culture, such as music, is not a separate domain from changes within society, but is rather integrated with these. Kaemmer suggests that in order to achieve an integrated view of the role of music and its social significance it is important to study it alongside sociocultural systems in order to understand how different aspects of culture relate to each other (Kaemmer 1993: 7). Sociocultural systems are integrated "... because [they] indicate a collection of phenomena that are so closely related to each other that a change in one of them will bring about changes in others" (Kaemmer 1993: 7). Kaemmer identifies three components of sociocultural systems that are interrelated: material needs (such as food and shelter); social relations (the need for human beings to relate to each other to form social institutions that standardize social interactions according to accepted forms of behavior); and the expressive dimensions of the sociocultural system (which are oriented to the cognitive and emotional needs of individual people). Expressive culture takes on various forms such as religion, art, and music. It fulfills the need to make sense of experience, and to instigate meaningful and positive reactions from other people (Kaemmer 1993: 8). As Kaemmer argues:

The combination of these three components of the sociocultural system means that the artifacts created by humans, the patterned social relationships, and the approved types of expressive behavior all work together to generate what we know as the way of life of an ethnic group or socio-economic group. Society can only exist as people relate to each other with some commonly held understanding about communicating and behaving; culture can only exist in the minds of individuals and in the practices by which shared understandings are passed from one generation to the next. (Kaemmer 1993: 9)

Shared understandings, however, do not necessarily mean one unified view, or one way of life. Cultural views change over time and cultural forms such as music express these different meanings. Often it is the contradictory views in 'the way of life' of a group that highlights what is a valued expression. In the Dominican Republic, music is a vehicle through which we can learn about these changing values. Music can both influence and be influenced by these different views.

The study of popular music can throw light on how changes in society occur, as well as how cultural identity and cultural values are expressed and formed through musical meaning. It can also show how music, when it travels across geographical boundaries, becomes a marker of an ethnic identity or social identity. In the Dominican Republic, merengue and bachata music are vehicles through which commonly held and contradictory social values are articulated.

In order to understand the social significance of Dominican popular music in Dominican culture, it is important to give an account of the social history of both these musical styles. Both have played significant roles in Dominican society, reflecting and contributing to social changes and changing forms of cultural expression, though both have made this contribution in different ways.

The introduction of this thesis will outline a brief history of the Dominican Republic and Dominican popular music in order to provide an understanding of the social context within which the social histories of bachata and merengue will be presented. It will proceed to outline the different ways in which popular music is defined, and the evaluative discourses within which music is assigned value and meaning. This provides a theoretical framework within which to understand the shifting meanings and evaluations of Dominican music over time. The introduction will conclude by outlining the methodologies used in this thesis.

Chapter One will outline the social history of merengue music; the debates surrounding the origins of merengue, which bear significantly on its current status as a national symbol; the relationship between merengue and the construction of national identity through the discourses surrounding its origins and history; and lastly, merengue's emergence in and integration into the music industry, which expanded drastically in the post-Trujillo era, together with the implications that follow from this emergence and integration.

Chapter Two will outline the social history of bachata music; its origins and its emergence during the post-Trujillo Era as a consequence of major political, economic, social, and demographic changes; its initial status as an ostracized music associated with a particular group, in this way symbolizing and characterizing the marginalized peoples of the Dominican Republic. Finally, the chapter will outline the emergence of bachata into the mainstream and subsequently the partial removal of the stigma so long attached to this music and those who create it.

The concluding chapter will highlight the social significance of the development of merengue and bachata music, and will show how each has reflected and contributed to social changes and changes in cultural values. Public opinion on such matters will also be presented in the form of a survey. The results of this survey reveal the musical values of the listeners as well as the character of their active participation in facilitating and reinforcing musical culture.

Introduction to the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic and Haiti share the island of Hispaniola (Española), which is situated between Cuba and Puerto Rico. The Tainos were the indigenous inhabitants of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic before the arrival of the Spanish. The Tainos who inhabited the island of Española called this land Quisqueya, a name that Dominicans continue to use.

Christopher Columbus landed on the island in 1492, and claimed it for the Spanish Crown in 1493 (Austerlitz 1997: 8). The Spanish settled on the southern coast, which they called Santo Domingo de Guzmán. Today, it is known as Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic (Austerlitz 1997: 8). It is commonly accepted that during the first century of the Spanish settlement, Taino natives were decimated as a result of war and disease that the Spanish brought with them (Kearns 1999: 12). Today, the Taino Nation of the Antilles, an organization whose members consist of those who are of Tainan decent and also of scholars in anthropology and archeology, argue against this extinction theory. This theory is known among Tainan members as the extinction myth. They argue against theories

that exclude any Tainan influence in the culture of the Antilles. They continue to perform indigenous religious ceremonies, such as the *areito*, among their communities in the Greater Antilles and in the United States (Kearns 1999). It is argued that many Tainos were able to escape Spanish control by fleeing to the mountains, and, therefore, were not completely decimated (Kearns 1999: 12). While this suggests that the Tainos are not extinct, their presence was reduced on the island of Española. As a result, the Spanish began to import Africans as slaves to replace the Tainos to work on the plantations and in the mines (Whiteford 1994: 98).

By the seventeenth century, a large proportion of the population was African. When the Spanish looked toward Mexico and Peru in search of gold, the French moved onto the island, and in 1697, the western part of the island, today known as Haiti, was ceded to France under the Peace of Ryswick (Austerlitz 1997: 8). This part of the island became Saint-Domingue. Despite Spain's growing disinterest in the colony of Santo Domingo because of more lucrative possibilities in other areas of Latin America, the eastern part of the island continued to be under Spanish rule. When Spain supported slave revolts in Haiti in the eighteenth century to oust the French, France abolished slavery to win the favor of the revolutionaries. Black leader Tossaint L'Ouverture, in the name of France, defeated the Spanish in 1795, resulting in French control over the whole island under the Treaty of Basil (Austerlitz 1997: 8). This control was not established until 1801. L'Ouverture's first act was to abolish slavery. This act was soon overturned by Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon also used the island as the headquarters for the new French Empire (Austerlitz 1997: 9). Slave revolts against the French were led by Jacques Dessalines. In 1804, Haitian armies

succeeded in ousting the French and the Republic of Haiti was founded. Haiti became “. . . the world’s first black republic and the second independent state in the Americas” (Austerlitz 1997: 9). Dessalines invaded the Spanish side of the island in 1805, with the intention of ousting all European domination. He was met, however, with resistance from the French. While there were Dominicans of color who sided with him, Dessalines reacted to the resistance that he met with violence. Over four hundred people were killed in Moca and Santiago (Austerlitz 1997: 9). This massacre marked the beginnings of conflict between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, conflict which has continued since.

The French did not fare so well with the Dominican elite and were ousted in 1809. Santo Domingo was returned to Spanish Crown. In 1821, the Haitian army led by president Jean Pierre Boyer successfully invaded the Spanish side of the island, which remained under Haitian control between 1822-1844 (Whiteford 1994: 99; Sagás 1995). Both the French and the Spanish planned *coup-d’états* to overthrow the Haitian President. Juan Pablo Duarte, a Dominican liberal, founded la Trinitaria, a secret society to establish independence. The plans of la Trinitaria were successful, and on February 27, 1844, the Dominican Republic was founded (Austerlitz 1997: 10; Whiteford 1994; Sagás 1995).

Since independence, the Dominican Republic has been through political turmoil. The Spanish had established a system of authoritarianism and hierarchy based on race and politics, and an economic system that was state-dominated (Whiteford 1994: 99). They also established a government of centralized control which they copied from Spain and transposed onto their cities of ‘conquest’. This historical pattern of authoritative rule in the Dominican Republic has been characterized as one of *caudillo* rule (Franco 1982: 197). This is a

personalist regime, in which the country is controlled by military power led by a charismatic officer whose reign serves the purpose of personal gain and aggrandizement (Handelman 1996: 195). The regime is one in which “legitimacy is secured through patronage, clientistic alliances, (and) systematic intimidation” (Handelman 1996: 195). This political system of centralized authority, hierarchy, order, discipline, and rule from the top down has manifested itself in different forms throughout Dominican history (Wiarda 1992: 96). According to Julio Brea Franco, one prominent characteristic of the Dominican political system is its cyclical nature of stability and instability. The reason for this is that the political system has never been institutionalized, but rather has been one founded in a charismatic leader. Therefore, when a *caudillo* who has personalized power through charisma disappears, there is instability because there is no institutionalized political structure outside of the State-Persona (Franco 1982: 197). These conditions then give rise to another *caudillo* to restore the stability. We can trace three cycles in which a dictator has been in power and destabilized and another has taken power. The first was the dictatorship of Ulises Heureaux (1882-1899). His death caused instability. This was followed by U.S. intervention and the rise of Ramon Cáceres (1904-1911). The second was the downfall of Cáceres followed by a second U.S. intervention which lasted from 1916-1924. During this time the Dominican National Guard was formed, and this strong military presence enabled the rise of the third and longest dictatorship of the Dominican Republic: that of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930-1961). The latter comprises the third cycle. The assassination of Trujillo led to instability which was followed by U.S. intervention (1965). Stability was restored when Joaquín Balaguer (1966-1978) was elected. The death of Trujillo was to mark the end of

authoritarian rule as the new government under Balaguer was formally named as a 'democracy'.

While the Dominican Republic is today a democracy, it continues to display characteristics of the authoritative rule of its predecessors. For a state to establish democratic institutions acting on behalf of the people rather than the rulers, there must be some decentralization of state power. As Abootalebi argues, "So long as the state lingers as the ultimate center of power, the prospects for inauguration of democracy will remain minimal" (Abootalebi 1995: 508).

Racial conflict and border tensions between the Dominican Republic and Haiti have continued ever since independence. The predominant Hispanic ideology and inherited social structure of colonial times has influenced what is accepted as valid forms of expression regarding Dominican national identity. As a result, these dominant views have favoured Spanish rather than African influences in Dominican culture. This ideology was known as *antihaitianismo* (anti-Haitianism), and developed as a result of historical tension between the two countries (Sagás 1995). Ernesto Sagás observes that this tension has been enhanced by political regimes promoting a homogenous nationalism and also by different paths of economic development. As Sagás observes, "Haiti and the Dominican Republic have unequal levels of economic development, different social structures, political systems laden with authoritarianism, and a heavy historical legacy of mutual animosities and tensions" (Sagás 1995: 266).

Conflicting ideologies regarding Dominican identity, whether they are based on race or class, are manifested in discussions regarding merengue and bachata music in the Dominican Republic. This thesis will proceed to outline a brief history of these two musical styles in order to provide a basis for understanding how music both constitutes and reflects social, economic, and political changes, as well as how music can create, facilitate, and reinforce cultural identity.

Background to Dominican Popular Music

The Dominican Republic is often referred to as the island of merengue (*la isla del merengue*). Merengue and bachata are two styles of popular music and dance in the Dominican Republic. Both musical styles reflect and contribute to political, economic and social change in the country. Both styles are socially significant as they have reflected and served to constitute important developments in different periods of Dominican history. An examination of these musics thus makes possible a better understanding of changes in Dominican society and culture.

Music is a central part of everyday life: it permeates residential areas, discotheques, cars, buses and is part of most social activities. Merengue stands as a symbol of national identity, simultaneously expressing inherently contradictory views of this identity. This is most evident in the debates surrounding the origins of merengue, as well as in its formation as a national music during the Trujillo dictatorship. Merengue is a central part of life in the Dominican Republic that it is often viewed as a symbol that represents the spiritual journey of the Dominican people since their independence from Haiti in 1844 (Matos 1999; Ureña

1987), mediating issues of heritage and collective identity that arise as a result of colonial encounter. Merengue provides a vehicle for the discussion of these issues, because debates about the origins of the music, whether Tainan, Spanish, African or a fusion of two or more of the above, give expression to questions concerning the social identity of Dominicans as a group.

Josep Martí i Pérez argues that when a group needs to affirm itself, that is, to make sense of its socially constructed identity, it expresses itself in cultural forms such as music. He argues further that this form of expression lies within the symbolic reality of a group. Through such forms of expression as that of a national music which represents a particular group, there exists evidence that there is a group of which individuals feel a part (Martí i Pérez 1996: 1-2). The social identity of a group “. . . is a matter of double boundary, a boundary from within, maintained by the socialization process, and a boundary from without established by the process of intergroup relations” (Martí i Pérez 1996: 2).

Charles Keil argues that musical style is also viewed as an indicator of the presence of a strong community, that is, of “an intense sociability that has been given shape through time, an assertion of control over collective feelings so powerful that any expressive innovator in a community will necessarily put his or her content into shaping that continuum and no other” (Keil 1994: 202). Musical style is closely associated with its social context—not only in terms of cultural features such as social activities, language and so on, but also in terms of socio-political and economic dimensions. Music expresses the way that people perceive and define themselves, and from this how they perceive and define oppositional groups (Hernandez 1995: 18). Christopher Waterman observes, music can serve as “a

system for the enactment and negotiation of emergent patterns of identity under conditions of pervasive demographic, political and economic change” (Waterman 1987: 2 in Hernandez 1995: 17).

Merengue developed as a national music during the Trujillo dictatorship (1930-61). During this time, the dictator, a lover of merengue, used this music as political propaganda (Austerlitz 1997; Hernandez 1993; 1995: 35). As a result, merengue came to be a national symbol of Dominican identity, like the national flag. Bachata, on the other hand, was the music of the marginalized community, the urban poor. Their music was ostracized by the upper and middle classes, since it represented the culture of urban migrants and *campesinos* (country people) who migrated to Santo Domingo for a better life in the post-Trujillo era. Migration, however, brought with it all the uncertainties of city life, and a large group ended up living in shanty towns and were stigmatized by the rest of society (Hernandez 1995: 76). During the post-Trujillo era there was another musical movement called *nueva canción*. This movement originated in Chile and eventually influenced the formation of a Dominican *nueva canción* movement. The ideology of the musicians was to validate folk music that was being shunned and left behind by commercialization and modernization. Popular merengue musicians who were previously part of the *nueva canción* movement challenged the social barriers that excluded bachata from the mainstream, and publically recognized bachata as a valid expression of Dominican identity (Hernandez 1995: 206; Austerlitz 1997).

Under the regime of Joaquín Balaguer (1966-78), these two genres of music were taken up by, and became part of the music industry, albeit with unequal opportunities. Commercialization and then globalization have raised new issues in relation to how music

is created and experienced, as well as in relation to cultural expressions of social change through technological and stylistic developments. Merengue, having been established and accepted as popular music, was in a position to more easily become commercialized within a freer capitalist market, though by no means was the transition to democracy a smooth one. Bachata, on the other hand, was an emergent form of popular music during this time (Hernandez 1995). It was a style that formed within an urban setting and among a specific population, that of country migrants who listened to guitar-based styles of music such as the Mexican *ranchera*. As such, it was a music in competition with merengue (Hernandez 1995; Austerlitz 1997).

Recordings became more widespread as a result of the importation of recording equipment and the freer use of this under Balaguer's government, allowing both merengue and bachata music to be recorded and mass disseminated through commodities such as records, cassettes and later CD's. Nevertheless, while merengue music was being produced and distributed throughout the Dominican Republic and abroad, bachata was limited in its position within the music industry because it was popular only among a certain population, and stigmatized by the rest of society. As a result distribution was banned in record stores, and only a few radio stations played this emerging style of guitar music. Merengue, like bachata, also struggled at the beginning of its history (1844) to be accepted by the middle and upper classes, which have traditionally attempted to determine what cultural expression is of value and what is not.

Processes of socialization and social legitimization play an important role in the way music will be positively or negatively valued by society. Legitimacy, a term used by political scientists, refers to the forms of political power that are acceptable to society. In terms of expressive culture, it refers to an acknowledgment by people that certain forms of expression, such as music, literature and art are acceptable, recognized, and valued. Some forms of expression may be more highly valued than others (Kaemmer 1993: 64).

In order to further explore the relationships surrounding and constituting merengue and bachata music in the Dominican Republic, it is important to discuss the issue of what is meant by the term popular music as well as the issues surrounding popular music discourse. This provides a framework within which to understand shifting understandings and evaluations of merengue and bachata music over time.

Popular Music and Popular Music Discourses

The use of the term 'popular music' is contentious because it is a discursive term, one that can evoke different meanings under different and similar circumstances. The examination of the social history of merengue and bachata music demonstrates how the term popular music shifts over time and is often used in different ways simultaneously.

Richard Middleton outlines the historical usage of the term popular music and describes the different ways in which it has been used. He convincingly demonstrates that there can be no one 'correct' definition of popular music. As a consequence, the term must be understood according to the social and cultural context of its use.

Initially, the term popular was used to refer to the ‘common people’, and was one which connoted inferiority (Middleton 1990: 3). The term arose in late eighteenth-century Britain, where popular referred to that music that was ‘well favoured’ by the bourgeoisie (Middleton 1990: 3). A commercial market in musical products began to develop and those songs that were part of this bourgeois market in the nineteenth century were labelled ‘popular’, meaning that they were good, or well favoured, because they were valued in the commercial market (Middleton 1990: 3). The initial meaning of the term continued to survive, and popular songs could also “be thought of as synonymous with ‘peasant’, ‘national’, and ‘traditional’ songs” (Middleton 1990: 4). Meanings began to shift alongside economic, political, and social changes. Middleton refers to a summary provided by Frans Birrer (1985: 104), which outlines the four ways in which popular music has been defined. Middleton shows convincingly that each approach is problematic, and that there is as a consequence no one way in which popular music can be adequately defined.

The first gives rise to the normative definition, which views popular music as an inferior type. This definition relies on arbitrary criteria and is mostly qualitative in nature. The second gives rise to the negative definition, according to which popular music is neither ‘folk’ nor ‘art’ music (Middleton 1990: 4). However, the boundary between these two categories easily becomes blurred. As an example, merengue music in the Dominican Republic was first viewed by the upper class as ‘vulgar’ music. It could then be categorized as popular music in the deprecatory sense, while later, it became popular among the very people who had criticized it. Also, merengue music could not be what it is independently of the influence of the preferred dances of the upper class of the time, such as the waltz. This

change of views supports Stuart Hall's conclusion that: "the assumption . . . that you might know before you looked at cultural relations in general what, at any particular time, was a part of elite culture or a part of popular culture is untenable" (Hall 1978: 6-7).

The third way identified by Birrer gives rise to a sociological definition: "popular music is associated with (produced for or by) a particular group" (Middleton 1990: 4). Middleton argues that this definition does not square with the fact that musical styles and genres are not associated exclusively with particular social groups because of the increasing mass dissemination of cultural products and the increasingly complex character of cultural markets (Middleton 1990: 4). Thus, bachata in its formative years could be defined in this way because it was a music of a specific group characterized by their class position in society. However, this definition could not describe contemporary bachata music for the reasons identified by Middleton: "the musical field and the class structure at any given moment, though clearly not unconnected, comprise different 'maps' of social/cultural space, and they cannot be reduced one to the other" (Middleton 1990: 4).

The fourth way gives rise to technologico-economic definitions, which define popular music as that which is disseminated by the mass media (Middleton 1990: 4). Middleton argues that these definitions are also problematic in that the technological advances enabling mass dissemination have affected all kinds of music, to the point where even the 'unpopular' can be sold in the form of a commodity (Middleton 1990: 4). Also, it is not only through the mass media that popular music is disseminated, but also through other means such as concerts, which can also be free and therefore not necessarily commodified (Middleton 1990: 4). This approach to understanding popular music is both positivist and primarily

quantitative in character. According to Middleton, it is thus “methodologically bound . . . to the requirements of measurement and to the mechanisms of the market, and excludes anything that does not fit these” (Middleton 1990: 5). It relies on sales figures which do not take into account that these can be open to manipulation through practices such as payola, a practice in which a musician or aspiring musician will pay the radio station (in the form of money or a gift) to market their product. This practice is used in the Dominican Republic for both merengue and bachata music. If one were to measure bachata’s popularity in this way at the beginning of its development, it would appear to be practically non-existent, as the majority of sales were through an informal economy. Bachata was not an accepted music in the mainstream. Through this informal economy however, it sold many copies and was clearly a music popular among a large part of the population. This positivist approach tends to “treat heterogeneous markets as parts of an aggregate” (Middleton 1990: 5). It also measures sales, not popularity, and fails to understand music within its social context. It views music as a commodity like all other commodities. However, as Robert Burnett indicates, cultural industries function on a more subjectively cultural level:

. . . Cultural industries . . . are those which produce goods or services which are either somehow expressive of the ways of life of a society, such as film, television and music, or which somehow occupy a special position within its system as social communication, such as advertising or the press. They are the industries which give form to social life in words and pictures, sounds and images. They increasingly offer the terms and symbols which we live our lives by. (Burnett 1996: 34)

Cultural industries are subject to change according to changes in social life. Cultural industries include or exclude certain forms of expressive ways of life and this depends on which ones are predominately valued. Because popular music is not static, it can highlight

the contradictions within a society, as Middleton explains:

What the term popular music tries to do is put a finger on that space, that terrain, of contradiction — between ‘imposed’ and ‘authentic’, ‘elite’ and ‘common’, predominant and subordinate, then and now, theirs and ours, and so on — and to organize it in particular ways . . . The relationships crossing this terrain take specific forms in specific societies and must be analyzed in that context. (Middleton 1990: 7)

As Middleton argues, the definitions assigned to the term popular music must be understood within their social context. We can further understand how popular music highlights spaces of contradiction and how it organizes relationships within this terrain by situating it within popular music discourse: different arguments about the values of music. Such arguments concern themselves not so much with the qualities of music itself, but rather with how music is evaluated and assigned meaning. Simon Frith suggests that such arguments,

. . . can only be understood by reference to the discourses which give the value terms concerned their meaning. Arguments about music are less about the qualities of the music itself than about how to place it, about what it is in the music that is actually to be assessed. After all, we can only hear music as having value, whether aesthetic or any other sort of value, when we know what to listen to and how to listen for it. Our reception of music, our expectations from it, are not inherent in the music itself . . . (Frith 1990: 96)

Frith’s position is influenced by the ideas of Howard Becker (1988) and Pierre Bourdieu (1984), which emphasize that in order to understand music and our response to it, we must understand the social organization and discursive practices within which art objects are given value (Frith 1990: 97). As Frith argues, “The aesthetic response, in other words, has to be understood by reference to the social organization of taste which patterns people’s morality, sociability, lifestyle, habitus . . .” (Frith 1990: 97). Frith suggests that there are three sources

of evaluative discourse which determine what music is meaningful, or 'good': the bourgeois music world; the folk music world; and the commercial music world (Frith 1990: 97-100). Each world constructs a notion of what is 'good' music according to the governing principles which determine its value. These values are formed and reinforced within social institutions and discursive practices.

