

their place. In these transgressions, as much as when they worked to position themselves within ideas of mixture or “authenticity” or when they chose to embrace stereotype, Hertzman demonstrates, these musicians were engaged in meaningful racial and cultural politics that left their mark.

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*Salsa World: A Global Dance in Local Contexts.* By Sydney Hutchinson. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013. Pp. viii, 229. Tables. Figures. Index. \$89.50 hardcover.  
doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.45](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.45)

Over the past decades numerous monographs on Latino and Latin American popular musics such as salsa, merengue, cumbia, conjunto, and banda have analyzed the musics in relation to the cultural contexts within which they have emerged. These studies, however, have generally been attentive to the music *per se* and to the performers, with less attention paid to dancers, whose physical and social experiences can and should be distinguished from their roles as consumers of music. Sydney Hutchinson’s comprehensive anthology on salsa dancing in global and local contexts corrects this imbalance by bringing together essays on salsa dancing and salsa dance scenes throughout the Americas and beyond.

Dancing has aptly been referred to as active listening, although the social significance of dancing goes well beyond the acts of hearing and responding physically to music. Indeed, as one of Hutchinson’s sources (Judith Hamera, 2007) notes, “dance technique [is] an archive that stores information about the past for those who can read its language.” The authors in this thoughtfully compiled anthology are able to read the language of salsa dancing, and to interpret it in lucid, jargon-free prose that renders the meanings of salsa dancing accessible to general audiences, whether a reader’s interests lie primarily in the Americas as a region or in dance as performance, as popular music practice, or as indicator of how social systems are constructed in local and global contexts. Most of the authors hail from the regions they analyze, and are dancers themselves. Hutchinson is to be commended for bringing such diverse voices together, and for translating several of the Spanish language essays into English herself, thereby broadening the range of her work.

The origins and trajectories of salsa music are inevitably part of the discussions, but the authors’ primary focus is on the dance scenes that developed as dancers sought ways to organize themselves around their shared interests. Key essays, including two introductory chapters by Hutchinson, cover salsa dancing in the core locations associated with salsa music: New York, where existing Caribbean rhythms coalesced

into the style marketed as salsa in the 1960s and 1970s; Cuba, whose *son* music with its signature *clave* beat is widely acknowledged as salsa's root genre; and the island of Puerto Rico, where decades of musical and dance styles circulating between the island and New York enable claims of cultural ownership. The anthology also includes essays analyzing salsa scenes that emerged in later decades in locations with large populations of Latinos or Spanish speakers: Los Angeles, New Jersey, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Spain. Other essays analyze salsa dancing in less predictable locations, those lacking well-established Latin/o American or Spanish speaking communities: Champaign-Urbana (Illinois), Paris, and Japan.

Within salsa dancing communities, debates about the origins of salsa music have been superseded by disagreements about the ownership and authenticity of salsa dancing techniques. While loosely correlated to the location/s from which salsa dancing is believed to have emerged, the primary distinction is between which beat is emphasized in the basic step: 1, as in Los Angeles, or 2, as in New York and Puerto Rico). The on-2 dance step is believed to more closely adhere to salsa's *clave* rhythm. Instructors and schools from different geographical areas tend to identify themselves with one or the other style, and each style comes associated with its own claims to authenticity. Other distinctions also figure into how salsa is taught, performed, and valued: the degree to which various techniques such as turns, dips, or ways of moving the feet and body are considered indicators of proficiency and authenticity—or lack thereof.

Another crucial distinction is between social salsa dancing learned informally in family and community settings and studio dancing, learned by paying for dancing lessons alongside others who are not “native” dancers. Some authors lament that salsa dancing's original cultural resonances have been lost as it severed from its original grounding—in working class, racially or ethnically identified Latin/o communities in New York, Cuba, and Puerto Rico—and transplanted into more upscale, ethnically nonspecific studios and international dance congresses and competitions, where most “non-natives” have learned to (and continue to) dance. The latter venues have fostered an emphasis on technique and connoisseurship, departing from the informal, improvisatory style of social dancing that originally imbued salsa dancing with its performative and symbolic meanings.

In contrast, other salsa dancers celebrate how the formalization of salsa dancing techniques has provided a common vocabulary that allows dancers from around the globe to learn from each other via social media and to interact at congresses, and they appreciate how salsa dancing has evolved in dialogue with other dancing styles such as hip-hop or cumbia. Salsa dancers in all settings, however, take great pride in the particularities of their local salsa scenes and ways of dancing, because these are understood to express the unique history and personality of each location.

Ethnic and class divisions and struggles are discernible throughout the essays. Some focus on the local ethnic specificity of salsa's original working-class settings, such as the informal *aguaelulo* dances in Cali, Colombia, while others interpret the more upscale

contexts associated with the burgeoning number and geographical dispersal of salsa dance studios and international salsa congresses, now lucrative commercial enterprises. Several authors describe the patrons of the latter as cosmopolitan, a term that suggests that these salsa dancers, Latino and non-Latino alike, are (or imagine themselves) as sophisticated and worldly, in contrast to immigrant or working-class dancers whose salsa dancing takes place in very different social settings and for different cultural reasons.

Initially, Latin/o American dancers enjoyed the advantages of being considered more authentic because their techniques had been “culturally inherited” rather than schooled. As salsa dancing became more widely popular, some skilled ethnic/working class dancers were able to leverage their cultural capital into new avenues of economic and social mobility. But over time, as dancers from more socioeconomically diverse racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds began teaching, producing, and promoting salsa dance events, Latinos lost their competitive edge. As the essays on Paris and Champaign-Urbana demonstrate, Latinos have sometimes been displaced altogether by those with more economic and social capital.

The essays also address various constructions and reconstructions of gender roles on dance floors: for example, how dancing conventions such as man leads/woman follows have been challenged (or not) in various locations; the relative importance of appearance and dress, especially in studio or competitive dance contexts (in contrast to social dancing scenes); or the ways gay dancers have destabilized the relationship between male bodily display and machismo. Other essays comment on the gendered organization of the salsa dance industry, in which, as on the dance floor, men have traditionally taken the lead—although it is clear from the essays that women have also been active as teachers and organizers of dances.

In summary, this highly recommended anthology illuminates how salsa dancing styles and distinctly local salsa scenes have evolved in multiple locations, but it also offers fascinating insights into the complex interplay between dance and culturally constructed ideas about race, class, ethnic, gender, tradition and modernity, migration, globalization, and national and local identity formation.

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*Language and Ethnicity among the K'ichee' Maya.* By Sergio Romero. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2015. Pp. 179. Illustrations. Maps. \$50.00 cloth.  
doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.46](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.46)

The K'ichee' language is best known to the world as the original language of the *Popol Vuh*. Romero's book is an historical ethnography of K'ichee', a Guatemalan