The first is the bourgeois music world. Emphasis is placed on a tradition of musical scholarship which is acquired through a strict process of learning music within a particular academic setting. Frith chooses the example of classical music in which the academy is the organizing institution which provides a space in which formal practices are carried out. It is a serious setting in which there are strict rules to learning and performing. Once students have been properly educated or trained, music is brought to a bourgeois public through the form of the concert. The value of music thus lies in its ability to provide, as Frith suggests, a transcendent experience (the concert) which is an experience apart from the everyday world. Such organization creates a world of hierarchy; there is a clear distinction between composer, performer, and listener. The listener must also be properly trained in how to listen to this music (Frith 1990: 98). Frith states that this is a world which is "... organized around a particular notion of musical scholarship and a particular sort of musical event, in which music's essential value is its provision of a transcendent experience that is, on the one hand, ineffable, but on the other hand, only available to those with the right sort of knowledge, the right sort of interpretative skills" (Frith 1990: 98).

The second ‘art world’, or evaluative discourse suggested by Frith is the folk music world (Frith 1990: 98). It also emphasizes tradition but the value of music is placed on its cultural importance in which “. . . there is no separation of art and life. The appreciation of music is therefore tied up with the appreciation of its social function” (Frith 1990: 99). The traditional way of doing things is a principle by which music is evaluated as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. These concepts are often formulated against the commercialization of music, which is seen to compromise traditional ways of creating music. Rituals such as folk festivals provide a space in which music can be evaluated according to its social function. The musicians and the fans interact with each other during festivals, which serve to maintain and reinforce a sense of collective experience between both the performers and the listeners alike, and to provide a space of ‘participatory music-making’ (Frith 1990: 99).

The third evaluative discourse is the commercial music world. The latter determines the value of music according to its monetary value within the music industry. A music is ‘good’ if it sells. The objective of this world is to sell; this is done through dissemination of music through forms of media such as radio. The mass reproduction of recordings enables the industry to sell at musical events such as discos and concerts in which ‘good’ music can be sold as “fun” (Frith 1990: 99). “Fun is an escape from the daily grind (which is what makes it pleasurable) but is, on the other hand, integrated with its rhythms — the rhythms of work and play, production and consumption” (Frith 1990: 99).

The three evaluative discourses provide a framework within which the different meanings of popular music can shift and be assigned value. As Frith suggests, these arguments do not function autonomously but rather have developed in relation to each other.

Hence, the 'value' of music is often caught between competing discourses (Frith 1990: 99). The term popular music shifts within these different discourses, and is assigned meaning according to them. But because these do not function autonomously, popular music can change its discursive significance (Frith 1990: 101).

These discourses are present when we look at evaluations of what is 'good' music in relation to merengue and bachata music in the Dominican. The trajectories of both musical styles manifest these necessarily multiple understandings of the term popular music. These trajectories also demonstrate how the same music is assigned meaning and value through shifting discourses, and is therefore evaluated as 'good' or 'bad' according to these.

Methodology

The research presented in this thesis is the result of both ethnographic work and information gathered from secondary sources. The research was motivated by my interest in Dominican popular music, which, initially, did not start for intellectual reasons. Eight years ago, during a four-month stay in the country, I worked in a nursing home in a town called San Jose de Ocoa, two hours west of Santo Domingo. After this visit I continued to travel in the country. The next year (1993), I returned on a development project for two months. This project took place in the rural areas of San Jose de Ocoa and Cambita, as well as in the capital, Santo Domingo. In 1995 I returned for three months, partially to work and partially to visit friends there. In 1997 I returned for two months before the fieldwork for my thesis, which took place in 1999.

The time that I had spent there prior to my fieldwork allowed me to learn Spanish and become familiar with daily life in the country. It did not take long after I arrived on my first trip to be initiated into merengue music and dance. Because Dominicans are known for their hospitality, friends would often take me to clubs to teach me to dance merengue. I noticed very quickly that this music was central to daily life and was a music that most people shared. It was played on buses, in stores, in discotheques, and from household radio systems that would play for the whole neighborhood (when there was electricity). Later, I began to learn about bachata music, but it was not as popular then as it is now. In fact, it was only beginning to be played on F.M. radio stations in 1991. Most mainstream stations were beginning to play it, but it was not heard as much as it is today.

I followed the developments in merengue and later bachata music over the years. This was not difficult because music is played everywhere, and almost everyone knows something about what is happening in the music scene. This makes talking with Dominicans about music very enjoyable. My interest then turned into one that was academic. During a two month stay in 1997, I began to collect all the secondary sources I could find on Dominican music. I visited the university and national and public libraries, as well the *Museo del Hombre* in Santo Domingo. At these places, I was able to find most of my information on Dominican music. In 1999, Carlos Batista Matos published his book *Historia y Evolución del Merengue*, a complete study on merengue in Spanish. For bachata, however, there has been little written in Spanish, except for a few articles. Also in 1999 a magazine was published that was dedicated to bachata music. In 1995, Deborah Pacini Hernandez published her book, *Bachata: A social history of Dominican popular music*, which is the only

account so far of bachata in English. Her book is primarily based on her fieldwork in the Dominican Republic and has been an important source for this thesis. Paul Austerlitz published *Merengue: Dominican music and Dominican Identity* in 1997.

Because there is more written on merengue music, the chapter regarding merengue music in this thesis relies more heavily on these sources. Because there was less written on bachata, my fieldwork became more important in understanding this musical style. My observations, and the conversations that I have had with people regarding the social history of bachata music, have been confirmed by the research presented by Hernandez, as well as other sources such as the magazine '*El Bachatero*', in which the first few volumes have presented opinions regarding the social history of this music. As a result, many of my observations have led me to secondary sources which were congruent with these observations, and these sources are cited accordingly. These secondary sources were then augmented by field research which was conducted between September to November, 1999 in Santo Domingo and the Cibao region.

The purpose of my research was to learn more about the current trends in both merengue and bachata music, and the social significance of both these musical styles in everyday life. I had as a basis from secondary sources an understanding of the social history of both merengue and bachata music. I resided in the district of Villa Mella, Santo Domingo, where I rented a room in an apartment. I planned to do most of my research in the capital, but as I noticed the sounds of bachata coming from stores, radio, street cars and stalls, I became interested in its increasing popularity. Two years prior it was not as widespread in Santo Domingo. This interest led me to Puerto Plata and Santiago, where many of the

bachata musicians lived. As a result, half of my time was spent in these cities and the other half in Santo Domingo.

Research methods consisted mainly of informal interviews with radio broadcasters, musicians, employees of the record houses (*casa disquera*), as well as many conversations with listeners. I also had many informal conversations with street vendors who sold bachata and merengue in order to have a better idea of what was being purchased. I also listened to radio stations to hear the latest merengues and bachatas. Also, a sample survey was conducted in order to guard against my own observational bias and that of my informants. These informants had mostly been involved in the music industry in some way at one time or another. The survey was not directed at a specific population; neither was it conducted at a specific event. Rather, it was an availability sample that involved men and women of all ages, of different occupations, as well as of different cities. The results of the survey are presented at the end of this thesis. Other sources, such as new magazines dedicated to merengue and bachata music, and articles and interviews found in national newspapers, provided information on the current situation of these musical styles in the Dominican Republic.

The research that took place within the country was conducted in Spanish. I have provided throughout the text English translations of the interviews that are cited. Every effort has been made to capture Spanish meanings in English. There are, however, expressions used in everyday speech that cannot be translated without losing some of their impact. Some expressions have not been translated, but instead, English explanations have been given to describe what these expressions referred to. A glossary of musical instruments

has also been provided (See Appendix 1).



Figure 2.

Chapter One

MERENGUE

What is merengue?

Merengue is a style of music and dance in the Dominican Republic. This music received its name because of its light and frivolous dance style, and its short and precise rhythm, which was similar to that of beating egg whites and sugar together (Coopersmith 1974: 27). Interestingly, the Dominican Republic is the only Caribbean country that did not call this recipe merengue, but rather ‘*suspiro*’, indicating that the name may have come from neighboring countries. Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Haiti and Columbia also had a dance called merengue (Alberto Hernandez 1969: 53; Austerlitz 1997). Nevertheless, it was the Dominican merengue that survived the longest, a survival attributed to its vibrant rhythm (Alberti 1975: 73; Matos 1999). As a result, the Dominican Republic is known as ‘the island of merengue’ (*la isla del merengue*).

Originally, merengue was played with a guitar ensemble, the *güira* (resembling a cheese grater), the *tambora* drum, and the *marimba* (a bass instrument). In the 1870's, German immigrants introduced the accordion, which later replaced string instruments. The latter style, played with *güira*, *tambora* and accordion, is known as *perico ripiao*, or *merengue típico*. Today, the modern style of *merengue típico* incorporates the saxophone, and the electric bass has replaced the *marimba*. The accordion, however, remains at the heart of these ensembles (Manuel 1995: 100; Alberti 1975; Austerlitz 1997). Merengue is structured in three parts: it begins with a march-like *paseo*, leading to a “song”-like section,

itself called “merengue,” which is followed by the *jaleo*, an extended call and response section (Manuel 1995: 100; Alberti 1975; Ureña 1987: 37). The two-step rhythm underpins the basic choreography of merengue dance (Manuel 1995: 100; Alberti 1975). The characteristic merengue rhythm comes from the *tambora* drum, which produces its sound through the use of right and left hand rhythms, and *cuero de chivo* (hide of the male goat) on one side of the drum, and *cuero de chiva* (hide of the nanny goat) on the other side (Alberto Hernández 1969: 60; Alberti 1975). The *güira* accompanies the *tambora* drum in maintaining this rhythm. The saxophone and the accordion are instruments that enhance the underlying rhythm of the *tambora* drum and the *güira*, enabling spontaneity and variation in the music. Most *merengue típicos* have been played by ear. This was the music that was most popular among the people in the Cibao region where, by the 1920s, it was played at some salons, but thrived mostly at parties and taverns. Its popularity, however, had spread even before this date (Manuel 1995: 99; Austerlitz 1997; Matos 1999). Not only was it played at cultural activities; but it was also closely tied to the political and social arenas of Dominican culture.

Origins of Merengue

The literature surrounding the origins of merengue and its status as a national symbol is extensive (Alberti 1975; Austerlitz 1997; Flérida de Nolasco 1939; Demorizi 1971; Alberto Hernández 1969; Manuel 1995; Inchaustegui 1995; Ureña 1987; Ventura 1998; Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988; Lizardo 1974; Matos 1999). There is no consensus regarding the origins of merengue. The debates surrounding this issue continue to be

important today. The discussions of the origins of merengue are ones that are discursive. Merengue, as a style of music and dance, a national symbol, has given rise to discourses relating to issues of cultural and national identity in the Dominican Republic. For this reason, it is also commonly known in other countries as ‘Dominican music’. The music thus reflects and constitutes differences and contradictions within Dominican society.

It is commonly held that merengue originated in 1844, the year that the Dominican Republic was founded (Austerlitz 1997: 1; Alberti 1975; Demorizi 1971; Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988). The first merengue written and documented was about a soldier, Thomas Torres, who fled like a coward from the battle of Talanquera in the war of Independence (1844). As the Dominican soldiers celebrated their freedom from Haitian rule they sang this song:

*Tomá' juyó con la bandera
Tomá' juyó de la Talanquera:
Si fuera yo, yo no juyera,
Tomá' juyó con la bandera.*

Thomas fled with the flag,
Thomas fled Talanquera;
if it had been I, I wouldn't have fled:
Thomas fled with the flag
(Translated in Austerlitz 1997: 1; Del
Castillo and García Arévalo 1988: 75)

Songs such as this were initially part of an oral tradition. Juan Alfonsesca is known as the father of merengue. Some argue that it was Alfonsesca who first notated merengue (Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988: 16). This particular song was first published by Rafael Vidal in 1927 (Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988: 16). The myth related to the battle of Talanquera was the first link between music and national identity.

While the origins of merengue are debated, there is a consensus that merengue music developed as a unique Dominican style over time. Carlos Batista Matos, a Dominican reporter, writes in his book *Historia y Evolución del Merengue* (1999) that merengue has continued to be popular and maintain itself as a national symbol not only because of its contagious rhythm, but also because it is a music that represents and manifests the spirit of the time and the journey of Dominicans over time (Matos 1999: 1). It is just as much a voyage or trajectory of the struggles of the Dominican people as it is a rhythm, because in times of drastic political and social change, music has always been a vehicle through which these changes have been articulated (Matos 1999: 1). Peter Manuel could not have said it better when he wrote: “how could a country with a history of such oppression, poverty, and instability produce a national music of such manic exuberance?” (Manuel 1995: 97).

The different theories about the origins of merengue are deeply rooted in the differing perspectives of what Dominican identity is, which in turn is rooted in race and class associations. These associations have been formed through European contact and historical conflict with the neighboring country, Haiti. As Austerlitz has observed, the island of Hispaniola has played a significant role “. . . in the formation of a Dominican national identity that has often been defined by its opposition to Haiti” (Austerlitz 1997: 9).

The debates surrounding the origins of merengue are based primarily on whether it is a music of Spanish, Tainan, or African influence, or a fusion of two or more of these. These debates are influenced by the racial and class tensions arising from these cultural encounters. They are based on historical conflict, not only with Spain, but also with the neighboring country, Haiti. Some scholars believe that merengue has its origins in European

ballroom dances (Alberti 1975; Flérida de Nolasco 1939), while others believe that its origins lie in African rhythms, adopted by the Haitians whose national music is *mereng*, which influenced the music of its neighboring country the Dominican Republic (Lizardo 1974: 3; Austerlitz 1997).

The Dominican Republic is a mixed-race community (*comunidad mulata*) (Austerlitz 1997: 4). In July 2000, the estimated population was 8,442,533. The Dominican population is estimated to be sixteen percent white, eleven percent black, and seventy-three percent mixed (CIA World Factbook). Dominican folklorist Fradique Lizardo (1974) states that merengue has its origins in Africa because the Bara of Madagascar have a dance called merengue. This African music, formed with the Cuban and Puerto Rican *danza*, influenced the Caribbean merengue (Austerlitz 1997: 3; Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988: 75). Fradique Lizardo argues that it is a myth that merengue originated with the song 'Tomás Torres' during the Battle of Talanquera, because merengue was already being danced and played around the Caribbean years before this song. He further argues that the documented form of this song is dated 1912, many years after the war of Independence, which occurred in 1844 (Ureña 1987: 45). Lizardo states that there was an anonymous investigator who researched the origins of the Bara tribe from Madagascar, and found that members of this tribe were used as slaves at the end of the eighteenth century on the island of Hispaniola (Ureña 1987: 45). Research demonstrated that they had a dance called merengue, something which was confirmed after many interviews by the anonymous investigator with the people of Dahomey. This dance was thus of African origin. The actual dance of merengue has a choreography in which the feet move close together to the two-step rhythm, and the hip

movements are more accentuated. Lizardo explains that this kind of move originated because the slaves were bound at the feet by chains and did not have room for flexibility of step (Ureña 1987: 45; Lizardo 1974). Therefore, according to Lizardo, merengue's origins date back to the period between 1631-1700 (Ureña 1987: 45).

The strongest arguments against this theory state that Lizardo has overlooked a very important detail. In the Dominican Republic, Africa is synonymous with Haiti and it would therefore have been impossible for Dominicans to celebrate independence from Haiti with merengue (Ureña 1987: 46; Demorizi 1971; Austerlitz 1997). There is more of a consensus that merengue has not been influenced by Haitian music, precisely because of the historical conflict between the two countries. Those who reject the theory that merengue has been influenced by Haitian or African music support their argument by saying that if it had been a music from Haiti, it would not have been the music played by the Dominicans to celebrate their independence from Haiti in the 1844 Battle of Tanquera (Ureña 1987; Austerlitz 1997; Demorizi 1971; Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988). These debates express the anti-Haitian sentiment in the Dominican Republic and ambivalent attitudes toward any African influence on the island. Ironically, the majority of the population was mulatto when the Dominican Republic gained independence. Nevertheless, the Eurocentric worldview prevailed as the dominant one during and after independence, and was one which consequently influenced these theories. The origins of merengue continue to be cloudy. This latter argument is based on historical conflict, and is a result of the years following independence which characterized continued struggles against Haiti (Demorizi 1971; Ureña 1987: 47).

Flérida de Nolasco states that merengue's origins stem from the European tradition. This is primarily because of the cultural control the Spanish exercised during their occupation of the island, and their control over all aspects of life. Nolasco also argues that merengue was sometimes 'contaminated' by African music (De Nolasco 1939: 70). Luis Alberti (1975) also argues that merengue is influenced by Spanish origins. Interestingly, Flérida de Nolasco wrote this in 1939, during the Trujillo dictatorship, in which all forms of expressive culture were monitored for subversive material. This music had to conform to Trujillo's vision of national identity, one that was anti-Haitian. Luis Alberti's band was hired to be Trujillo's personal orchestra. This clearly influenced Alberti's musical orientation and possible opinions of merengue's origins.

Paul Austerlitz observes that merengue is a fusion between Spanish and African elements (Austerlitz 1997: 5). J.M. Coopersmith also recognizes this fusion, and states that the African and Spanish elements are closely tied together (Coopersmith 1974: 11). He argues that the reason these elements are closely tied together is because many slaves were imported from Andalusia, Spain, where they had been previously imported in the fifteenth century by the Portuguese (Coopersmith 1974: 17). Also, on September 3, 1500, there was a decree, authorized by Don Nicolas de Ovando, Governor of Santo Domingo, which allowed the importation of slaves from Africa as Christian property (Coopersmith 1974: 17). The cultural fusion was inevitable and this is evident in merengue music. While Coopersmith argues that there is some Tainan influence, he states that this is minimal considering that ninety percent of the Tainan population was decimated by the mid-sixteenth century, resulting in the total disappearance of indigenous music in Santo Domingo.

The Tainos had a religious ceremony called *el areito*, which included music and dance (Coopersmith 1974: 17). In the chronicles found from the *conquistadores*, Bartólome de Las Casas describes the *areito* as a very happy ceremony that was very pleasing to watch (Coopersmith 1974: 13). If these characteristics can be found today, it is in the rhythm and dance of merengue, which is also a happy music. Interestingly, however, the arguments that merengue includes Tainan influence are mainly based on the origins of the *güira*. The *Museo Del Hombre* in Santo Domingo hangs at its entrance a painting of the Tainan *areito*, which portrays the closest idea of what Tainan culture was like. The painting portrays instruments that were used in this culture, one of which was the *maraca*. There are also other instruments which resemble the *güira*, and which were made out of the calabash tree. While it is clear that the metallic *güira* used today in merengue and bachata music was created within the country, calabash trees can be found in Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Martinique, Dominica, the Dominican Republic and other tropical African countries. There was a tradition in Nigeria in which the calabash was decorated for special cultural occasions (Hargreaves 1965). Calabash trees have numerous green fruits that are 5" x 12" in size. These turn yellow and then brown. The shells can then be polished to form the gourd and the *maraca* (Hargreaves 1965). The shells can be trained into different shapes by tying them when green, hence explaining the *güira* shape and that of the *maraca* (Hargreaves 1965). This instrument is therefore as much Tainan as it is African. Julio Alberto Hernández argued that there is no documented history that the origins of the *güira* instrument are Tainan (Alberto Hernández 1969: 61).

What is agreed upon in the different theories is that, over time, the Dominican merengue clearly formed as a style that has maintained itself and has come to be a symbol of national identity. This style of merengue is called *perico ripiao* (ripped parrot), and is also known as *merengue típico*. It is characterized by its vibrant rhythm and its principal instruments: *güira*, *tambora* and accordion. This is the music that reigned over all other styles for the very reason that, while it was a fusion of sounds and instruments, its very style developed to incorporate and express the downfalls, happinesses, joys, satires, and all the circumstances of the independent nation and its people (Ureña 1987: 48). According to Enrique de Maerchena (1842) and Flérida de Nolasco (1939), Juan Bautista Alfonsesca (1810-1875) was the father of merengue, and it was only after 1844 that Dominican musicians began to form their own style within a context of independence. Before this, musicians said that what was mostly heard was the polka, *vals* (waltz) and minuet (Ureña 1987: 50). *Merengue típico* arose and was a product of history and everyday life. Alfonsesca was the first to begin to compose notated merengues and to establish a repertoire that had a national appeal (Ureña 1987: 50). Nevertheless, after Alfonsesca, there was said to be a lack of care in the composition of the music. This prevented merengue musicians from playing in the dance salons, and polkas continued to be played in the upper-middle class salons (Ureña 1987: 51). At the end of the nineteenth century, the merengue style of Alfonsesca's band had disappeared, but a new style of *merengue típico* (*güira*, accordion, and *tambora*) reappeared in the northwest border (*la línea noroeste*). The Cibao region is today known as the birthplace of merengue (*la cuna del merengue*). The music of *merengue típico* formed itself within a context of strong regionalism, as will be noted below.

The Search for Dominican Identity: the underlying arguments

The different theories regarding the origins of merengue reflect a conflict concerning “the nature of Dominicanness,” (Austerlitz 1997), but all have in common the idea that merengue, as a national music and symbol, expresses Dominican identity (Austerlitz 1997: 4). Each of these arguments points to what is believed to be the cultural essence of the Dominican people and experience, or as Manuel Brito Ureña states, the existential nature of the Dominican people which is embodied in the symbol of merengue music (Matos 1999; Ureña 1987). It is through this symbol that “. . . members of a society communicate their worldview, value orientations, ethos, and all the rest to one another, to future generations” (González 1991: 63). However we have seen that the different theories regarding the origins of merengue point to different views regarding who identifies with whom. Stuart Hall argues that this kind of discussion (in this case, regarding the origins of merengue and Dominican identity) is common in post-colonial societies and, while it expresses a ‘unity’ that needs to be rediscovered, it often hides the other differences.

According to Stuart Hall, there are two ways of looking at cultural identity. The first defines cultural identity as:

One, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people’, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. This ‘oneness’, underlying all other more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence of ‘Caribbeaness’. (Hall 1989: 69)

This understanding of a unified identity forms the underlying basis of many arguments regarding cultural origins and identities in post-colonial societies. In the Dominican Republic, we find this conception of cultural identity embedded in arguments about the origins of merengue, in which there are different theories that relate to the “nature of Dominicanness” (Austerlitz 1997). Where do Dominicans come from, and what does it mean to be Dominican? This kind of search for a unified cultural identity is the basis of arguments regarding merengue as a symbol of national identity in the Dominican Republic, and is an important vehicle through which worldviews are expressed. This understanding of a unified identity, however, posits cultural identity in an historical moment, one that is static and unchanging, one that already exists. The rediscovery of this identity constitutes a common search in post-colonial societies (Hall 1989: 69). While this search is an important aspect of cultural identity, Hall presents a second more integral understanding. This second understanding recognizes that while there are many similarities, there are also crucial points of difference in the constitution of cultural identities.

We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about ‘one experience, one identity’, without acknowledging its other side - the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean’s uniqueness’. Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. (Hall 1989: 70)

Hall argues that identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse (Hall 1996: 4). Merengue music as a symbol of national identity does not represent ‘one’ identity, and it is in the process of change that we find discontinuities and ambivalence in what is viewed as ‘the nature of Dominicanness’. As Grossberg and Hall argue, “. . . the so-called ‘unity’ of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary ‘belongingness’” (Grossberg and Hall 1986: 53 in Austerlitz 1997: 8). Merengue music continues to articulate these differences. In turn, these differences shape societal views. As Paul Austerlitz concludes: “Thus, syncretic, multivalent, and fluid, merengue has endured as a symbol of Dominican identity for its very success in articulating the contradictory forces at play in Dominican life” (Austerlitz 1997: 8).

Merengue began as a marginal musical style after the war of independence, and reflected class conflict during this time. In this sense, cultural forms such as music offer an understanding as to how symbols operate as active forces in the process of social transformation, how society and culture shape music, as well as how music creates social and cultural realities (González 1991: 63). The next section of the thesis will describe merengue’s marginal status at the beginning of its history.

Merengue and Marginality

After the independence of the Dominican Republic from Haiti (1844), merengue became a controversial music. Though merengue may have Spanish origins, it developed as a music with marked Afro-Caribbean rhythms. It was for this reason that the anti-Haitian elite denounced merengue as 'vulgar' and 'barbaric' (Manual 1995: 99; Austerlitz 1997). Such Eurocentric attitudes determined which music was accepted and which was not. While there were no recording industries during the mid-nineteenth century which enabled the diffusion of music throughout the country, there was, however, media coverage in the form of the newspaper. While the first merengue is said to be that composed during the battle of Talanquera, the first written mention of merengue can be found in the newspaper *El Oasis* of November 26, 1854 (Demorizi 1971: 111; Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988). Two opposing attitudes can be found in the paper at this time. Eugenio Perdomo, a poet who used the name Ingenuo, wrote in *El Oasis* about merengue and its innovative and elegant style of dancing, as well as about the enjoyment which he observed at a fiesta (Demorizi 1971: 112; Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988). Nearly two months later, on January 7, 1855, another commentary came out in the same newspaper by another poet by the name of Eliodoro, stating that Ingenuo's commentary was nonsense, and that it would be impossible to observe 'decent people' enjoying such a dance. He also stated that a person without education who has not frequented 'society' is excused from such behavior because he/she does not know any better, but that those who are part of 'society', that is, the upper classes, cannot be excused for dancing such a distasteful dance as the merengue (Demorizi 1971: 113; Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988).

A second critic on the same day wrote a response agreeing with this previous one; that the 'awful' merengue which is being danced in such an indecent manner must be stopped (Demorizi 1971: 113). These comments reflect the lack of acceptance of merengue as both music and dance. Merengue was such a popular form of music that it began to replace *la tumba* music, which was the preferred music of the upper class. On January 14, 1855, another complaint was printed, but this time in the form of a poem, called '*Queja de la tumba contra merengue*' (Complaint of the Tumba Against Merengue), by Manuel Jesús de Galván (Demorizi 1971: 114; Austerlitz 1997: 19). It is written, however, *tumba* was replaced by merengue in 1850 (Lizardo 1974: 218; Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988), while newspaper articles show that this conflict arose in 1855. The poem was a protest against the African heritage of merengue and fueled the pro-European attitudes that prevailed within the upper classes (Austerlitz 1995: 18). The first stanza of the poem demonstrates a strong resentment towards merengue, which continues throughout the poem:

*La Tumba que hoy vive desterrada
por el torpe merengue aborrecible;*

que en vil oscuridad yace olvidada

llorando su destino atroz, horrible;

*ya por fin, penetrada de furor
expresa de este modo su dolor*

The tumba exiled today
By the lewd and contemptible
merengue

Lies in odious obscurity,
forgotten

Wailing in horrible and
insufferable exile

Finally, penetrating with furor
Expresses in this way its pain.

(Translated in Austerlitz 1997:
18; Demorizi 1971: 114)

Other poems like this one followed in the month of January, 1855, all of which were against the popularity of merengue. Nevertheless, it continued to encroach on the territory of the *tumba* and, by 1874, merengue was played at every popular fiesta. It even incorporated the piano, sometimes replacing the accordion and the *cuatro* (Demorizi 1971: 124). There were still complaints during this time in the newspapers that musical bands were using the same merengues, only disguised with the piano and the adoption of the Spanish pasos dobles. It must be noted that this popularity was mostly in the Cibao region, including la Vega and Moca, where *merengue típico* was, and still is, widely known. It would only be later, during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, that this music would be further disseminated across the country. Merengue's history has been closely linked to a formation of cultural identity, a process by which the same people involved in creating this music in a uniquely Dominican style, irrespective of its origins, have contributed to the creation and fostering of a sense of community.

While it was at first denounced by the elite, merengue became extremely popular among the rural population, estimated to be 97% in 1880. The Cibao region, where merengue was most popular, would soon provide the ground for the development of political propaganda, propaganda in which merengue became an important tool (Austerlitz 1997: 24; Hernandez 1993).

Merengue and Politics

Since the beginning of its history, merengue has been associated with political and social change in the country. In the 1840's, Juan Bautista Alfonsesca was said to be the first to incorporate merengue in his marching band's repertory (Matos 1999: 1). General Pedro Santana was president during this period. This presidency led to financial instability and chaos, which laid the ground for conspiracies against the President on the part of the influential bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie did not include merengue in their lifestyle, as they preferred the waltz, polka and other European dances. It was in this context that merengue first established itself in Dominican society. Its position was, however, a marginal one associated with criticisms of it. Nevertheless, it was a position with a political significance important for the future.

The second most significant time when merengue was closely linked to social changes was during the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic (1916-24). During this time, the *merengue cibaeño* was becoming increasingly popular but was nevertheless still marginalized. U.S. soldiers would not accept merengue at any festivities. As a result, a different style of merengue arose in which the only difference was a slower tempo, because the U.S. soldiers could not dance to merengue's fast rhythm. Merengue was changed to resemble a one-step rhythm popular in North America at the time. This fusion took the name of *pambiche*, because it sounds like the pronunciation of the U.S. 'Palm Beach' (Ureña 1987: 59). While *merengue pambiche* was a popular dance, it was never played in ballroom salons until 1920, when the first merengues were played in the Club de Comercio, in Puerto Plata (Ureña 1987: 57). Nevertheless, while this fusion occurred to accommodate U.S. soldiers,

there were, on the other hand, musicians such as Níco Lora who composed merengues *against* the occupation. One way that Dominicans protested this occupation was through the *merengue cibaeño*, which, as it developed, manifested strong political resistance (Austerlitz 1997: 36; Hernandez 1993). For the first time, the upper classes, who previously frowned upon this music, developed a “program of diplomacy and propaganda against the occupation” (Austerlitz 1997: 31; Hernandez 1993). This would not be the first time that merengue would be used for political propaganda, and while these same classes had earlier stigmatized merengue as being ‘vulgar’, they now embraced the music as a national symbol for political purposes (Austerlitz 1997: 31). The growing distaste of all Dominicans for the U.S. Marines led them to define their group solidarity and identity through merengue, symbolizing their unity and protest. Austerlitz argues that this reflects the connection between imperialism and a rise in nationalism (Austerlitz 1997). The nationalist movement was most evident in the Cibao region, where merengue was played and heard more than in other regions of the country. This protest gave the illusion of unity across class lines: merengue was played and danced by both rich and poor at informal fiestas, *galleras* (cock fighting rings), bars and brothels, and its lyrics reflected daily life as well as political issues (Austerlitz 1997). One merengue by Níco Lora called ‘*La Protesta*’ (The Protest) (Ureña 1987: 59; Austerlitz 1997) demonstrates the Dominican resistance to occupation. The song begins:

*En el año diez y seis
Llegan los americanos
Pisoteando con sus botas,
El suelo dominicano*

The Americans came
In 1916,
Trampling Dominican soil
With their boots.
(Translated in Austerlitz 1997:
37)

A strong nationalistic movement was evident in the Cibao region, and merengue became a tool of protest against the occupation. Merengue was being accepted in ballroom salons by the early 1900s, but its style differed from that of *merengue típico*. Musicians who were accepted in ballrooms began to incorporate jazz styles to make the dance music more appealing to the elite classes (Austerlitz 1997). In 1928, Luis Alberti's band, called Jazz Band-Alberti, made its way into the ballrooms of Cibao, and was later to be chosen as the first band to be part of the political propaganda of Rafael Trujillo. While merengue was a tool of resistance for the people, it was also used as propaganda by political leaders. Julio Alberto Hernández, in a conversation with Paul Austerlitz, observes, "there were political leaders who said that politics is nothing more than merengue and rum, because they used to give peasants lots of rum so that they would vote for certain candidates" (Austerlitz 1997: 36). Such propaganda prevailed during the Trujillo dictatorship, which was the most influential period in the development of merengue.

The Trujillo Era

The dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina lasted from 1930-1961. Trujillo and his associates not only took control of the political and economic aspects of the country, but also of all forms of cultural expression (Hernandez 1995: 35; 1993; Austerlitz 1997; Matos 1999). Recognizing the importance of merengue in Dominican culture, he used the music to enhance his political power during his campaign in 1930 (Austerlitz 1997: 52; Hernandez 1993).

Trujillo's political career began at an early age. In 1919, during the U.S. occupation, he joined the U.S. National Guard and quickly rose to a high rank. Before the Americans left in 1924, they had successfully trained the Dominican military to be an efficient institution and an effective means of ensuring that U.S. interests were looked after. Ironically, what they had created was a strong political power; the Dominican National Guard. In 1928, Trujillo became chief of staff, and this created the conditions for his future dictatorship (Betances 1995: 83).

He eventually used this status, as well as ballot fixing, to become President in 1930 (Austerlitz 1997: 53; Betances 1995). His status as General helped him as he had already made alliances with his most trusted allies in the army, and he used this institution to eliminate all opposition. His violent approach was to mark the character of his regime, as well as his dishonesty in attaining power. The violence exerted in the preceding weeks before the elections ensured that 99% of the votes were in favor of Trujillo. He was sworn in on August 16, 1930 (De Galíndez 1973: 19).

Under the dictatorship, government control was exercised from the capital, Santo Domingo, then called Ciudad Trujillo. This centralized power enabled Trujillo to control provinces and local governments, and the growth of any industries that were not controlled by the dictator or his family. This control included that over cultural expression and all forms of media. The Dominican Republic became Trujillo's private enterprise. He personally became the owner or primary beneficiary of the most profitable industries in the country. He controlled the liquor and tobacco companies, salt, sugar, the food production industries, as well as the banks, newspapers, and lotteries. Trujillo wanted to become

autonomous from the United States. He paid off the debt in the 1940s, and began to boost the economy through ISI (Import Substitution Industrialization). ISI was an economic policy of industrial development in which previously imported goods were manufactured domestically (Handelman 1996: 265). The majority of the owners of such enterprises were his family members, while others were controlled by the petit bourgeoisie that preceded his rule. The U.S. dollar was replaced by the Dominican peso, and Trujillo was better able to monopolize the country's wealth as the country became more autonomous (De Galíndez 1973: 86).

Merengue: Trujillo's national identity

The Dominican national identity was fostered by Trujillo's anti-Haitian sentiment, both musically and politically. During the dictatorship, many Haitians lived on Dominican borders. In 1937, Trujillo's army began a massacre which decapitated, drowned, and tortured an estimated 12,000- 40,000 Haitian men, women, and children in the Dominican Republic (Austerlitz 1997: 65; Hernandez 1993; 1995). His control over Dominican national identity permeated all aspects of society; he felt that it was his patriarchal duty to exercise this kind of control. He believed that Dominican identity should be tied to Spanish identity. He made a speech in 1955 saying "I received in 1930 . . . a people with a weak sense of identity, with their territory still undefined, and today I offer to my fellow-citizens a country the demarcation of whose frontiers has been completed" (Trujillo speech in Austerlitz 1997: 65). Ironically, Trujillo's grandmother was of Haitian decent, and the contradiction of Trujillo's attitude towards the Haitians was manifested in the country's national symbol: merengue.

The *merengue cibaeño* incorporated African rhythms, yet was vigorously promoted by the dictator (Austerlitz 1997: 66). It was also, however, complimentary to his Hispanic ideology because the Cibao region was where the majority of the Spanish oligarchy settled, and *merengue típico* is from this region (Austerlitz 1997: 5).

The Trujillo dictatorship was the strongest factor in the development of merengue as a symbol of national identity (Hernandez 1995: 35; 1993). In fact, by a 1936 decree, the *merengue cibaeño* became the country's national music and dance (Manuel 1995: 102). Trujillo used this decree to manipulate the population. It was not, however, Trujillo's ingenious idea to use merengue in his political campaign. His personal informant, Rafael Vidal, was very familiar with the life of the country people (*campesinos*), whose musical tastes were already in favour of merengue (Matos 1999: 30). The roads built during the U.S. occupation allowed mobility for Trujillo's political campaign. As a result, *merengue típico* which was primarily based in the Cibao region, was easily disseminated across the country as Trujillo was accompanied by a band of *merengue típico* during all events. This enabled Trujillo to reach a population to whom he offered a nationalist vision. He did so by using a music that was still, apart from a few performances, excluded in most social clubs (Matos 1999: 30). Trujillo enjoyed music and was said to be a good dancer, qualities that were appealing to a population who incorporated *merengue típico* in their daily life (Matos 1999: 30). Trujillo supported many regional bands, and Luis Alberti's band was hired by Trujillo in 1936 to be his personal orchestra. The band relocated from the Cibao region and was renamed Orquesta Generalísimo Trujillo. It performed in upper class ballrooms in the capital (Austerlitz 1997: 54). Trujillo used merengue as propaganda not only to reach the

campesinos, but also the urban elite. In order to get the approval of the elite, he felt he had to 'refine' merengue by incorporating the saxophone and piano to replace the accordion (Austerlitz 1997: 42). The same elite had once embraced the merengue in a nationalist movement to oust the U.S. marines. After they left in 1924, the upper classes continued to stigmatize the music, until the era of Trujillo. When his orchestra played at upper class functions in the capital, the urban elite were shocked because merengue was not played in ballrooms outside the Cibao region before Trujillo, and it was still looked down upon. No one, however, would dare to disagree with the dictator's taste; Rafael Colón recalls: "No one was allowed to leave a dance at which the Orquesta Generalísimo Trujillo was playing until Trujillo himself left" (Colón in Hernandez 1995: 40). All the bands in the country were required to incorporate merengue into their repertoires during the dictatorship, and the *merengue cibaeño* was heard all over the country. Its lyrics, however, were highly controlled (Austerlitz 1997: 54). Merengue became a state symbol and it is said by composers that Trujillo ". . . not only appreciated the true value of folk music as a genuine expression of nationhood, but also, with laudable patronage, secured our creolism merengue as a popular symbol of authentic Dominican culture" (Hernandez 1995: 55). Among the musicians of this time that continue to be legends today Joséito Mateo and Luis Alberti. While Trujillo's love of merengue undeniably influenced its development as a symbol of national identity, he always had a political agenda, and this national identity was largely formed in the hands of and defined by Trujillo and his associates.

Trujillo founded and supported many regional bands. This gave them exposure at important social and political functions. However, the lyrics had to praise the dictatorship (Hernandez 1995: 42; 1993; Austerlitz 1997). Eventually, there developed a class distinction between styles of merengue. The orchestral style of merengue, such as that of Luis Alberti, became associated with the urban elite. Alberti's band played in the luxurious Jaragua Hotel in Santo Domingo. This increased their status among the urban elite. Rural merengue took the name of *perico ripiao*, and was known as *merengue típico*. Today's modern sounds of *merengue típico* include *güira*, *tambora*, accordion, bongos, and saxophone (Lizardo 1974: 216). This style continued to be played in local clubs and at parties among the rural population. Nevertheless, both styles served to promote and support the dictator. Any criticism of the regime resulted in serious consequences. One composer wrote a merengue called '*La Miseria*' (Misery), which related the hardships experienced during the dictatorship. He was later imprisoned (Hernandez 1995: 43). Songs were even composed by Trujillo's political party to be performed by the orchestras, which in doing so, were proving their loyalty to the dictator (Hernandez 1995: 43). Other composers 'voluntarily' wrote merengues praising the dictator. In 1960, the *Antología Musical de la Era de Trujillo* was published (Del Castillo and García Arévalo 1988: 31). It consisted of 300 merengues supporting and praising the dictator. One of the most popular of these was named '*San Cristóbal*', named after Trujillo's home town.

*¡Salve San Cristóbal,
Cuna de Trujillo!
Ese gran caudillo,
Jefe de nación.*

Hail San Cristóbal
The birthplace of Trujillo!
This great caudillo,
The leader of the nation.
(Translated in Austerlitz 1997:
61)

This praise and worship was found in numerous merengues, as well as in the press and on radio stations. Trujillo's name was used throughout the city. The capital, Ciudad Trujillo, and the province of Trujillo, were named after him. His name also appeared on postage stamps, streets, and city squares (De Galíndez 1973: 181). Needless to say, self censorship became a survival skill, and the use of fear through violence and the threat of violence was always present. This fear can be detected in the lack of any criticism by the media towards the dictator, as Galíndez indicates: "If, in any country, it is possible to criticize the government in the press and qualify as arbitrary its decisions, there is reason to believe the existence of freedom. But if, in any country, one reads and hears only praise of the ruler and never a criticism, there would be good grounds for suspecting tyranny" (De Galíndez 1973: 121). Never was this so apparent as in the lyrics of merengue during the Trujillo era: not for what they said but for what they did not say. It was not until after Trujillo's assassination that song lyrics made reference to his tyranny, reflecting an environment where self censorship was no longer a great concern.

Trujillo and the Music Industry

As a result of the dictatorship, the development of the music industry was stalled. While the dictator and his family had a love for merengue music, they did not see the opportunities for marketing that were available. Music was a pastime especially powerful for political propaganda.

There was strict control over what people heard on the radio, both from within the country and from radio stations abroad. Merengue musicians supported by Trujillo had more opportunity to promote their music. Yet this promotion was not for marketing purposes. Rather, it was for political purposes. However, merengue was becoming very popular in New York, where most of the musicians who managed to escape the dictatorship were settled (Austerlitz 1997). These musicians developed differently from those nationally, as they were part of a musical market which allowed this pastime to turn into an economically feasible career. National musicians, on the other hand, were not part of this market. They did not have the same flexibility under the regime, and the industry was strictly controlled. Trujillo's brother Petán owned radio stations, but for him it was a hobby. He did not have an economic motive which could have benefitted both himself and the musicians. Trujillo and his associates strictly controlled the media and the music industry. However, during the dictatorship, new broadcast and recording technologies were established and developed. Trujillo's control over radio stations determined what was heard, what was recorded, and what was bought (Inchaustegui 1997: 130; Hernandez 1995: 45; 1993).

Radio was the main means of transferring information to the population. Radio broadcasting began in the country during the U.S. occupation (1916-24) (Hernandez 1995: 45). Frank Hatton Guerrero was one of the first to engage in radio broadcasting and, later, had an important role to play in the secret recording of musicians during the Trujillo era (Inchaustegui 1997: 130; Hernandez 1995: 46; 1993). He began his own station (Radio HIH) during the U.S. occupation. From this station he broadcast Spanish versions of sports events from U.S. radio. After the U.S. marines left he renamed his station HIZ in 1927, and it became the first commercial radio station in the country (Inchaustegui 1997: 130; Hernandez 1995: 46; 1993). By 1930, there were at least three radio stations in the country which Trujillo allowed to continue operating (Hernandez 1995: 46). In 1935 Trujillo established his own station, La Voz del Partido Dominicano. This was used for the political propaganda of his own party. However, it also broadcast sports, music, and comedy programs. This put the station in competition with the others (Hernandez 1995: 46; 1993). Nevertheless, all forms of media soon came under Trujillo's control.

A decree required radio broadcasters to keep records of their programs for a year so that they could be reviewed for any subversive material. Censorship during the Trujillo era was rampant, which inevitably stunted creativity in cultural and musical development (Hernandez 1995: 46; 1993). Self censorship (*autocensura*) was almost a natural response for Dominicans during this time (Hernandez 1995: 46; 1993; Inchaustegui 1997; Galíndez 1973). Fear was instilled through violence and the threat of violence. The rights and freedoms of people were strictly restricted, and an espionage system was widespread. As a result, this system did not allow people any freedom to express their opinions. In such

circumstances, silence can be interpreted as an awareness of these restrictions. Self censorship became second nature. The violence of Trujillo's regime could be manifested in both a direct and indirect manner. The fear which permeates a society is not always visible, as Green explains: "The routinization of terror is what fuels its power. Routinization allows people to live in a chronic state of fear with a facade of normalcy at the same time that terror permeates and shreds the social fabric" (Green 1995: 108). It is under these circumstances that we can understand how a dictatorship can last so long. This control over self expression was visible in merengue music, not only in the songs of praise to the dictator, but also in how music was used, produced, and disseminated through radio.

Trujillo's brother Petán, also a lover of merengue, established his own radio station, La Voz Del Yuna, which was situated in Bonao. He later moved to Santo Domingo and renamed it La Voz Dominicana. This became the most important radio station, broadcasting twelve hours of live performances by musicians of both orchestra merengue and *merengue típico* (rural merengue from the Cibao region) (Hernandez 1995: 47). This broadcasting allowed merengue to be disseminated throughout the country (Austerlitz 1997: 171). Petán, as an owner, was said to have been one who respected musicians and paid them well. For him, however, this was a hobby, while the musicians would have liked to record and promote their music. He believed that musicians were only supposed to record if they were incapable of performing (Hernandez 1995: 47; 1993). Recording began when Frank Hatton brought the first Fairchild recording equipment and installed it in his radio station HIZ (Inchaustegui 1997: 130; Hernandez 1995: 49; 1993). Petán also brought another Fairchild to the country to record the musicians he had at his radio station. Trujillo ensured that his brother's new

recording company, Caracol, would not have any competition. To ensure this, he forbade the importation of foreign recordings, and monitored national ones (Hernandez 1995: 49). Nevertheless, the recordings that were made by Petán were few and of poor quality. Petán's company suffered. Trujillo once again allowed importation of foreign records. By the 1940s, there was little record production (at the time 78 rpm) in the Dominican Republic (Hernandez 1995: 49; Inchaustegui 1997). Later, in the 1950s, Frank Hutton imported an Ampex recording system that recorded onto magnetic tape and enabled the duplication of copies. As a result, the production and distribution of music became more feasible (Inchaustegui 1997: 131; Hernandez 1995). Small enterprises began to emerge. While a recording industry began, it did not flourish. Everyone involved was aware of Petán's involvement in the music industry, and no one wanted to stand out as competition to the dictator's brother (Hernandez 1995: 50). Many Dominicans left the country to record in New York, and others left in exile (Inchaustegui 1997; Hernandez 1995; Austerlitz 1997).

Francisco Amaro was one of the first who began recording and selling Dominican musicians, some of whom were from Petán's *La Voz Dominicana*. These musicians recorded with a high risk of being caught. When Amaro was caught by Petán for recording Petán's personal musicians, Amaro convinced Petán of the commercial possibilities, since the recordings sold well (Hernandez 1995: 51; 1993; Austerlitz 1997). The recording business made its debut, and while musicians were afraid of recording without the permission of the Trujillos, some did it anyway and did well. One reason that this could have gone on was that the Trujillos were interested in music as a hobby, and for political propaganda and fiestas. However, having been found out by Petán, Amaro paid him a share

of the revenues from the recordings.

In 1959, the first record manufacturing factory, *Fábrica Dominicana de Discos*, began pressing 45 RPM's (Inchaustegui 1997: 130; Hernandez 1995: 53). The founder, Pedro Pablo Bonilla, was approached by the Trujillos to go into business with them, and the factory soon came under their control. Shortly after the company was established the importation of foreign records was again forbidden in order to avoid any competition (Hernandez 1995: 53; 1993; Austerlitz 1997). There are only two incidences of complete recordings, that is, a record full of merengues, during the Trujillo era. These recordings contained merengues that did not have lyrics praising the dictator. The local record business was stifled, and it was not until the 1960s that the music industry would flourish (Inchaustegui 1997: 131).

By the 1950s, the detrimental consequences of the dictatorship were becoming known. Those who had migrated or were in exile in New York began to protest against human rights abuses in the Dominican Republic. The national economy also suffered because Trujillo and his associates were monopolizing all the money. This caused the U.S. to rethink their support for Trujillo. Eventually, the CIA sided with clandestine groups in the Dominican Republic in a plot to kill the dictator when he was on his way home to San Cristobal (Hernandez 1995: 61; Austerlitz 1997; Galíndez 1973). Trujillo's death marked a turning point in Dominican society. Although he used merengue as a means of spreading political propaganda, its status as a national music did not change (Austerlitz 1997: 77; Matos 1999; Hernandez 1993). After his death, it was to be redefined as a national symbol, one that would again be a vehicle to express historical conflict, as well as present political, economic, and social changes.

The Post-Trujillo Era

The year 1961 was one of celebration in the Dominican Republic. The capital, named Ciudad Trujillo during the dictatorship, took back its original name of Santo Domingo. Merengue now became a means of expressing a new freedom felt throughout the whole country. Many merengues were performed denouncing Trujillo, a form of freedom that had not been possible for thirty-one years. One musician, Antonio Morel, performed a merengue called '*Mataron Al Chivo*' (They Killed the Goat):

*Mataron al chivo
en la carretera
dejénmelo ver,
dejénmelo ver.*

They Killed the goat
On the highway
Let me see him,
Let me see him!

*Mataron al chivo
y no me lo dejaron ver*

They killed the goat
But they didn't let me see him.
(Translated in Austerlitz 1997: 83; Del
Castillo and Garcia Arévalo 1988: 87)

This anti-Trujillo sentiment was so strong that, in 1962, merengues which praised the dictator were prohibited (Austerlitz 1997: 83).

Between 1961 and 1965 there was increasing political unrest within the country. The government continued to be run by Trujillo's associates until 1963. Liberals, such as workers' unions, and the petit-bourgeoisie who worked the land and whose crops were neglected for export purposes, supported Juan Bosch, a liberal leader of the PRD (*Partido Revolucionario Dominicano*) for President. Bosch was sworn in on February 27, 1963. He began a series of reforms such as guaranteed civil liberties and redistribution of land to those

who lost it to Trujillo (Hernandez 1995: 72; 1993; Austerlitz 1997; Inchaustegui 1995). This action was considered by the military to be too radical. On September 25, the military staged a *coup d'état* and Bosch was exiled to Puerto Rico. A triumvirate took control of the government. On April 24, 1965, the armed forces ousted the government, and political instability continued (Austerlitz 1997: 88). The military became divided between pro-Bosch (Constitutionalists) and anti-Bosch (Loyalists) officers. A civil war broke out. The U.S. troops invaded the country to restore stability. This intervention was caused by the fear that Juan Bosch, back from exile, would gain power (Austerlitz 1997: 88). For fear of the government becoming communist, the United States supported Joaquín Balaguer; Trujillo's puppet president and Secretary of state in 1956. Balaguer resumed the Presidency in 1966 (Wiarda 1992: 44). The country was under military rule until Balaguer became President. He, unlike Trujillo, did not want to control the country as a private enterprise, and he opened its doors to foreign relations and investments, primarily with the United States. Balaguer wanted to 'modernize' the country, which, at the time, meant to industrialize it by means of foreign investments on the part of international corporations (Hernandez 1991: 107). New economic opportunities were available to the upper and middle classes. Balaguer's policies were in favor of the economic elite, and of the interests of the United States. When he first entered power, his priority was to establish social control. He used the advantage of a strong military to exercise this control, in much the same way that Trujillo had: by getting rid of the opposition through force. The United States turned a blind eye to this as Balaguer opened the doors for them to resume their ties with the country that Trujillo had cut off. This allowed them to extract resources at a cheap price. The transition to democracy was not a

smooth one. Balaguer inherited a weak social structure, characteristic of authoritarian rule, and these characteristics continued throughout the transition (Wiarda 1992: 95). The new democracy under Balaguer was characterized as a bonapartist regime. According to Betances, such a regime is “. . . the personalization and concentration of power in the executive of state. It is associated with the predominance of the executive power over the legislative bodies and alludes to the independence of state power from social classes and civil society” (Betances 1995: 113).

Merengue continued as a symbol of national identity, and nearly a century later, expressed the same conflicts of race and Dominican identity that surrounded its origins. This political and economic shift brought with it the possibility of openly expressing opinions. Merengue was a vehicle through which these tensions were expressed. Balaguer, like Trujillo, continued the same anti-Haitian sentiment, and he referred to Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent as ‘inferior’ (Austerlitz 1997: 108). This conflict continues in the Dominican Republic. Ironically, merengue, having Afro Caribbean rhythms, continued as a symbol of national identity, one that fueled both racial tensions while simultaneously expressing political and economic ‘freedom’. Simultaneously with the modernization of merengue, Dominican musicians were influenced by the *nueva canción* movement. This movement originated in Chile during the Presidency of Salvador Allende (1970-1973). Musicians in Cuba also adopted this movement and created songs of political consciousness. The songs were known as protest music (*música de protesta*) and dealt with themes of current social problems (Hernandez 1995: 120). In the Dominican Republic, this movement manifested itself in different ways. The group Convite was the most noted of this

time, challenging mainstream views regarding merengue and national identity. Convite consisted of a group of urban intellectuals and artists who held radical political and social ideas, and challenged issues of Dominican identity through music. They challenged views that denied an African influence on merengue music. They also argued that the merengue that was being created in the mainstream was being 'denatured' by the capitalist music industry. Convite's spokesperson, Dagoberto Tejada Ortiz, argued: "The musical folkloric expressions of the people have been both disfigured and undervalued, and have been substituted with commercial, alienated songs" (in Salazar Diaz 1978: 23 in Austerlitz 1997: 109; Hernandez 1995). The *nueva canción* was a movement in which musicians sang protest songs which allied them with Cuban musicians. These musicians challenged Balaguer's anti-Haitian views and began to advocate the African origins of merengue and challenge Eurocentric attitudes (Austerlitz 1997: 110). Musicians that emerged after the passing of the Dominican *nueva canción* movement continued to address these same issues regarding racial tensions as expressed in merengue. Juan Luis Guerra argued that: "Unequivocally, you can't take merengue out of Africa" (Guerra in Austerlitz 1997: 111).

While merengue continued to express fragmented views about Dominican identity, it also symbolized growing modernity and certain freedoms of expression in the new democracy. Economic opportunities in the musical marketplace began to open up as upscale recording equipment was being imported and made more readily available (Hernandez 1991: 108).

For the first time, merengue was being marketed as never before. Johnny Ventura was the most dynamic merengue musician of this time. His music was characterized as lively and happy, reflecting the new freedom. Ventura's presence in the merengue scene characterized the new direction that merengue music would take within the new social order. His music was symptomatic of a new style of merengue, that of the combo show, which was different from the orchestras during the dictatorship. The orchestras quickly became uninteresting as they were representative of the Trujillo era. However, Ventura's music was innovative and new (Matos 1999: 61). Like Luis Alberti, who in 1936 created a new history for merengue with his national hit '*Compadre Pedro Juan*', Ventura was a musical hero of his time, embodying in his music the transitions of Dominican society from a dictatorship to a democracy (Matos 1999). Legendary figures such as Ventura and Wilfredo Vargas have characterized the transition of merengue music from its use as political propaganda to a music that began to be more immersed in the economic possibilities of the cultural marketplace. Technology enabled the incorporation of new sounds and rhythms (Matos 1999). Merengue in the last few decades has been influenced and marked by these technological changes. The Balaguer years, however, cannot be described as times of complete political and economic freedom, as the transition from dictatorship to democracy was not smooth. The year before Balaguer became president, Ventura and his band sang to the military to promote patriotism. The greatest changes in merengue during this time were apparent in lyrical and stylistic changes resulting from new technology and the dissemination of foreign music through Dominican radio stations. Merengues with double sexual meanings began to resurface during this time. Such merengues were suppressed under Trujillo, in

order to retain approval from the elite (Austerlitz 1997: 85; Matos 1999). Women merengue musicians also began to surface in the mid 1970s. Previously, there were no women merengue bands, not because they were not talented but because the industry did not view women bands as promising, and the recording studios, promotion managers and distributors of music were primarily male (Matos 1999). If women were involved in the bands it was for singing background vocals. The first woman to make an impact in orchestra merengue was Milly Quezada, known today as the queen of merengue (*la reina del merengue*). After her came all women groups such as Las Chicas del Can and Merriam Cruz. In *merengue típico* legendary women figures are Fefita la Grande (*la mayimba del típico*) and Maria Díaz. These women have been successful in the music industry and have opened doors for others. Recording women is no longer seen as something that is not profitable.

Simultaneously with the social changes of the 1960s and 1970s a different style of music arose: bachata. As will be established in the next chapter, this music expressed a different social reality as a consequence of these same social changes. Foreign music such as *salsa* and rock also began to appear on the musical scene, and this meant competition in the marketplace. Merengue groups such as Johnny Ventura y su Combo incorporated stylistic elements from rock and roll and the twist. This group became the most popular band of the 1960s (Austerlitz 1997: 86; Matos 1999). Johnny Ventura stated in an interview with Joseph Cáceres (1999) that, without the influence of the twist and rock and roll merengue during the 1960s and 1970s would have not sounded as it did. Fusions of rhythms began to appear. Merengue boomed in the country as well as in Dominican communities abroad. Thematic changes began to reflect diasporic activity. Juan Luis Guerra's lyrics addressed

national social issues at the core of Dominican life in the late twentieth-century (Austerlitz 1997: 107). His song '*Visa Para Un Sueño*' expresses the desire of a majority of Dominicans to leave the country and move to New York:

<i>Eran las cinco en la mañana</i>	It was five o'clock in the morning
<i>Un seminarista, un obrero</i>	A seminarian, a laborer,
<i>Con mil papeles de solvencia</i>	With a thousand documents proving economic solvency
<i>Que no les dan pa' ser sinceros</i>	Which do not allow them to be honest.
<i>Eran las siete en la mañana.</i>	It was seven o'clock in the morning.
<i>Uno por uno en el matadero</i>	L i n e d u p a t t h e slaughterhouse,
<i>Pues cada uno tiene su precio,</i>	Everyone has a price,
<i>Buscando visa para un sueño.</i>	Seeking a visa for a dream.
(Juan Luis Guerra, 4:40)	(Translated in Austerlitz 1997: 131)

Dominicans formed communities in New York City, and, as a result, merengue became very popular outside the country. This made adaptation for migrants easier (Austerlitz 1997: 128; Matos 1999). Communication between migrant communities and those within the country demonstrated that merengue as a marker of Dominican national identity was no longer bound to geographical areas. Music became a common thread between these communities. Merengue was also used to promote Dominican products such as Barceló rum. José Rivera, the campaign manager of the rum company, claimed to promote national identity at the same time. Rivera stated: "Selling this also transmits culture, *our* culture, our own culture, our identity as a nation" (Rivera in Austerlitz 1997: 102). Merengue, a national symbol of identity which was used firstly for political propaganda, was

now also being used to sell products. The way in which musical styles and technology have crossed Dominican borders since the post-Trujillo era has resulted in musicians borrowing elements from other styles and also creating new styles. Fusions emerged. As an example, Dominicans migrating to New York took merengue with them as a prime marker of Dominican identity. The different styles that arose reflected an emerging diasporic social identity which was both part of and removed from the country of origin. It was under these circumstances that merengue music incorporated sounds of rap and dance music, as well as using technology such as the synthesizer to replace, add, and to enhance the sounds of instruments such as the saxophone.

The growing cultural industry, diasporic activity, and consequently the incorporation of foreign rhythms led to new meanings in relation to merengue music and Dominican identity. The mass production of this music linked local Dominican communities to those in the diaspora. As George Lipsitz observes, shared cultural space no longer depends on shared geographical place (Lipsitz 1994: 6). Lipsitz argues:

Music being part of a cultural industry enables local sounds to be recorded and distributed and consumed in various parts of the world, breaking down geographical barriers enabling us to be in contact with the sounds of cultures that are far away and learn how different people from different places create culture in different ways. (Lipsitz 1994: 4)

Popular music in the Dominican Republic is the most important aspect of expressive culture; one which highlights social changes and provides a space in which views can be articulated. Lipsitz further argues that while these musical sounds are exchanged in packaged cassettes and CD's around the world, they reinforce attachment to place because, he argues, they,

never completely lose the concerns and cultural qualities that give them determinate shape in their places of origin . . . These transactions transform—but do not erase—attachments to place . . . As transnational corporations create integrated global markets and the nation state recedes as a source of identity and identification, popular culture becomes an ever more important public sphere. (Lipsitz 1994: 4-5)

Popular music, in all its encompassing meanings, reflects and contributes to the processes of globalization and cultural fluidity through its expressive character. Local and national identities form and evolve under different sets of conditions, constantly being redefined in relation to changing aspects of society. Popular music highlights these changes through thematic changes, as well as arguments concerning its significance. The music industry plays a significant role in these processes.

Technological Changes since the Post-Trujillo Era

Technological changes have marked the way that music is made, heard, and experienced. Technological advances such as the synthesizer have enabled the sounds of merengue to be more easily reproduced, while adding new ones. In the 1960s, Johnny Ventura was the first to replace the *tambora* drum with metallic ones (Matos 1999: 136). In the 1980s, musical arranger Manuel Tejada began to record merengue musicians with a variety of synthesizers capable of reproducing and adding the sounds of different instruments (Matos 1999: 137). Manuel Tejada began to introduce elements of rock and jazz (Matos 1999: 134). Furthermore, recording systems and the appearance of the CD facilitated the easy reproduction and distribution of music across borders (Matos 1999: 137). The household use of radios and stereo systems has enabled dissemination across the country not

only of merengue and bachata music, but other musical styles such as *salsa*, Spanish rock music, and U.S. music. The mass production of cassettes and later CDs was an important breakthrough for the careers of musicians. Ironically, however, by the 1980s, night life suffered in the places where most of the orchestras played, because most people were staying at home to listen to the music from their sound systems or from the radio (Matos 1999: 136). The orchestras were also charging amounts that a large majority of the population could not afford. Sound systems became a household item in the Dominican Republic. Recording equipment has thus allowed sounds to be reproduced in mass form, enabling the dissemination of music both nationally and internationally. There are currently over two hundred radio stations in the country (Lamarche 1997: 106). Nevertheless, while these forms of dissemination have influenced how the music is experienced, performances of local and national musicians are still widespread within the country.

The 1980s were characterized by the electronic revolution of merengue, making it one of the most attractive exports from the Dominican Republic (Matos 1999: 133). The Dominican music industry attempted to target the Puerto Rican market (Matos 1999: 181). Initially Puerto Rico did not take to the rhythm because they had as part of their culture different music such as the *jibara*, *plena*, *bolero*, and *salsa* (Matos 1999: 181). However, with all the dissemination and marketing of merengue in Puerto Rico, it eventually came to be a part of daily musical life (Matos 1999: 186). As a result, many Puerto Ricans began to play and record merengue. It is argued that they are surpassing Dominican merengue musicians in popularity in the music business. Technology has enabled merengue to be reproduced by musicians outside the Dominican cultural community, provoking an

introspective discussion about merengue and Dominican identity among Dominican merengue musicians.

The discussion presented in the next section highlights emergent patterns of negotiation regarding a social and national identity in relation to musical styles changing alongside political, social, economic and demographic developments.

Whose music?: Musicians defining merengue

Dominican musicians, such as Johnny Ventura and Sergio Vargas, are expressing concerns about the lyrical and stylistic content of today's merengue. They argue that merengues lyrics are not expressing anything important, and the resurgence of merengues with double sexual meaning have been indicative of a deteriorating style. They argue that if musicians do not take more care of the style then they will lose merengue. Johnny Ventura has been most vocal about this concern. He argues that Dominicans are losing their merengue because they are not careful in protecting its style and lyrics. Merengues, such as those of Juan Luis Guerra, were valued because they expressed changes in everyday Dominican life: immigration, drug addiction, prostitution, and class differences (Inchaustegui 1995: 247).

In an interview with Joseph Cáceres, Ventura argues that merengue musicians today are depersonalizing merengue in that they are producing music that is far removed from the cultural expressions of the Dominican people, that is, expressions of issues in everyday life (Ventura with Cáceres, *Ovación* 1999: 8). Ventura states that in order to maintain a musical style, there needs to be more national figures with which the Dominican people can identify

themselves. The lack of musicians creating a music that has cultural importance for the Dominican people has caused a great decline in merengue music. Ventura further argues that, because of this lack of care among Dominican merengue musicians, Puerto Rican musicians are gaining headway in the industry. As a result, he argues that today there is a separation between 'Dominican merengue' and 'Puerto Rican merengue.' The latter, he argues, is surpassing the former in popularity both nationally and internationally (Ventura with Cáceres, *Ovación* 1999: 9). Ventura argues that the promoters and the musicians themselves are not targeting the Dominican people, but rather audiences and markets outside the Dominican Republic. For example, there are fewer orchestra merengue fiestas within the country because they are all played in places that are not within the economic means of most of the public, but rather those of the upper middle classes. Discotheques such as Jet Set in Santo Domingo exclude a majority of the population because of the entrance fee and the cost of drinks. There has been less publicity through radio since a large part of the production, distribution and promotion of merengue occurs in New York. It is argued that in Puerto Rico musicians have better resources to promote their music, and therefore gain more exposure. Carlos Batista Matos argues, however, that the distinction between Dominican and Puerto Rican merengue cannot really be made. Many Dominicans have migrated to Puerto Rico and have established there a certain way of playing merengue from which the Puerto Rican musicians have learned. He further argues that neither the musical culture nor the technology in Puerto Rico contribute to the recordings that the public hears (Matos 1999: 192). Puerto Rican musicians record with Dominican ones and the recording process takes place in Santo Domingo, or with a staff of Dominican musical arrangers. He argues that this interaction

among musicians explains the structural and melodic uniformity heard in the orchestra merengue from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico (Matos 1999: 192). He does state, however, that if Dominicans continue to establish this cultural symbol in Puerto Rico, the musicians will eventually take it as part of their national identity, if not by creation then by appropriation (Matos 1999: 192). Matos, while saying that it is not fair to accuse the Puerto Rican musicians of appropriating merengue since it was the Dominicans who attempted to seduce the Puerto Rican public in a marketing strategy, also says that there is a threat that Dominicans will lose their merengue. Other musicians such as Sergio Vargas and Los Toros band have followed Ventura's lead. They have successfully attempted to bring back merengue's popularity by reinterpreting songs of the past, as well as incorporating *merengue típico* and bachata into their repertoires. Los Toros Band produced '*Raices*' (Roots), in order to reach the Dominican public. Sergio Vargas created a musical play called '*Habia una vez un merengue*' (There Was Once a Merengue) in which he and other musicians re-enacted the history of merengue with the same didactic message as that of Johnny Ventura (Diaz 1999; Gómez 1999).

This is not the first time that this kind of discussion has arisen regarding thematic and stylistic changes in merengue music. Luis Alberti wrote in 1975 that there was a need for musicians to pay more attention to maintaining the style of folklore and popular music (Alberti 1975: 92). Alberti uses these terms simultaneously to describe merengue's different styles today. He states that if there is not more care put into the preservation of folklore and popular national rhythms then they may soon be extinct, and generations to follow will not have any other knowledge of them except through recordings (Alberti 1975: 91). The

evolution of a style, however, is inevitable, and with this evolution there is change. At the same time, Alberti states that he is not trying to ‘fossilize’ merengue, and is for its evolution and changes within modernization. He argues, however, that he is against losing the actual structure of merengue: the rhythmic and melodic personality that define it (Alberti 1975: 78).

Interestingly, the orchestra style merengue, as Matos explained, has become uniform in its structure. While Dominicans may know the difference between their artists and those that are non-Dominicans, this distinction is not always obvious within the cultural industry more generally. As a result of this competition and stylistic uniformity, the modern *merengue típico* is being promoted more nationally and internationally to represent the Dominican Republic because it is a style that symbolizes the origins of the Dominican Republic. I spoke with a radio broadcaster in Puerto Plata who explained, “It’s a long story to speak about merengue. There is no foreign merengue; there is only one merengue. There is no Puerto Rican merengue; neither Columbian or Mexican. Simply, merengue is Dominican, because it is here that we make the *güira* and the *tambora*” (Interview at Radio Isabel de la Torre, Puerto Plata, 1999).

The merengue referred to in the above statement is the modern *merengue típico*, a style that is making a strong presence in the music industry and that, alongside bachata, has encroached on the territory of orchestra merengue. Modern *merengue típico* is viewed as the folklore of the Dominican Republic: a musical style that symbolizes the history of the Dominican Republic. While this style was always popular, it is now getting more attention in the music industry. One reason is attributed to the appropriation of merengue by non-Dominicans. Another reason is that with the ease of travel and a rise in tourism, it has

become a product to sell to tourists. It is also a musical style that a majority of Dominicans continue to enjoy, including those in communities outside the country. Modern *merengue típico* is still very popular, especially in the Cibao region. The live performances that I attended in Puerto Plata were of *merengue típico* and bachata. By observing and participating in these fiestas, I noticed that when people dance and listen to *merengue típico*, there is a different energy and enjoyment than when the orchestra merengue plays. Many orchestra bands are including in their repertoires sounds of modern *merengue típico*. While this music has always been popular in the Cibao region, it was in competition with the orchestra merengue for many years. Orchestra merengue is declining in popularity while modern *merengue típico* is making a comeback in the cultural industry. Orchestra merengue bands are incorporating this style alongside bachata because of competition in the cultural industries.

The presence of modern *merengue típico* in the cultural industries evidences a negotiation of Dominican national identity in times of social and economic change during the growth of the music industry. John Lovering (1998), in discussing the political economy of music, argues that:

. . . the production, consumption, and marketing of particular kinds of music in particular places clearly influences the development of musical tastes and subsequent musical activity . . . This process is often accompanied by a reinvention of the past . . . Folk is really only a modern label for a modern kind of music . . . the “traditional” or “ethnic” identity of such musics . . . is an aspect of current musical culture and marketing rather than of history. (Lovering 1998: 33)

Modern *merengue típico*, then, while clearly influenced by the direction of the music industry, simultaneously highlights the grey area between the ‘folk’ and the ‘popular’; the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’. It is a style that highlights a point of transition, or reconciliation, between a cultural expression that can be claimed as Dominican, while simultaneously changing alongside the technological and economic aspects that accompany the construction and production of this cultural expression. It highlights issues of national identity in times of modernization and competition among musical styles. Stuart Hall argues that identities are:

. . . never unified and, in later modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation . . . Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves . . . They relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself, which they oblige us to read not as an endless reiteration but as ‘the changing same’. . . not the so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms-with our ‘routes’. (Hall 1996: 4)

As Hall states, identities are subject to radical historicization, and *merengue típico* is the musical style that most closely narrates the trajectory of the Dominican Republic and its relation to national identity. Simultaneously, it is a musical style that is used to promote Dominican national identity in the music industry and to tourists and visitors to the country. As Deborah Pacini Hernandez observes: “[T]he spread of ‘international’ music’ paradoxically often encourages ‘deeper’ exploration of national musics’: when music travels

across cultures, artists and audiences notice peculiarities of place that would otherwise remain hidden from them without opportunity for comparison” (Hernandez in Lipsitz 1994: 18).

Modern *merengue típico*, and the presence of legendary figures such as Fefita La Grande and Francisco Ulloa, represent the Dominican Republic in comparison to other musical styles such as *salsa*. It is not uncommon to hear Dominicans say that merengue is in their blood. Some even say that they started dancing merengue in the womb. One informant explained the changes described above in this way:

. . . *merengue típico*, which is *güira*, *tambora*, and accordion, is being promoted more because it was being lost in the popular merengue. The identity of the country was being lost. But there have been orchestras now who have begun to record *merengue típico*, which is the real merengue, and it has regained its level/ status. After Juan Luis Guerra started to play merengue with accordion came Los Toros Band, and that’s why the rhythms have been coming back . . .

I then asked why Dominican identity was being lost.

The classic merengue, the combo, has been dispersed in New York; many bands are Puerto Rican, and it is the Puerto Ricans who are selling most recordings in merengue, such as Elvis Crespo and Manny Manuel. So here, it is not so much that it is declining rather that the lyrics are changing in merengue, and they have had to compete with what is the real merengue . . . It is rare that you will see a Puerto Rican play *merengue típico* . . . Wherever you go at an international event, the merengue that you will hear will be *merengue típico*, and in the commercials that promote tourism. That’s why you find that most of the tourists like *merengue típico*, because that is what is sold to them and that is what we have . . .

Modernity has sophisticated merengue too much. Before the orchestra merengue always existed, but it was more pure, more contagious. But now with all the new sounds and instruments, anyone can play. It is getting more and more lost because other countries are taking it. But the *típico* they can’t take . . . I think that the Dominican pueblo has come back to see what merengue really is, maybe for many different reasons. International

commercials for Sammy Sosa have as a foundation *merengue típico*, with accordion . . . What is sold to tourists is *merengue típico*; in hotels and in the airports, groups welcome tourists with *merengue típico*. It is representative of the folklore . . . An organized merengue, like the orchestra merengue, is one that is written; you simply have to read the musical notes. On the other hand, *merengue típico* is a merengue of the blood, played by ear, and it is a rhythm that is only played here. This is why I tell you that it is very difficult that you will see anyone else play this. Wherever you see merengue with accordion, you can be sure they are Dominican. It's because we are born with this, and this is from years in our past; this is from the time of when there was war . . . Triumphs were celebrated with *merengue típico* . . .

I then asked, 'do you think that any other music could replace merengue as a national music'?

No, never. What would maybe replace it is the same merengue, but only a little more modern, but accordion music will never fall here, this comes from many years ago . . . Music is something that everyone has in common, it's like seeing a Cuban with the *son*, we grow up with merengue . . .
(Interview with Cirilo Ulloa, Puerto Plata, 1999)

Merengue music continues to symbolize, on the one hand, Dominican identity as identified in the *güira*, accordion and *tambora*. On the other hand, it highlights the tension between the 'traditional' and the 'modern', and social and economic changes as the modern *merengue típico* is being more promoted in the cultural industries and to tourists. Merengue continues to be an important symbol through which opinions and worldviews are articulated. In this way, musical culture remains an important vehicle in articulating concerns regarding social changes.

Current competition in the marketplace came about as a result of a drastic political and economic change in the post-Trujillo era which influenced the growth of the music industry in the Dominican Republic. While this competition encouraged the emergence of modern *merengue típico* in the mainstream and musical arguments surrounding merengue as a symbol of national identity, these same changes influenced the creation of another style of music: bachata. Comparisons between musical styles not only occur in relation to other styles in other areas, but also among those that emerge within the same area. This comparison can provide a better understanding of changes in Dominican society. Merengue's development in the post Trujillo era together with its present status cannot be understood independently of its relation to bachata music, and *vice versa*.

During the post-Trujillo era, there began a mass rural-urban migration. Those who were without land in the countryside because of Trujillo's regime migrated to the cities, especially Santo Domingo, in search of better economic opportunities. It was in this context that another music arose that expressed another reality of the Dominican Republic. This music was bachata. The following chapter will outline the social history of bachata and its significance in the Dominican Republic.

Chapter Two

BACHATA

The Origins of Bachata

The music that is now called bachata has been influenced by a long tradition of guitar music in Latin America; the Mexican *ranchera*, Cuban *son* and *bolero*, Puerto Rican *jibaro* music and Columbian-Ecuadorian style *vals* (Inchaustegui 1995; Hernandez 1991; 1995). This guitar tradition consisted of trios or quartets which incorporated guitars and percussion instruments such as *maracas*, bongo drums, the *güira*, and *claves* (Hernandez 1995: 5). In the Dominican Republic, spoons were also used as percussion instruments to accompany the guitar ensembles. The early style of bachata that emerged in the 1960s was characterized as romantic guitar music and the most notable influence on this style was the Cuban *bolero*.

The Cuban *bolero* made its entrance into the Dominican Republic in the nineteenth century with the migration of Cubans fleeing the Wars of Independence between 1895 and 1898 (Hernandez 1995: 5; Manuel 1995). The Cuban migrants settled mostly in the Cibao region (Hernandez 1995: 5). They brought with them musical styles such as the *son* and the *bolero*, which have influenced the development of the Dominican *bolero* and later bachata. Interestingly, the region of the Cibao seems to be the region where *merengue típico* and *bolero*, later bachata, developed. It is no mistake that today the Cibao region is considered not only the birthplace of merengue, but also of bachata (*la cuna del merengue y la bachata*).

Eventually, Dominican musicians developed their own style of bolero music. Musicians composed their own songs and incorporated lyrics appropriate to Dominican life. Most of the musicians were of rural origins and played by ear, often improvising as they played (Hernandez 1995: 6). Interestingly, this improvisation is still a characteristic of bachata musicians, perhaps not in recordings as much as in live performances. Mexican *ranchera* and *mariachi* were also influenced by the Cuban *bolero*, which made its way to Mexico (Hernandez 1995: 6). These musical styles were, and still are, very popular in the Dominican Republic. The early style of bachata was more characteristic of the Cuban *bolero*, because of its slow rhythm and romantic themes. Later, when it developed as a unique style, musicians incorporated faster rhythms characteristic of the Cuban *son* and *guaracha*. These marked its transition from a romantic *bolero* style to a dance music.

Initially, these guitar ensembles were a central characteristic of a rural tradition: informal fiestas (*pasadias*) which took place on Sunday. During the nineteenth century in the Dominican Republic these fiestas consisted of informal gatherings accompanied by food and music. This tradition still exists in the Dominican Republic, but mostly takes place in discotheques or *cervecerias* instead of familiar surroundings.

In the Dominican Republic the word bachata literally meant a party or social gathering that took place in rural areas. These were accompanied by food and guitar-based music. A bachata was a street party, and while music was a central part of it, the music itself was not called bachata (Hernandez 1995: 9; Ramos 1999: 29; Inchaustegui 1995: 244). Bachata, however, even as a term for parties, had class associations. Bachata was traditionally the oral culture of the countryside. To have a bachata meant to have a social

gathering in a private home, generally of the underprivileged, in which musicians would improvise songs made up of a guitar ensemble, *maracas*, the *marimba* (a bass instrument), and occasionally spoons. This musical spontaneity was characteristic of these social gatherings (Inchaustegui 1995: 244). Because these gatherings were associated with rural areas, the middle and upper classes would not call their parties *bachata*. *Merengue típico* was also marginalized at the beginning of its development because of its association with rural inhabitants (*campesinos*). Interestingly, it was these same upper classes who later gave the name ‘bachata’ to the music itself. But because of the stigma visited on rural inhabitants, the word ‘bachata’ came to have negative connotations. It was used by the upper classes who saw the music, and the people who played it, as ‘vulgar’ or ‘rude’ (Inchaustegui 1995: 245; Hernandez 1995: 8). It was this prevailing stigma that prevented *bachata* from emerging into the mainstream.

During the last years of the Trujillo dictatorship, *bachatas* (fiestas) were popular in the rural areas. People would gather before the middle of the day, eat *sancocho* (stew made of potatoes, *yuca*, and sometimes meat), drink rum, and musicians would play romantic *boleros*, Mexican *rancheras*, as well as *merengue típico*, played with the guitar instead of the accordion. Eventually, the *bolero* style associated with the parties would take the name of *bachata* (Ramos and Moquete 1999: 28). Deborah Pacini Hernandez argues that *bachata* was also influenced by the Dominican merengue, because it was originally played with a guitar ensemble prior to the incorporation of the accordion (Hernandez 1995). Today, *bachata* musicians incorporate merengue into their repertoires, but it differs from the orchestra or *típico* style in that it is played with guitars instead of accordion or saxophone. This style was

given the name *bachata-rengue*. Julio Alberto Hernández argues that bachata music was influenced by the Cuban *guaracha* (Inchaustegui 1995: 244). He states that musicians that played at a bachata (fiesta) sometimes incorporated rhythms characteristic of the Cuban *guaracha*. He further argues that these are the same rhythms that are found in bachata music today (Inchaustegui 1995: 244). While today bachata music is danceable, it was characterized as a romantic music during its formative years.

One issue in the literature on bachata has to do with when it made the transition from an informal gathering to a musical style (Ramos and Moquete 1999; Inchaustegui 1995; Hernandez 1995). It is argued that bachata developed as a musical style during the mass rural-urban migration that followed the Trujillo dictatorship. Its formative years were from the mid-1960s to the 1970s (Hernandez 1990; 1995; Inchaustegui 1995; Ramos and Moquete 1999; Manuel 1995).

The genre heard today is an urban one. During the Trujillo dictatorship, the people from the countryside were strictly limited in their mobility. If *campesinos*, especially those from the Cibao, were found living in the city they were considered vagabonds (*vagos*), and nobody dared to take this risk during the dictatorship (Ramos and Moquete 1999: 28). In 1964, rural-urban migration led to the creation of migrant neighborhoods within Santo Domingo. These neighborhoods housed the marginalized poor of Santo Domingo (Ramos and Moquete 1999: 29; Inchaustegui 1995: 245; Hernandez 1995). Bachata was first known as '*música romántica*,' '*bolero campesino*,' or '*música popular*.' It was seen by the middle upper classes as a 'sad' imitation by *campesinos* trying to imitate the Cuban *bolero*. Pioneers of bachata such as Luis Segura and José Manuel Calderón sang love songs with a slow

tempo, thus allowing the ‘sobbing’ voice which so characterizes bachata as a *música de amargue* (songs of bitterness). A highly emotional singing style is characteristic among bachata singers. Sometimes during a song, the guitar is referred to as the vehicle for expressing emotions. For an example, Luis Vargas, in his song ‘*El Llórón*’ (The Weeper), cries out ‘*y la guitarra llora*’ (and the guitar cries). This singing style accompanied by the guitar creates a music that is conducive to expressing emotional dilemmas. During the formative years of bachata, the music dealt with themes of love and betrayal, disillusionment and despair. Bachata’s origins are rural. However, its development as a unique genre is principally urban based, and it emerged during the social, political, and economic developments of the 1960s (Hernandez 1991; 1995; Ramos and Moquete 1999; Inchaustegui 1995; Manuel 1995).

Bachata: The formative years

After Trujillo was assassinated there was mass rural-urban migration to Santo Domingo. One problem that occurred with this migration was that the city was not prepared for the population boom. Between 1960 and 1970, Santo Domingo’s population rose from 370,000 to 699,000 inhabitants (Hernandez 1995: 74). This population boom resulted in the rapid development of barrios (shanty towns), where the rural migrants lived. Also, the prevailing stigma against the *campesinos* as ‘uneducated’ and ‘unskilled’ (according to city standards) prevented them from participating in the formal employment sector (wage paying jobs in businesses, corporations, and so on). Instead, most became part of the informal economy. Informal sector jobs are mainly small scale, within an unregulated marketplace,

and depend primarily on manual labor (Ramos and Moquete 1999; Hernandez 1995: 74). Many of these jobs were created by the migrants themselves. The most common involved selling cigarettes and gum in street stalls, and shining shoes. Women who worked in the informal sector mostly provided domestic services. With the arrival of recording equipment, another job was created: selling musical tapes in the informal sector. Today this is called piracy (*pirateria*). This informal business consisted of obtaining the final recorded product, reproducing it, and selling it at reduced prices. Early bachata music, or *bolero campesino*, was primarily circulated through the informal economy as it was initially banned from mainstream music stores and most radio stations, except for Radio Guarachita and La Voz del Trópico. Because most of the bachata musicians and audience were of rural origins, and were now so numerous in the city, bachata tapes sold very well among them (Hernandez 1995: 75).

The informal sector, then, was associated with the urban barrios, and life in the barrio became a cultural system unto itself. The characteristic that most defined barrio culture was the guitar-based music, still called '*bolero campesino*', of the late 1960s (Inchaustegui 1995: 245; Hernandez 1995: 76). The tradition of having informal gatherings (bachatas) continued in the urban barrios, and the music played in these was romantic guitar music. It was not accepted into the mainstream, but it was not totally shunned either because the guitar traditions such as the Mexican *ranchera* were loved by all Dominicans (Ramos and Moquete 1999: 28; Hernandez 1995). It was slowly being recognized by some radio stations that there was a large audience for this music and, therefore, economic potential. Merengue had long been established by this time, and despite its association with Trujillo, it continued to be the

national symbol. While merengue thrived in the political, social, and economic changes that were taking place, bachata reflected the life of a growing number of urban poor, the direct consequence of these same changes (Ramos and Moquete 1999: 29; Hernandez 1995: 77; Inchaustegui 1995: 245). According to Dominican Professor Jacobo Moquete, the most significant time in the formation of bachata as a musical genre occurred in the mid 1960s to 1970s with the opening of Radio Guarachita in Santo Domingo. Its owner, Radhames Aracena, was a radio broadcaster (*locutor*) during the Trujillo era. He was the only radio broadcaster who was permitted to import and play foreign music such as the Cuban *bolero* and Mexican *ranchera*. This guitar music was loved by all Dominicans and was commonly the music played in the rural bachatas (Ramos and Moquete 1999: 29). Aracena formed Radio Guarachita in 1965 and played an important role in promoting bachata music in the 1960s and 1970s. His radio station was always dedicated to this music, and was recognized as the most popular bachata radio station in the country (Hernandez 1995; Inchaustegui 1995; Ramos and Moquete 1999). As of 1999, Radio Guarachita was closed, Radhames Aracena having passed away.

As rural-urban migration increased, rural musicians were looking for opportunities to record their music. Aracena was one of the first to give these musicians an opportunity to play and record at his station. He was hesitant at first because he considered the local guitar music of poor quality; a music that needed to be ‘refined’ in order to sell in the marketplace (Hernandez 1995: 85). José Tabar Asilis was the first disc jockey to play musicians’ records regularly on his radio station La Voz del Trópico in Santo Domingo. Asilis played the music as the musicians presented it to him. Aracena, on the other hand,

criticized Asilis for not attempting to 'refine' the music. Aracena preferred to correct the pronunciation and grammar of the musicians in order to hide their rural background. As a result, the creativity of the musicians was limited because their music and lyrics were being changed to suit Aracena (Hernandez 1995: 85). Though many musicians recognized this, they were grateful to have a chance to promote their music. Aracena would also train his disc jockeys to speak a certain way on the radio so that their rural background would not be known (Hernandez 1995: 85). The different pronunciation of words were indicative of regional differences. In some rural areas, the endings of words were pronounced differently. For an example, the word '*compadre*' would be pronounced '*compai*'. The verbs that ended in 'ar' such as '*buscar*' (to look for) would be pronounced '*buscai*'. Of course, Aracena had economic interests as well, and for this reason he wanted to make the music more socially acceptable (Hernandez 1995). Nevertheless, his radio station became the most popular station in the country among rural inhabitants and new migrants. Aracena opened Empresas Guarachita, a radio and recording studio, where he would record and produce bachata music to sell to the population. All records were issued on the Guarachita label. Aracena's radio station and recording studio provided musicians with the opportunity to record their music. It is argued that without Guarachita they would have never had this opportunity because of growing class divisions and the stigma visited upon the new city dwellers (Ramos and Moquete 1999).

Radio Guarachita also became an important communication bridge between the *campesinos* still living in the countryside, and their families in the city. As one informant told me: "Radio Guarachita was distinct from other stations in that it acted as the 'maternal

mother' (*madre materna*) for all the *campesinos* who migrated to the city" (Interview, Santo Domingo, 1999). It was a place where *campesinos* who were lost in the city could go. At Radio Guarachita the disc jockeys would announce on the radio the name of the person and direct family members to pick them up. The station was located at the center of the city on the street *Calle El Conde* (El Conde Street) in the *Parque de Independencia* (Independence Park), which made it accessible. When family members living in the city made announcements to those from the countryside who were expected to visit them, they would always end by saying "And if you get lost in the city, go to Radio Guarachita" (Interview, Santo Domingo, 1999).

Aracena would also dedicate a certain amount of air time to the new population who wanted to send messages to their family members in the countryside. This was known as the *programa de saludos* (greeting show) (Hernandez 1995: 93). The station became dedicated and targeted to a certain population: the rural inhabitants, and those undergoing the painful rural-urban transition and living in Santo Domingo's city slums. Radio Guarachita became an important transitional place which provided services to help migrants. As Hernandez observes: "The influence of Radio Guarachita extended beyond the music industry and into the social realm: it helped introduce people of rural origins to patterns of urban life and provided a significant cultural link between urban and rural contexts" (Hernandez 1995: 87).

With Radio Guarachita, bachata musicians got air play and the opportunity to record. Still, it was not a music that was accepted into the mainstream, and most radio stations would not play it. As one informant explained to me, "Aracena was the first person who dared to commit themselves fully to bachata music, and he took the chance and the criticisms against

him for doing so” (Interview, Santo Domingo, 1999).

During the 1960s and 1970s, the attention of radio broadcasters and listeners in the mainstream was focused on the new synthesized and modern merengue of Johnny Ventura and others. The local guitar music was stigmatized by mainstream forms of media. It was simply seen as a poor imitation of the Cuban *bolero*, and as ‘traditional.’ It was not yet thought that these characteristics could be reconciled with the progressive and modern identity that merengue music symbolized. The acceptance of the *bolero campesino* was impeded by the fact that it was looked down upon by the middle and upper classes, who ignored the marginalized inhabitants of Santo Domingo and the music created by them.

When this music was given the name bachata in the early 1970s, it was limited further, and came to represent ‘backwardness’ in a time of rapid economic growth and increasing socio-cultural diversity, during which merengue was the preferred music of the mainstream (Inchaustegui 1995; Hernandez 1991: 111; 1995; Austerlitz 1997). The conflict between the traditional and modern represented a class conflict. *Merengue típico*, though neglected by Dominican record companies because it was not yet marketable, was still regarded as the country’s folk identity (Hernandez 1991: 111; 1995; Austerlitz 1997; Manuel 1995). Bachata, on the other hand, was not seen as such, as it was in the process of emerging as a unique genre. Bachata was played mostly for and by the rural inhabitants who migrated to the city and were of the poor class. In spite of comprising a majority of the urban population, these people were marginalized politically, economically, and socially (Hernandez 1991: 112; 1995).

Bachata: Social context, style and lyrics

During the twelve years of Balaguer's presidency, from 1966 to 1978, the country suffered intense political, economic and cultural conflicts. Shanty towns grew, and barrio culture suffered the effects of this unrest. Music was a vehicle through which these conflicts could be articulated (Hernandez 1995: 103). In the 1970s, class divisions intensified, and music became a way to represent and identify these divisions. Both bachata and merengue underwent a number of changes. *Merengue típico* represented a folklore identity, while the new 'modern merengue style' represented a 'progressive' one that incorporated jazz, the twist, and other styles into its repertoire. These musical styles were also listened to among the rural and urban populations. However, during this time, bachata highlighted class divisions. The struggle between what was viewed as the 'traditional' and the 'modern' corresponded with the identification of middle-upper classes and the poor. This struggle expressed itself in music and in attitudes towards music. Leonardo Paniagua, in an interview with Deborah Pacini Hernandez, stated: "What they are looking for with the word bachata is to keep it beneath the saxophone. To keep the guitar under the saxophone. It can't be. The two instruments are equal" (Hernandez 1995: 103; 1991: 112). Class conflict and the emerging identity of barrio culture was represented and expressed in the emerging new style of bachata, using the metaphor of the guitar and the saxophone. The bachata musicians, the urban poor, were represented metaphorically by the guitar, while the modern progressive merengue musicians, related to the small middle-upper classes, who were represented through the saxophone (Hernandez 1991: 112).

Merengue symbolized the growing modernity and freedom of the new democratic society. In the 1970s and within this growing industry, bachata music, which previously had been a predominately romantic music, was now articulating a different reality than that of merengue musicians. This reality was one of a community undergoing a transformation from rural to urban life. Bachata's tempo increased, and the lyrics changed from being romantic to harsh depictions of impoverished urban life (Hernandez 1990: 351; 1995; Ramos and Moquete 1999: 29; Inchaustegui 1995: 245). Interestingly, in the 1960's, bachata's stylistic predecessor was played on radio stations, but when it was given the name bachata, as well as its corresponding class association, no mainstream radio station in Santo Domingo would play the new genre. Radio stations that did play bachata functioned from A.M. airwaves. Bachata music was never played on F.M. stations until the early 1990s (Interview at Radio Criolla, Santiago, 1999).

In the 1970s, bachata was first called *música cachivache* (meaning trivial or insignificant), then *música de guardia* (guard music). Both names denoted something vulgar in the guitar music, in order to push it out of the national arena. The latter term referred to the guards who were of the working classes (Inchaustegui 1995: 245; Hernandez 1995: 117; Ramos and Moquete 1999: 30). This music was later given the name bachata, which carried the same negative connotation and class association. One explanation as to why the name bachata was given to the music was because the word was a combination of two other words: 'bar' and 'chata', two words commonly used in the capital region (Santo Domingo) (Ramos and Moquete 1999: 29). The military guards were said to visit bars in the evenings that would play music such as *bolero*, *son* and *guaracha*, all of which influenced what is now

called bachata. The guards would order a shot of rum which was then called 'chata' (Ramos and Moquete 1999: 29). Alejandro Paulino Ramos argues that this interpretation may or may not be true but is nevertheless important because it is representative of the kind of ways in which people try to explain and make sense of their cultural expressions (Ramos and Moquete 1999: 29). The term *música de guardia*, however, had negative connotations, and the different names given to bachata by the upper middle classes were to identify the musicians themselves and the class they represented in the urban city.

Bachata continued to be recorded on vinyl records with inexpensive equipment, and continued to be promoted and distributed through the few forms of radio referred to above. A large part of bachata's dissemination was through the local *colmado* or neighborhood bars (*barras*) (Hernandez 1991: 78; 1995; Manuel 1995). The *colmado* is not only a local store that stocks everything from rice to cigarettes; it is also a place where people gather and socialize. A *colmado* is, in the words of Pacini, "... a common social space for everybody and is one of the most important contexts for the exchange of information, ideas, and culture" (Pacini 1989: 79). Men frequently met there in the evenings to talk with friends, drink Presidente (Dominican beer), play dominoes and listen to music. Women previously were not part of the evening gatherings, but would make many trips to the *colmado* during the day, as it was more common to buy food daily rather than to stock it. This was a social space in which bachata was disseminated, and many owners of *colmados* owned jukeboxes and played the latest songs. Merengue, on the other hand, was integrated into the formal economy, being sold at major record stores in Santo Domingo, and could be heard mostly on F.M. radio. Today, the *colmado* continues to be an important social space, but radios

have replaced the jukebox. Merengue, bachata, and other popular styles such as the *bolero* and *salsa* are also played. *Colmados* vary in size. The larger ones include tables and chairs to accommodate social gatherings. *Colmados* can be found everywhere in the country, and often there are numerous ones in a single neighborhood.

Bachata's emergence as a unique genre was characterized by its fast tempo and changing lyrics and dance style. The musicians, by increasing the tempo, created in the 1970s a style that was different from the romantic guitar music, and bachata became danceable. Social unrest influenced this change enormously. During the Balaguer years, the upper middle classes enjoyed the wealth of the new industry and the trade secured by Balaguer (Hernandez 1995: 105). This economic growth, however, was not shared with those less fortunate, and this latter group experienced unemployment, infant mortality and malnutrition (Hernandez 1995: 105). This was the reality manifested in the barrio culture and expressed through bachata, but rather than describing these events explicitly, the themes of bachata simply changed to reflect the increasing poverty and struggles.

Musical conflicts therefore reflected a struggle between social classes and political ideologies (Hernandez 1991; Ramos and Moquete 1999). Bachata was associated with a population that was viewed as 'backwards,' the urban poor who lived the negative consequences resulting Balaguer's economic and political policies.

One informant told me that bachata originally began as a protest (Interview, Santo Domingo, 1999). It was a way in which a musical style could empower a group that was neglected by mainstream politics and social life. Jacobo Moquete argues that bachata music created itself out of an unconscious protest as a result of class distinctions (Ramos and Moquete 1999). He says that the musicians fought with music: they took the bolero and gave it Dominican characteristics which reflected everyday life. The protest was not one that was explicit, but rather was found in the lyrics that depicted the reality of living under extremely poor conditions, and well as ways of coping. Music constituted one form of coping. Hernandez also observes that the lyrics during this time reflected the refusal of musicians to accept the mainstream values of those that shunned them (Hernandez 1995: 115).

Balaguer was defeated in 1978 by Antonio Guzmán, head of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Dominicano*). This political change was meant to be celebrated by looking forward to freedom from Balaguer's repressive regime. Instead, the Dominican population soon found themselves again under the control of a corrupt government (Hernandez 1995: 140; Austerlitz 1997). Guzmán appointed to government positions family members who were so corrupt that the country's economy suffered even further. There was a decline in the agricultural sector, which led to an increase in manufacturing goods in urban factories for export. A second wave of rural inhabitants were migrating to the city and not finding jobs, ending up in shanty towns which were already overpopulated. The period between 1978 to 1982 led to an even more severe economic and social crisis in the country, and the poor were the most devastatingly affected. Urban barrio culture took on a different identity from its rural antecedent. This can be traced in the

thematic and stylistic changes in bachata music, which further served to facilitate and reinforce the development of the social identity of the barrio culture.

The most significant effect of the transition from rural to urban life was the tremendous effect that the economic crisis had on the traditional rural Dominican family (Hernandez 1990: 352). Men had previously been the breadwinners of the family, but in the city they had great difficulty finding jobs. Women started to find work in order to supplement income. More women migrated to the city and found jobs in the new economy in export manufacturing. Others worked in the informal sector as servants, selling food and other products in street stalls, while others turned to prostitution (Hernandez 1990: 352). The fact that women were more involved in the workforce had important consequences on the previous set roles of men and women in traditional rural patterns of marriage (Hernandez 1990: 352). Women who were more economically independent were seen as more likely to leave their husbands if they were having too many differences. Not being able to fulfill their traditional role of breadwinner, men's feelings of inadequacy increased, and they were challenged by women's freedom in the city. This situation was expressed in the lyrics of bachata music, whose musicians were mostly men. The songs were mostly written by men, and directed towards the actions of women (Hernandez 1995: 184). Women, no longer bound by the same rural family and community ties (although new ties emerged) experienced far more sexual freedom and social flexibility than they had in rural areas (Hernandez 1990: 353). Men who were unemployed or underemployed spent more time in city bars and brothels, where casual sex, often mediated by money, was more available than in rural areas. Drinking became a way of coping with the depression of urban life (Hernandez 1990: 353).

It is not surprising that bachata music expressed a social breakdown of male/female relationships in urban barrio life and conflict between men and women. Bachata musicians, being primarily male, began to redirect their songs to other men who were experiencing problems with their girlfriend or wife. Romantic *boleros* were previously sung to address women as the object of love by using the pronoun ‘*tu*’ (you). The use of ‘*ella*’ (her) in the songs indicated a change, one of men giving each other advice through music. A song by Manuel Chalas, ‘*Aquí la mujer se daña*’ (Women Go Bad Here) illustrates this change by giving advice to other men about how women change and ‘go bad’ when they leave the countryside to live in the city (Hernandez 1990: 353). Other songs continued to use the pronoun ‘*tu*’ but expressed resentment and anger in the face of betrayal by women. One such song is Blas Duran’s ‘*Tu Carnaval Pasó*’ (Your Carnival Has Passed). These themes reflected the changing roles of men and women in city life and the breakdown of male/female relationships.

There were few women musicians at this time, and only two made an impact: Mélida Rodríguez and Aridia Ventura (Interview at Radio ABC, Santo Domingo, 1999). Mélida Rodríguez only made one album as she died young (early 1970s). However, her songs reflected her experiences of city life. Most of her songs take place in a bar in which drinking was a way to cope with feelings of alienation. The bar came to symbolize urban alienation. Her lyrics were not unlike those of her male counterparts, but very unusual for a woman during this time (Hernandez 1995: 180). Her song, ‘*La Desamparada*’ (The Abandoned Woman) illustrates this:

<i>Déjenme beber hasta que muera No se metan en mi vida por favor</i>	Let me drink until I die Please don't get involved in my life
<i>El licor puede acapar las penas Que esta sufriendo mi pobre corazón</i>	The liquor can capture the pain That my poor heart is suffering
<i>En la cantina me paso noche y dia Tomando por un falso querer</i>	Day and night I spend in the bar Drinking for the betrayal of a lover
<i>Después que me dijo que a nadie mas quería</i>	After he told me he loved no one else
<i>Lo vi con otra entregándole su amor</i>	I saw him with another, giving her his love
<i>Ya para mi no hay alegría Vivo en un mundo de tristeza Cúando me falta el valor</i>	For me there is no happiness I live in a world of sadness When I have no more courage
<i>Aclamo a la cerveza (Mélida Rodríguez)</i>	I hail to the beer (My translation)

Today there are still fewer women bachata musicians than there are men. More women, however, are involved in the music industry, and more women bachata singers are emerging, especially in the Cibao region. One male musician that I spoke with in Puerto Plata expressed the view that as long as there are women, there will be bachata, implying that the relationships that men have with women is the prime motivator for lyrics and singing.

The thematic changes in the 1970s and 1980s, from the romantic lyrics of its stylistic predecessor, reinforced the stigmatization of bachata and the urban barrios. The music dealt with many themes: sexual appetite, deception by a woman (or man), abandonment and despair, and drinking as a way of coping with despair (Hernandez 1995: 159). Songs of double sexual meaning began to arise, which also reinforced the stigma.

Songs of *doble sentido* (double sexual meaning) are songs that are not concerned with romantic courtship, but rather with sexual courtship without the emotional attachment or social consequences of sex outside of marriage (Hernandez 1990: 361). The narrative space, then, is occupied with descriptions of sexual conduct using objects that can refer to men or women's sexual body parts in order to describe sexual acts (Hernandez 1990: 361). The romantic bachatas occupied a narrative space in which the singers, mostly men, would speak of women, referring to their beautiful hair, eyes, and so on. Songs of double sexual meaning occupy a different narrative space. These songs contributed to bachata's stigma in the early 1970s and 1980s, because the lyrics were viewed as 'vulgar'. The lyrics were clearly symptomatic of machista ideology (Hernandez 1990: 361). Machismo, translated to English, means he-man-ship, or stud-man-ship (Anders 1993: 14). According to Donald Mosher, machismo as a gender ideology is defined as "a masculine display complex involving culturally sanctioned demonstrations of hypermasculinity both in the sense of erotic and physical aggressiveness" (Mosher 1991: 199).

The lyrics of *doble sentido* songs were playful, and were very popular. The narrative space presented a humorous situation because the lyrics used were a play on words (Hernandez 1990: 361). This game of sexual courtship thus became a play on words. The songs expressed not only men's sexual desire as well as their needs, but also that of the woman's needs and desires (Hernandez 1990: 361). Those needs are without any emotional and social attachments. As Hernandez observes, "... these songs seem to express this aspect which is 'natural,' fun and even physically exhausting: *doble sentido* songs often refer to sexually voracious women who besiege the hapless singer with endless sexual demands"

(Hernandez 1990: 361). The following is an example of a *doble sentido* song by Blas Durán, called 'El Huevero' (The Egg Man).

<i>Como no encuentro trabajo</i>	Since I can't find a job
<i>Me dedico a vender huevo</i>	I sell eggs
<i>Y a mi morena querida</i>	And it's that way
<i>Con eso yo la mantengo</i>	That I support my dear morena
<i>Todos los dias por la mañana</i>	Every day in the morning
<i>Cuando le doy desayuno</i>	When I give her breakfast
<i>Quiere que le busque huevo</i>	She wants me to get her eggs
<i>Y que se lo dé bien duro</i>	And to give them to her real hard
(Blas Durán)	(Translated in Hernandez 1995: 174)

While men objectified women's body parts they also did the same for themselves (Hernandez 1990: 362). Usually, women's sexual organs were referred to through natural objects, such as fruits, cotton and eggs. Men's sexual organs were referred to through manufactured things such as cars light bulbs, combs, and record players (Hernandez 1990: 363). According to Hernandez, this suggested that men belonged to the cultural world of man made objects while women belonged to the natural world (Hernandez 1990: 363).

While these songs are no longer played (because it is seen as bad taste), it was these songs (specifically by Blas Duran in the late 1970s, and those later in the 1980s by Luis Vargas) that revived bachata at a time when it was losing ground on the radio stations that did play the music. One reason was that these songs took a different stylistic form. Blas Durán began to incorporate merengue into his repertoire. Interestingly, songs of *doble sentido* did not take the musical form of bachata. Rather, they were played merengue style,

with guitars instead of the accordion. This style was characterized as *bachata-rengue*, and the upbeat rhythm contributed to the playfulness of the lyrics. Today, however, the radio broadcasters that I spoke with say that bachata would quickly suffer if it changed back to lyrics of double sexual meaning because it is a music valued for its lyrics (Interview at Radio Isabel de la Torre, Puerto Plata, 1999).

During this time, however, only about half of the bachatas reflected these sexual themes. Luis Segura and Leonardo Paniagua maintained romantic lyrics, which followed the style of the *boleros* that influenced bachata as a genre. These bachatas were seen by the mainstream as ‘decent bachata’, while the others were seen as ‘indecent’ and ‘immoral’ (Hernandez 1995: 176). This, in turn, caused a division among bachata musicians because those with romantic lyrics, like Luis Segura, were more likely to be accepted into the mainstream, while others that reflected the realities of urban life were discarded as ‘vulgar’ without recognizing the root problems that urban bachata music was expressing: economic exploitation, unemployment, poverty, overcrowding, and social disruption (Hernandez 1995: 184). This division among bachata musicians also reflected and created a complex among urban migrants. Those that migrated in the first wave tended to be more integrated in urban life and preferred to associate with the ‘modern’ merengue style which symbolized a ‘progressive’ view. The second wave of migrants, however, preferred to listen to bachata and felt no complex about this. While they shared the same living space, they identified with different kinds of music (Hernandez 1995).

Bachata's emergence in the mainstream 1980-1990s

Salvador Jorge Blanco (1982-1986) resumed the Presidency after the death of Antonio Guzmán in 1982. The economic and social difficulties continued, and Joaquín Balaguer was re-elected in 1986, holding two consecutive terms (1986-1990 and 1990-1994). He was re-elected again in 1994, but because Balaguer was accused of corruption, a constitutional amendment limited him to a two year term instead of four years. In 1996, Leonel Fernández was elected as President. The new President who was recently elected (2000) is Hipólito Mejía.

In the early years of bachata, and with the help of Radio Guarachita, its popularity grew among the urban barrio population. When Luis Segura released a record in 1983 called '*Pena*' (Grief), it "... outsold every other recording in the mainstream market" (Hernandez 1995: 192). While most of the production and distribution was still occurring through the informal economy, this popularity could not be ignored, and bachata for the first time encroached on the territory of merengue. Segura's album sold over 200,000 copies (Hernandez 1995: 193). Bachata's popularity had a lot to do with the new name that it was given, *música de amargue* (songs of bitterness) (Inchaustegui 1995: 245; Manuel 1995: 113). This name made the guitar music more accessible to the market, because it did not bring with it the stigma attached to the name 'bachata'. This popularity lasted for two years and was called '*la fiebre de amargue*' (Bitter Fever), and drew the attention of record producers. Bachata made its way into newspapers, magazines, and television (Hernandez 1995: 192). However, there was growing discontent on the part of urban intellectuals about the emergence of this music into 'polite society', and there were articles written attacking

bachata. Hernandez observes that these attacks “. . . revealed the deep contradictions and insecurities people felt about being in contact with a music so long associated with the underclasses” (Hernandez 1995: 195). Merengue also suffered the same scrutiny at the beginning of its development, but in the case of bachata it would not be political propaganda that would spread the new genre. It would be a group of musicians, who challenged dominant social views.

This two year period gave bachata national exposure. However, the music was not recognized by some as legitimate, but as simply part of media exploitation. At the end of the second year (1984), it was no longer the center of attention. It went back to its original status of being almost invisible in mainstream Dominican society (Hernandez 1995: 196). As mentioned above, bachata musicians such as Blas Durán began to play merengues using guitars, and thus created *bachata-rengues*. This repertoire increased possibilities for recording and, by the late 1980s, Durán and Segura began to make names for themselves in New York and Puerto Rico (Inchaustegui 1995: 245; Hernandez 1995: 202). Nevertheless, bachata remained marginal until its exclusion was challenged by a group of musicians previously involved in the *nueva canción* movement. They began to challenge the social barriers that excluded bachata from the mainstream. Four well-known musicians, Luis Dias, Sonia Silvestre, Victor Victor, and Juan Luis Guerra, were all very successful singers and well liked in the mainstream. Dias was the most connected to Dominican street and folk culture. As a consequence, he took bachata seriously in turning it into a valid mainstream genre (Hernandez 1995: 204; Inchaustegui 1995: 246; Austerlitz 1997). Dias and Silvestre made an album together called '*Quiero Andar*' (I want to keep moving) which became a big

hit. The bachata they played, however, was increasingly synthesized, and it was given the name *techno-bachata*. Nevertheless, the purpose was to challenge society's views on bachata and show it to be a valid form of artistic expression. When the musicians, all except for Guerra, were part of the *nueva canción* movement, they addressed the issue of Dominican identity, merengue's relation to this identity, and the issue of merengue's African Heritage. They challenged the mainstream to recognize bachata music as a valid expression of Dominican culture. All these musicians used their positions as respected and accepted musicians to validate bachata. As Sonia Silvestre stated, "Our intention was to valorize this manifestation as an expression that was authentic, that had quality, value, originality, and we felt the necessity to identify ourselves with popular music values, without complexes" (quoted in Hernandez 1995: 206). Juan Luis Guerra, a well respected musician, began to experiment with bachata. In 1991, he released an album called '*Bachata Rosa*' (Bachata Rose), which became a success in the Dominican Republic, the United States and Europe (Matos 1999: 29; Hernandez 1995: 207; Inchaustegui 1995: 247; Austerlitz 1997). This hit, coming from a middle-upper class, educated and talented musician, seriously challenged the stigma visited on bachata. The musicians mentioned above not only demonstrated but celebrated bachata as a valid musical genre and form of artistic expression. This paved the way for other musicians to be heard and recorded, such as Anthony Santos, Raulin Rodriguez, and Luis Vargas, the three most popular musicians of the 1990s. Musicians in the 1990s could be recorded in studios with high quality equipment and bachata was played on F.M. radio stations. This gave the musicians exposure and opportunities that they did not have before, as the dominant mainstream radio stations previously did not play the music,

despite the large population that listened to the music.

It is argued, however, that it was Anthony Santos, with his song '*Voy pa' alla*' (I'm Going There), that really pushed bachata into the mainstream in 1991. This song, before it was known as a bachata, was released on the radio as a cover version by an all women merengue band called Las Chicas Del Can. When it was discovered that this song was originally a bachata, it became a hit that was heard on every major radio station (Hernandez 1995: 210). People I spoke with about the popularity of bachata during this time said that this song brought with it a boom, and a new energy for bachata music. By the end of 1992, bachata was being played on major radio stations. The revived popularity of the genre doubled the number of copies sold. Since 1991, bachata's popularity has only increased and it is argued by some that it is now more popular than merengue.

In Santo Domingo, bachata was never well supported in the mainstream. Its dissemination was primarily through a few radio stations such as Radio Guarachita. Today, however, many merengue musicians are turning to playing bachata. This change is primarily due to the economic opportunities that result from playing bachata. Most radio stations have bachata programs at certain hours of the day. One radio broadcaster I spoke with who had a mixed program (of different musical styles) said that if he were to go by what the people wanted to hear he would be playing bachata all day (Interview, Radio ABC, Santo Domingo 1999). Unlike the two year '*fiebre de amargue*' in the early 1980s, bachata music today is not a passing fad but is rather a musical style that is integrated within the music industry. Radio broadcasters say that it is the music that is most listened to and demanded at radio stations. Radio programs dedicated to bachata concern themselves with promoting new

talent and receiving calls from fans. Often there will be a special guest, sometimes a musician, and at other times a musical expert discussing a topic surrounding bachata's popularity today as against merengue and other musical styles. Bachata is no longer associated with impoverished urban conditions, as the musicians themselves are no longer financially deprived. Nevertheless, these conditions still exist in the Dominican Republic. Bachata's emergence in the mainstream is due to many reasons. The most commonly stated reason, however, is that of lyrical changes (Interviews at Radio ABC, Santo Domingo; Isabel de la Torre, Puerto Plata, 1999).

The value of lyrics

While speaking with Dominicans about music, lyrics have always been a focus of attention. Jacobo Moquete, when talking about music, states that all Dominicans are art critics (Ramos and Moquete 1999). Most of the people I spoke with, whether listeners or radio broadcaster, separated songs into two categories: ones 'with lyrics' (*con letras*), and ones 'without lyrics' (*sin letras*). Songs 'with lyrics' are ones that deal with courtship, and romance or social issues. They present a problem and provide solutions which then give listeners a narrative space within which to identify with what is being said in the songs. Songs with 'lyrical content' are the ones that are remembered. The artists tend to remain popular and are remembered as national legends. *Merengueros* such as Fernando Villalona, Johnny Ventura, and Juan Luis Guerra have remained popular and their music continues to be liked. Bachata musicians such as Luis Vargas, Raulin Rodriguez, and pioneers such as Leonardo Paniagua all have the loyalty of their listeners and they will be long remembered.

Songs ‘without lyrics’ are not ones that have no words, but are rather those that have words that are viewed as devoid of meaning or as being offensive. Some have a good beat and an accompanying refrain, such as La Banda Gorda’s ‘*Dame agua que tengo calor*’ (Give Me Water because I’m Hot). These are usually merengues and are viewed as *música chelcha* (music for fun) because they serve as good dance music. They may stay in style for a few months but then slowly decline in popularity (Interview at Radio Isabel de la Torre, Puerto Plata 1999). Songs ‘without lyrics’ are also referred to as ones of double sexual meaning, such as ‘*El Chivo*’ (The Goat) by Mala Fe, which was banned from being played on the radio in 1999 (Interview at Radio Isabel de la Torre, Puerto Plata, 1999). In fact, there is a law that bans songs of *doble sentido*. Peter Nuñez argues that most of the songs that have been banned in 1999 have been merengues, while no bachata in the recent past has been banned from any radio station. They are not, however, banned from other forms of dissemination such as discotheques. These songs, ironically, are very popular, despite the criticism that they are lacking what is considered good lyrical content. They are liked because of the contagious dance rhythm which so characterizes merengue music. Lyrics have been an important topic for the popularity of bachata and merengue because both musical styles have been stigmatized by the middle upper classes at some point. Inappropriate lyrics reinforced this stigma, especially in the case of bachata music.

Bachata is now well accepted in terms of its lyrics. Bachata is music that provokes reflection and does so through language. It can therefore be argued that its lyrical content is much more important than that of merengue, because its slower tempo allows the lyrics to be more prominent. As Hernandez observes, “Bachata, whether it expresses erotic,

romantic, or disillusioned love, serves its listeners as a triggering device for thinking about the relationship between an individual and his or her world, whether it be the relationship between the individual and the other persons or between the individual and society” (Hernandez 1991: 82). Bachata musicians sing about common experiences such as disillusionment in love, life, and different relationships. Merengue music has a different kind of expression, one that is more happy because of its vibrant rhythm. One merengue musician, Raffy Matias, told me that he started to play merengue because, firstly, he could not survive as a performer in the Dominican Republic without playing merengue, and secondly, because it is the happiest music in the world (Talk with Matias, Puerto Plata, 1999). The merengue songs that previously spoke of political changes now incorporate themes of a romantic nature, or refrains intended simply for entertainment purposes. The lyrics have always been of importance in the songs because they can express the experiences of everyday life as well as current issues in society. Lyrics have been used through times of political importance for propaganda or resistance, and as an expression of hardships and disillusionment, as in the case of bachata. As David King Duanway observes, “Song texts and their accompanying music enfranchise groups in important ways . . . First, the lyrics of songs inevitably express the world view of their authors and singers . . . Second, music itself acts as a historical indicator. Musical forms have their own identifiable history, which tells us the origins and world view of those who choose them as a means of exhortation” (Duanway 1987: 38-39).

The main reason that is given for bachata's popularity today is its abandonment of lyrics with double sexual meaning. Stylistic changes have also contributed to bachata's popularity in the mainstream. There has been an introduction of the electric bass guitar, as well as of bongos and saxophones. Also, the *techno-bachata* style of Juan Luis Guerra and Sonia Silvestre incorporated the synthesizer. For the first time in 1999, bachata was considered a valid music to include in the yearly Latin Music Festival which takes place in Santo Domingo. Raulin Rodriguez was the first bachata musician to play in the festival and to introduce bachata as a Latin musical style. To date, however, there is still no official bachata festival as there is for merengue. The merengue festival occurs twice a year: once in Santo Domingo and once in Puerto Plata. For bachata, there are events called *bachatazos* which occur two or three times a year. The merengue festival, however, is a big event. In both cities it takes place on the boardwalk which is closed off from traffic for a week. Every night there are merengue bands playing, street stalls selling food, and drinks are available to accommodate the crowd. With bachata's growing popularity there may be a festival in the near future. Merengue bands such as the Los Toros band are incorporating bachatas into their repertoires, and others such as Alex Bueno have turned to playing bachata exclusively. While this is clearly a result of bachata's popularity and success in the music industry, it also shows a declining stigma against those who play bachata because, ten years ago, no merengue band would play bachata. The following *bachata-merengue* played by Luis Vargas illustrates this change in a comical way: '*Bachatero Y Que*'

<i>Tus padres no me quisieron porque soy hombre del pueblo (2)</i>	Your parents never liked me Because I'm a man of humble means (sung twice)
<i>Por ser humilde y feo y para ser un bachatero (2)</i>	Because I'm humble and ugly, and a bachatero (sung twice)
<i>Mi trabajo es bien humilde Canto al pueblo con amor (2)</i>	My work is very simple I sing to my people with love (sung twice)
<i>Tus padres no me quisieron y mira que pegado estoy (2) Ahora ando montao' Cantando bachata Con cuarto y perfumao' Cantando bachata (2)</i>	Your parents never liked me and now look how popular I am (sung twice) And now I've made it, Singing bachata Perfumed and with money Singing bachata (sung twice)
<i>Bachatero y Que (4) (Luis Vargas)</i>	Bachatero, so what? (sung four times) (My translation)

While this song is meant to be comical, it also shows that musical style is still classified by class association, something also noted by Austerlitz (1997). It reflects the stigma that existed towards bachata and its subsequent financial legitimization and entrance into the mainstream.

Bachata: Social status and musicians in social change

The changes in bachata music over the years have contributed to a significant removal of the stigma once attached to the people who created this music and those who listened to it. Some argue that bachata today is loved by all Dominicans, implying that it has transcended class associations. It was common to hear people say that bachata used to only be heard in places like cabarets, but that today it is listened to in offices. One taxi driver told me that people who used to listen to opera are now listening to bachata. Others have said

that everyone likes bachata, but there are still some who will not admit it and will listen to it secretly in their homes. These were some explanations that were very common among the people I spoke with. These comments refer to the prevailing stigma that existed towards bachata musicians because of their social status, and also that of its listeners. The class associations are still present in the explanations, such as the one comparing the opera (upper classes) to bachata. While the association of bachata with brothels and *cervecerias* (beer centers) still holds, this is no longer bachata's sole association. Peter Nunez argues that there still exists a stigma against bachata, albeit for different reasons. He argues that others who have interests in promoting other styles in the cultural industry will attempt to keep bachata out of competition. Bachata is very popular and, as a result, some will maintain the stigma to minimize competition in the marketplace. Also, there are still some areas where bachata is looked down upon (Interview, Santo Domingo 1999). As Hernandez observes:

(T)he Dominican music industry helps to illuminate the struggles between contending groups in Dominican society for access and control over the media, not simply for economic motives, but for power to determine the construction of social and national identities, and to assign value and meaning to various forms of cultural expression. (Hernandez 1995: 45)

One important point to make is that bachata musicians who have become very successful in the industry are no longer part of the same class in an economic sense. While they are distanced from their previous class economically, they are still very involved socially, as will be noted below. Also, bachata music, now part of the mainstream, is no longer an expression solely of a disenfranchised and marginalized community as the one represented in the post-Trujillo era. The urban slums in Santo Domingo continue to grow, and the agriculture in the *campos* continues to suffer: the marginalized communities continue to exist and continue to

be largely forgotten by economic and political plans. Agriculture, while still an export, is suffering because of increased focus on the tourist industry and the influx of free trade zones (*zona franca*) owned by multinationals. Promises at each election of more opportunities, hopes for a better life, have plagued the poor in the Dominican Republic. In this case, I will give an example of the role that musicians can play in alleviating economic pressures in their communities.

Bachata musicians that have done well financially, while enjoying the material luxuries that come with this success, have also made investments in their country. Musicians such as Luis Vargas, Raulin Rodriguez, and Anthony Santos are all of rural origins from the surrounding area of Monte Cristi (situated near the northwest border). I mention these musicians because they are the three most popular ones of this generation of *bachateros* and they also play a significant role in their hometown. I had the opportunity to speak with Luis Vargas and Raulin Rodriguez during the period of my fieldwork, and to see where they came from and how they got to where they are. While they have become successful economically, they have not distanced themselves from the communities in which they grew up. A promotion manager with whom I spoke in Santo Domingo said that the bachata musicians are the only ones who re-invest in their country. Raulin, for example, lives in the *campo* where he grew up. He is involved with the people in this community to improve the lives of agriculturalists by helping financially to obtain what is necessary to maintain and grow healthy crops for consumption and for sale. Anthony Santos also lives in his home town and has a similar agricultural system developed. He also installed electricity and a baseball field where he plays every Sunday. Luis Vargas lives in the city of Santiago, where he recently

(1999) opened a recording studio, Supremo Records. This studio is open to established musicians and new musicians who want the opportunity to record. It is fully equipped and has all the comforts that make the task of recording less strenuous. For example, when musicians have to travel to Santo Domingo to record they have to do so in a limited time. Supremo Records is equipped with hotel rooms on the upper level along with a restaurant; the recording studios are on the lower level. It is an informal setting where staff are family and visitors, such as myself, can listen and sit in on most recording sessions, unless otherwise requested by the musicians. During my second visit to the studio Luis Vargas was recording his new CD. The sound technicians told me about the different recording processes. The idea behind building the studio is that musicians can focus more on their creative activities because they have these necessities nearby. They do not have to travel back and forth to record, and can stay overnight if the recording is not finished. Also, Luis Vargas, while he himself records there, is taking on the task of recording and promoting promising local bachata musicians.

Each of these musicians are helping people in a very direct way by opening doors and providing opportunities which can make life a little easier. Because music is such a central part of everyday life, musicians can play an important role in social change, without the political attachment and empty promises of past presidents and upcoming candidates.

Bachata music has come a long way from a marginalized music to one that has entered '*con fuerza*' (with force) into the mainstream. This means that bachata musicians sell their records in stores part of the formal economy, as opposed to only in the informal economy such as street stalls. They are exposed by the media, when previously no musician

was given airtime (except for during the two year '*fiebre de amargue*'). Bachata is played on F.M. stations, like merengue other musical styles. Bachata musicians are well integrated within the music industry. Previously musicians encountered obstacles because of the stigma attached to the music, and the mainstream catered to the musical tastes of the upper middle classes. As noted above, bachata was a music that was valorized by a group of musicians while merengue was valued politically. In the early years of bachata, it was a genre in competition with merengue and other musical styles that were being introduced into the country for commercial reasons. Today, it is argued that bachata, the not long ago ostracized music, is surpassing merengue in popularity. One informant told me that it is argued that 'bad' merengues, referring to those that have offensive lyrics and a uniform style, have opened the door for bachata's popularity in the mainstream (Interview, Santo Domingo 1999). Many merengue musicians are recognizing the economic possibilities of playing bachata music both nationally and internationally. I often asked whether people thought that bachata music would become a national symbol in a manner similar to merengue. The answers were mixed. Some said that it was debatable that bachata is more popular than merengue, and others argued that while it is in its prime, it will never surpass the national status of merengue. Jacobo Moquete states that it is debatable whether bachata will become as much a part of the hearts of the Dominican people as merengue has. He argues that this will eventually depend on the direction of the music industry (Ramos and Moquete 1999). The following section of this thesis will present the results of a survey conducted during fieldwork. It was undertaken in order to obtain an idea of what people outside the industry thought about these two musical styles.

Conclusions

Survey Results

While there are other styles played on the radio in the Dominican Republic, bachata and merengue continue to be the most popular music heard on the radio, in discotheques, at *fiestas populares* (popular rural town fiestas that occur once or twice a year), and at most live performances and festivals. Both musical styles are danceable, and live performances continue to be important. People participate in different ways. It can be as subtle as dancing and singing along to a song on the radio, or as overt as attending performances and dancing in discotheques. Many times I have heard people singing a song to themselves even when there was no music, as well as when there was music. Most radio stations, discotheques, *colmados*, and bars play mostly merengue and bachata music, while incorporating other styles such as *salsa* and *bolero* and sometimes U.S. and Spanish rock and pop music.

Can we assume, however, that everyone likes and/or listens to these musical styles? During fieldwork a sample survey was conducted in order to establish the degree to which opinions of individuals quoted in this thesis, as well as my own observations and those from the secondary sources, are compatible with those who participated in the survey.

The survey was conducted in Santiago, Puerto Plata, San Jose De Ocoa and San Cristóbal. It was one in which there was no targeted population, and was therefore an availability sample. The survey remained open to a variety of groups and ages. The questions were designed to be answered in an open-ended fashion. There were no questions

with check boxes (see Appendix 2). I felt it was important not to limit opinions by creating categories, but rather to have categories created by those who offered their opinions. In some cases, the questions were asked verbally, in which case I would write down the answers. This survey served to allow opinions of part of the population in different geographical areas to be expressed. One hundred and forty three people filled out this survey. While the results presented may not be representative of the whole country, they do provide some general conclusions and insights.

Four questions were asked in this sample survey, three of which are presented with quantifiable results. Question three and part B of four were not quantifiable. Questions one, two, and part A of four are presented in graph form. For each of the latter questions, respondents were given the option to provide an explanation to their answers. In such cases, examples of answers will be provided. Question three of the survey, which asked, 'What is your favorite group or artist?' is not presented in the survey results. The reason why these results are not given is because they correspond to question one of the survey which asks, 'What is your favorite kind of music?' For an example, if someone chose bachata as their favorite kind of music then a favorite artist might be Luis Vargas (bachata musician). Therefore, questions one, two, and four (a) and (b) are presented with results. They are not, however, presented in this order. They are presented in an order (4a and b, 1 and 2) that allows for easy discussion in terms of the evidence already gathered for this thesis. Question four addresses universal likes and dislikes, while question one and two address the issue of personal preferences. Categories for sex (male/female) and age were used, but the final results showed such small differences according to these variables that the results are based

on both men and women of all ages.

Question 4(a) asked, “In your opinion, what is the most popular music (that everyone likes) in the Dominican Republic?” Seventy percent of both men and women chose merengue as the most popular music, and eight percent chose bachata. Twenty percent chose a combination of both of these musical styles or one of these styles in combination with another such as *salsa* or *bolero*. Only two percent chose another style altogether.

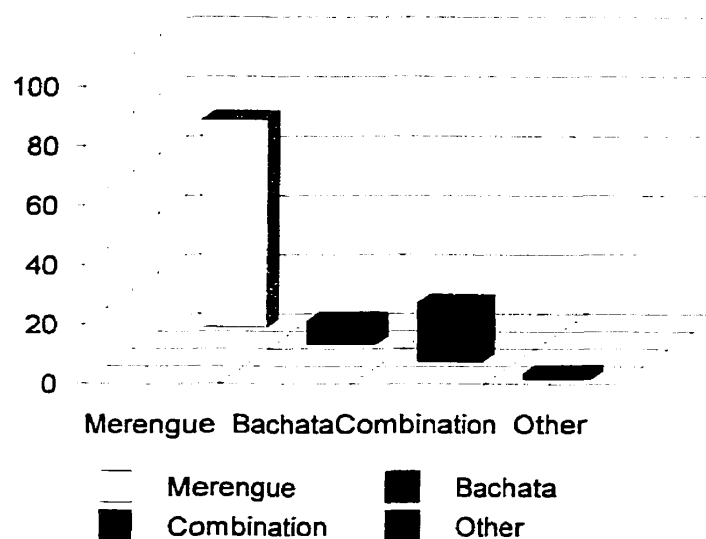


Figure 3. In your opinion, what is the most popular music (that everyone likes) in the Dominican Republic?

These results seem to demonstrate that merengue continues to be the most popular style in the country and this popularity is closely related to the status of merengue music as a symbol of national identity. This correlation is evidenced through answers to part B of this question: “What does this music represent for you, if anything?” Those that chose merengue responded in a similar manner. Merengue represented ‘our culture’, ‘our ‘folklore’, ‘Dominicans all around the world’, ‘the identity of my country’, ‘our roots, our culture and

our past', 'our culture and wherever I go I say that I am from the land of merengue', 'the happiness of our people, 'our way of expression', 'our music', 'our national values', 'our national identity', 'our national musical symbol', 'happiness and freedom', 'our culture-the mix of African and Spanish is where merengue comes from', 'our roots, our way of thinking and who we are'. This shows that merengue music continues to stand as a symbol of national identity, representing past and present, and a marker of identity for communities in the diaspora.

The results show that bachata music, while now heard on every radio station, in discotheques and street corners, is still not as popular as is merengue. Only eight percent chose bachata as the most popular music that everyone likes. While it was not chosen as the most popular style, it was often chosen in combination with merengue. Those who chose bachata responded to Part B of the question as follows: bachata represented 'the reality of what the people feel', 'the most popular music', 'the expression of the Dominican people', 'romance', '*amargue*' (bitterness), 'a music that allows us to know our feelings', 'my country', 'a music that represents any event, feeling, or a person that one is in love with'. The responses to bachata allude more to emotions than do the responses to merengue, which alludes more to history, identity, and continuance. Bachata is a music that plays both a recreational role and a cognitive one. While, stylistically, it is different from its predecessor, the *bolero*, the lyrics continue to express romantic themes. Bachata musicians tell stories in their songs. They recount a lost love, a betrayal, disillusionment, in life and love. They tell stories that relate to everyday experience and thus provide a common space of experience. We can find similarities between a blues singer and a bachata singer. Charles Keil notes:

“The blues artist, in telling his story crystallizes and synthesizes not only his own experience but the experience of his listeners” (Keil 1966: 161). As Hernandez also observes, bachata serves as a triggering device for individuals to think about their personal relationships (Hernandez 1991: 82). The slower rhythm of bachata is conducive to express certain emotions such as heartache, while merengue has a fast and vibrant rhythm conducive for dancing and ‘letting go’. Merengue plays an important social role in everyday life because it recreational and serves as a source of identity. It is the national music, and it is also a music that is characterized as ‘happy’.

While bachata is still not as popular as merengue, it is becoming more a part of everyday life in the Dominican Republic. By this I mean that sounds of bachata permeate discotheques, stores, and radio stations just as much as merengue does. From my observations, there are just as many live performances of bachata as of merengue. In the northern part of the country, especially in Puerto Plata and Santiago, *merengue típico* and bachata are heard more today than the orchestra style merengue. For example, two years ago, Orion, a discotheque in Puerto Plata, played mostly orchestra merengue and salsa, but little bachata or *merengue típico*. Other clubs such as La Barrica were known for playing these latter two musical styles. During my fieldwork, I returned to Orion, and noticed that they had changed the style of music they play to include bachata and *merengue típico*. While both musical styles have always been heard in this region, in the past they were not heard in discotheques or on the radio as much as the orchestra style merengue. I observed this shift of popularity for bachata in Santo Domingo, but *merengue típico* is not as well supported in the capital and is still largely more popular in the Cibao region. I then asked why Orion had

begun to include bachata. One informant explained these changes:

Orion was a classic club of Puerto Plata, where they did not play bachata. But unfortunately or fortunately they realized (the owners) that the supposed 'upper class' did not go very much to the discotheques and so they had to include bachata . . . This supposed 'upper class' did not listen to bachata because ten years ago, it was a music that was only listened to in places of *mala muerte* (referring to bars and brothels of poor and working poor neighborhoods). But now it has become a very popular genre and is listened to in a variety of places . . . Bachata is a rhythm that was born here in the suburbs, in places that they call cabarets, or places of *mala muerte* as they say. But bachata has very beautiful lyrics. Now with Juan Luis Guerra, Alex Bueno, El Torito, bachata began to increase in popularity. Later came Luis Vargas, Anthony Santos; those people expanded bachata and now it is the most popular rhythm . . . But merengue is the national music and bachata will never reach the same level as merengue. (Interview with Cirilo Ulloa. Puerto Plata 1999)

While the survey results show that bachata is not as popular as merengue, the sounds of bachata that permeate different forms of media indicate otherwise. One reason for this discrepancy is that bachata is not considered or accepted as a national symbol, and therefore is not considered as a music that everyone likes. Whether bachata will become as popular and develop the same kinds of links to issues of national identity as merengue in the following years is debatable. Merengue music has a history of over a century and its significance is securely grounded. Bachata continues to be a music with class affiliations and connotations it sometimes being implied that the 'upper classes' do not go to discotheques and that the owners therefore have to attend to popular demand.

It is important to discuss the two percent of the respondents that chose another style, because there is part of the population that does not consider either of these musical styles to be popular or significant. The music that was identified as most popular by this two percent was Christian music. The Dominican Republic is officially Catholic. There are

different kinds of religious communities, one of which is the growing community of Evangelicals. To accommodate this community there is a growing production of religious music. As revealed by the survey, merengue and bachata music are seen as deterrents to reaching a higher level of spirituality. While these styles are not stigmatized by this community, they are not chosen as vehicles of expression either, because the styles are simply viewed as non-spiritual. As previously argued, the social significance of both musical styles was influenced by considerations of class and race. From the standpoint of the responses provided by the Evangelical community, merengue and bachata (as well as other styles such as *salsa* and Spanish rock and pop) are not viewed as being conducive to living a spiritual life. This is so not only for their lyrics but the activities associated with them, such as dancing and drinking in discotheques and bars. This is important to mention to demonstrate that not everyone who is Dominican regards merengue and bachata as part of their musical world and chooses them as a vehicle of expression.

Question one asked "What is your favorite style of music?" The reason for this question was to determine whether what was considered the most popular music was what people chose to listen to. Thirty nine percent chose merengue, three percent chose bachata, twenty nine percent chose romantic music such as the *bolero* and *balada*, sixteen percent chose a combination of two or more of the above styles, and thirteen percent chose another style altogether such as *salsa* or Spanish rock.

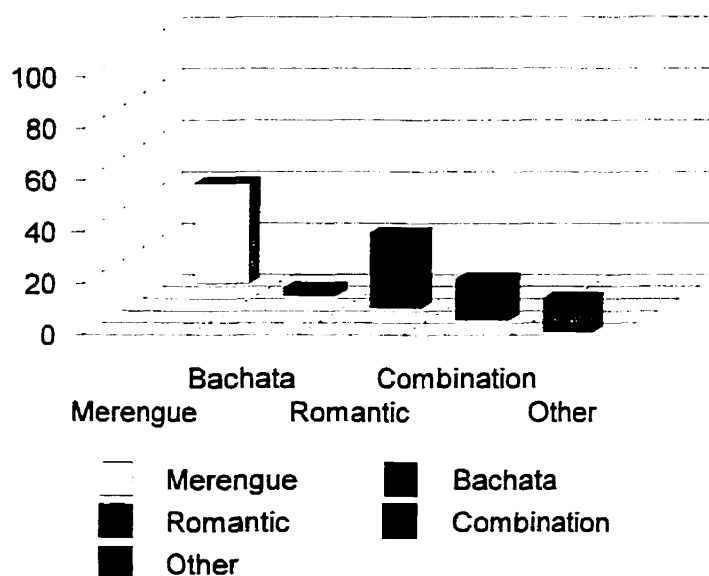


Figure 4. What is your favorite style of music?

While merengue still was chosen as the preferred music, *balada* was chosen as the second most preferred style. I noticed that romantic music continues to be a very popular style and often musicians will do cover songs of *boleros* and *baladas* in bachata or merengue style. These romantic styles are bachata's musical predecessors, but today bachata is a distinguishable genre and would be clearly understood as bachata rather than romantic music. Bachata was mainly chosen in combination with merengue as opposed to being a music preferred on its own. Other styles are also popular and listened to, such as *salsa*, and Spanish rock as performed by Enrique Iglesias, Ricky Martin and Chakira. Spanish rock was most popular among young people during the period of my fieldwork. One informant explained it this way: "We may listen to different music at home but if we go to a party and they don't play merengue, there is no party." While both bachata and merengue continue to dominate the airwaves and discotheques, musical tastes are becoming more varied. One radio

broadcaster told me that while people listen to different styles, they tend to follow more the *música popular, la música del pueblo* (music of the people, referring to merengue and bachata) (Interview at Radio Isabel de la Torre, Puerto Plata, 1999).

Question two asked “What is your least favorite kind of music?”. One percent chose merengue, thirty two percent chose bachata, sixty four percent chose another style altogether, and three percent did not choose any of the above styles.

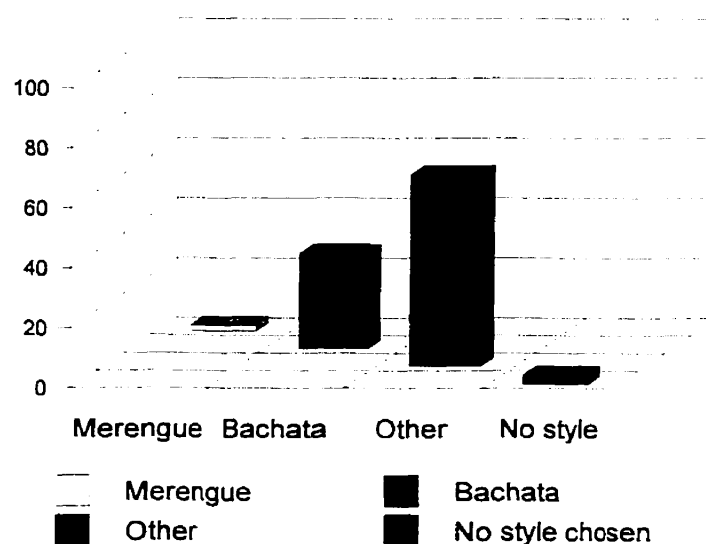


Figure 5. What is the music that you least prefer?

Only one percent chose merengue as the least preferred music. The response for bachata music presents the same discrepancy noted earlier: that the media indicate a popularity different from that of public opinion. Approximately one third of this population chose bachata as the least preferred music. Some of the respondents provided explanations as to why this is their least favorite kind of music. Some of these explanations are as follows: ‘it does not have much meaning’, ‘it is not part of our culture’, ‘it is scandalous’, ‘it is listened in places and for people of low social status’, ‘it makes people drink alcohol’,

‘it is listened to by people of low class’, ‘the *doble sentido* songs are vulgar’, ‘it makes people sad’, ‘it has a poor vocabulary’, ‘its composition is not good and sometimes the lyrics are vulgar.’ From these explanations we can observe that the stigma that was initially visited on bachata is still present. This stigma is linked more to the extra musical qualities of bachata — the association of this music with a social class, and to activities such as drinking— than on musical style itself. What is interesting is that it is still seen as having vulgar lyrics (referring to songs of *doble sentido*) while the majority of the *doble sentido* songs that are out today are merengues, and not the merengues played by bachateros. This discrepancy offers insight into the shifting value of bachata music. While media such as radio, television, and newspapers no longer keep this music out of the national arena, this does not necessarily mean that the stigma has been removed. Nevertheless, its popularity is increasing, and it is no longer shunned as it was during its formative years. There are a lot of bachata singers and fans who continue to maintain this musical style — hence reinforcing bachata as a part of Dominican culture.

The least preferred musics that were chosen were rap, reggae, and rock. The most common reason given was that these musics are: ‘noisy’ (*ruidoso*), ‘not part of our country’, ‘there is no meaning’, ‘rap is not art’, ‘disorganized’, ‘scandalous’. Interestingly, some of the same reasons were given for bachata music being the least preferred, but the answers that mostly explained why this music was not desirable were because it was noisy, and it was not part of Dominican musical culture.

The three percent that chose none of the styles all answered that they liked all kind of music.

Summary

The social history of bachata and merengue music in the Dominican Republic demonstrates the importance of music at times of significant transition in a society, as well as its significance in reflecting and facilitating social identities. As Richard Middleton argues, popular music identifies the space of contradiction between assigned values of 'imposed' and 'authentic', 'elite' and 'common', and organizes these in particular ways (Middleton 1990: 7). Both merengue and bachata have been vehicles through which cultural contradictions have been articulated. Both styles began as marginalized, a status determined by constructions of race and class. These constructions have been expressed explicitly through music and its understanding, for example, in the debates regarding the origins of merengue and Dominican identity. Bachata's marginalization was determined primarily by its class association, as well as by the stigma imposed upon it through dominant mainstream views as a consequence of its association with, and expression of, the hardships of impoverished urban life.

Throughout the development of both musical styles, we can trace the multiple meanings of popular music as they shift alongside political, social, economic, and demographic changes. Kaemmer noted the importance of understanding how these aspects of the sociocultural system relate to each other, and how a change in one may affect the other. Music has both reflected and contributed to these changes. In the case of merengue, political change has played a direct role in its development: first as a form of resistance against the U.S. occupation, and later as propaganda for the Trujillo dictatorship. Its development as a national symbol was heavily influenced by these political changes. It is

still a music used during presidential campaigns. During my last stay in the country I witnessed a lot of preparation for the recent elections. Street cars used for presidential campaigns would often blast out merengue, with flags and posters of the preferred candidate attached to the vehicle. While it is still used for campaigns, one person told me that merengue's status has nothing to do with politics. He further explained that it is such a part of Dominican culture that if there was a political leader who ever tried to shun it, this leader would be taken out of power. Hector Acosta of Los Toros Band once said that whichever candidate comes to his concert first will be the one that he votes for (Listín Diario, 1999). The basis, then, for judging a good candidate for this merengue musician was having a candidate who supports and would continue to support the survival of this music.

The issues regarding merengue and Dominican identity have also shifted. The expansion of the music industry in the Dominican Republic has provoked different arguments about the ownership of this style in competition with others, as noted in the discussion surrounding Dominican and Puerto Rican merengue. As Josep Martí í Pérez observed, social identity in relation to music is both maintained by socialization and by intergroup relations (Martí í Pérez 1996: 1). The origins of merengue music, however, continue to be debated. Paul Austerlitz and Carlos Batista Matos have both observed that merengue continues to be a national symbol because it is a vehicle through which current social changes are expressed, in musical style, in lyrics, and in arguments about the music. Stuart Hall argues that in times of modernization, identities are constructed using resources of the past and present to make sense of a changing world. Modern *merengue típico* is a music that highlights this process, because it is seen as both a representation of Dominican

folklore and popular culture.

The social changes that occurred in the Dominican Republic after the Trujillo dictatorship influenced the rise of bachata as a new musical style. It was a marginalized music as were its participants and musicians, defined by their status of material poverty. Hernandez observes that this marginalization shows how the emergence of a musical style can be influenced by socio-economic status and physical environment (Hernandez 1995). Bachata musicians today are no longer part of the same socio-economic group from which bachata emerged. However, conditions of urban impoverishment still exist in the Dominican Republic. This raises the question of whether a new musical style will arise in the future to express and depict these hardships.

Hernandez questions whether bachata musicians will turn to play more the *techno-bachata* style of Juan Luis Guerra in order to appeal to upper middle class audiences, thus abandoning the music's original characteristics. From my own observations, bachata musicians are not changing over to this style, and, in fact, this style of bachata is not so popular. Bachata musicians, while having incorporated innovation by amplifying the acoustic guitar and using the electric guitar, continue to maintain a certain style which does not seem to be compromised as a result of mainstream integration. The merengue bands who play bachata are not following the *techno-bachata* style, in which the sound of the synthesizer overrides that of the guitar. Rather, they are following the guitar style.

While the popularity of bachata is increasing, there still exists a stigma which is no longer attributable solely to dominant mainstream views. Conversely, others will say that bachata is popular with everyone and those that are still embarrassed to listen to it will do so privately in their homes. While the comments differ, it is clear that this was a music once shunned by mainstream society. While I would argue that some still stigmatize bachata, this stigmatization is based more on association than on musical style. The guitar is no longer an instrument discriminated against as it was in the 1970s. As a result, it is not likely that this 'partial' stigma will affect bachata's further development in the music industry, unless, as argued by one informant, it is to keep bachata out of the market because it presents too much competition. Bachata is, however, well integrated into the commercial industry, and is well regarded for its lyrics.

In the case of merengue, there seems to be a more distinct split between the orchestra style and the *típico* style. While the orchestra style is still popular, the popularity of modern *merengue típico* seems to have reinforced the regional division in which the latter style is still more popular in the Cibao region.

The question remains: while merengue continues to be the national music, will bachata ever reach the same status in Dominican society? It will be interesting to see whether bachata music develops a history as influential as that of merengue. Both have played important roles in expressing and facilitating cultural values of a society in transition. Merengue music has a tradition of over a century-and-a-half in the Dominican Republic, and it is questionable whether, even with global changes, migrations and fusions of musical styles, this music will be surpassed by another in the near future. Bachata continues to be

a music very much alive in the Dominican Republic, and is reinforced as part of musical culture by musicians and fans. That these musical styles are kept alive has much to say about musical tradition in the Dominican Republic, and the social importance of music. I would argue that popular music continues to be the most important aspect of expressive culture in the Dominican Republic. It is a vehicle through which cultural contradictions are expressed and reflected, and it continues to be a source of identity through social changes. Josep Martí í Pérez observes that when a community needs to affirm itself it does so through music (Martí í Pérez 1996: 1). Music becomes a symbolic thread which provides participants with reference points in terms of which to make sense of the world around them and tie communities together, with all their contradictions and discontinuities. Clifford Geertz, in discussing the semiotics of art, argues that, “. . . Signs and symbols, such vehicles of meaning, play a role in the life of a society, or some part of society, and it is that which in fact gives them their life” (Geertz 1983: 118). As this thesis has demonstrated, music can be a vehicle through which meaning is created and social identities constructed and negotiated. These change and shift alongside social, political, economic and demographic developments. Music provides important social spaces to create, exchange, and articulate changes in everyday life.

Appendix 1

Glossary of Musical Instruments

Claves (translated literally as keys). Claves are percussion instruments of Cuban origin. They are hardwood sticks which provide rhythm to Latin American dance music, and often accompany the guïra and maraca. Claves are played by placing one stick in the cup of the left hand, resting on the ball of the thumb and index finger, while the other stick, placed in the right hand, strikes the centre of the one in the left hand (The Oxford Companion to Musical Instruments 1992: 70). In the Dominican Republic, claves were often replaced with spoons.

Cuatro. Cuatro is the name used in Latin America and Spain for a small guitar. In Puerto Rico, this guitar is thought to have descended from the Spanish *vihuela*. The cuatro has four strings and is often played in a guitar ensemble. It is an instrument that is strummed vigorously, and is sometimes tuned to a chord, or is tuned to sound like the ukelele. Another variety of small guitars is the cinco, which has five strings (The Oxford Companion To Musical Instruments 1992: 86; The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments 1984: 526).

Güira (güiro; gourd). The güira is a scraper which is used as a percussion instrument. It is found in Africa, the Carribean, and South America. Made from the gourd, the güira is then shaped to create notches along the surface. These surfaces are scraped with a short stick, which creates a distinctive sound and enhances the musical rhythm. Güiras are also made

from hardwood (The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments 1984: 87; The Oxford Companion To Musical Instruments 1992: 134). In the Dominican Republic, the güira is shaped in a cylinder form and is made out of metal. It is used in merengue and bachata ensembles.

Maracas. The maraca is a percussion instrument in the form of a rattle. Like the güiro, maracas were originally made from the gourd trees in South America. From the gourd, the pulp is taken out and the seeds are dried and then put back into the gourd to create the rattling sound (The Oxford Companion to Musical Instruments 1992: 204). Maracas are played in pairs, and the player shakes them according to the rhythm being played. Maracas are commonly used to accompany Latin American dance.

Marimba. The marimba is an instrument which is said to have been introduced to Latin America in pre-Colombian times or later by African slaves. The marimba is a name given to a group of idiophones. The plucked kind are called lamellaphones, and the struck ones are called xylophones (The New Grove Dictionary of Music 1984: 614). In Latin America the marimba is a calabash-resonated xylophone. Each of the calabashes are tuned to the pitch of each key (The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments 1984: 614). In the Dominican Republic, however, the marimba used was not the xylophone commonly found in Mexico and Central America. Rather, it was a wooden box with plucked metal keys (Manuel 1995: 99). The marimba was used as a bass instrument for merengue and bachata music, but today it is replaced with the electric bass.

Tambora. The tambora is a double-headed drum of Latin America. Some play it standing while in the Dominican Republic it is usually played in a seated position (The New Groves Dictionary of Musical Instruments 1984: 508). The drum is made from a hollow log or boards which are arranged to form a cylinder shape (Austerlitz 1997: 25). The player strikes one side of the drum with the hand and the other side with a stick. The tambora is sometimes accompanied by other percussion instruments such as the bongo.

Appendix 2

**ENCUESTA
REPUBLICA DOMINICANA, OCTUBRE - NOVIEMBRE 1999**

1.- ¿Cuál es el tipo de música que mas le gusta? ¿Por Qué?

2.- ¿Cuál es el tipo de música que menos le gusta? ¿Por Qué?

3.- ¿Cuál es su artista o grupo favorito?

4.- En su opinión, ¿Cuál es la música mas popular (que gusta a todos) en la República Dominicana?

(b) ¿Que viene a representar para usted esta música tan popular, si es que representa algo?

Sexo

Hombre Mujer

Grupo de Edad

10-25 25-45 45-65

Ciudad o Pueblo de Residencia

Area de Trabajo o Funciones

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