LO NUESTRO ES LO VERDADERO: ð
CULTURAL POLITICS, MUSICAL NATIONALISM, AND THE IMAGE OF BRAZIL
IN DOMINICAN NATIONAL CARNIVAL

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THESIS
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ABSTRACT

As the home of the most famous and successful carnival, the celebration in the city of Rio de Janeiro has quickly transformed into the world-model for carnivals in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the image of Brazil has played an increasingly influential role in the development of carnival in the Dominican Republic. There are many factors that make carnival in Rio de Janeiro enviable: its economic success, mass tourist appeal, exaggerated grandiloquence, heightened sexuality, and its profound association with the musical genre *samba*. However, the Dominican state's desire to imitate Brazilian carnival is not wholly compatible with the customary carnival activities of the Dominican people, nor has it contributed to a substantial change in carnival practices within the Dominican Republic.

This thesis investigates both the emergence of carnival practices and musical nationalism in Brazil and the Dominican Republic. This is in order to understand how carnival in Rio developed into the most successful and desirable model for carnival and the conditions that would ultimately impact the compatibility of a Brazilian-carnival model for Dominican carnivals in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, I investigate the historical influences behind the discrepancies between what Dominicans say and what Dominicans do through analysis of the Dominican National Carnival Parade in Santo Domingo. This conflict is particularly salient between the discourse of Dominican state cultural politics and the actual practices of its people, making a unified concept of the Dominican nation both unique and problematic. Therefore, the celebration of Dominican National Carnival in Santo Domingo is an ideal case study for
examining the construction of *dominicanidad*, mediating between Dominican state institutions and the Dominican people.

Drawing on fieldwork conducted during the 2010 carnival season throughout the Dominican Republic, this study examines the historical processes of cultural politics behind the formation of Brazilian and Dominican nationalism, analyzes accounts of actual carnival practices in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Santo Domingo during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, explores how the discourse of Brazilian carnival influenced the creation of the Dominican National Carnival parade in Santo Domingo and its continual affect the discourse of Dominican carnival in the twenty-first century, and briefly discusses the recent emergence of the popular Dominican carnival music/dance groups called *Alí-Babá* and how current carnival practices in Brazil also challenge contemporary conceptions of Brazilian carnival.
To my entire family
y la gente dominicana
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

On 27 January 2010, the Dominican National Brewery, in conjunction with the Dominican Ministry of Culture, launched the cultural campaign and advertisement slogan "Lo nuestro es lo verdadero" at the official opening of the Dominican Carnival season. Roughly translating into English as "What ours is what real," the Brewery unveiled its marketing strategy with its flagship brand Presidente Beer as the official sponsor of Dominican carnivals, folklore, and traditions. The Dominican National Brewery has been an important sponsor of the Dominican National Carnival Parade since its inception in 1983 and produces specially designed cans to be sold at the parade instead of the standard bottle. According to Presidente brand-manager Marisol Martínez, quoted in an article published in the online periodical Dominicanos Hoy.com, Presidente always supports what is Dominican ("lo dominicano") and what is real ("lo verdadero"), which shows that at the exact moment of saying Carnival, one must speak of Presidente (2010). However, the "Lo nuestro es lo verdadero" slogan was not utilized by Presidente Beer during the actual 2010 carnival season or during the National Parade. The Presidente float during the 2010 instead featured the slogan "Refrescando desde siempre el carnaval dominicano" ("Forever refreshing Dominican Carnival").

In this study, I investigate the historical influences behind the discrepancies between "what Dominicans say" and "what Dominicans do" through analysis of the Dominican National


2 "Desde siempre Presidente apoya lo dominicano y lo verdadero, lo que demuestra que a la hora de hablar de Carnaval, hay que hablar de Presidente." All translations from Spanish to English are by the author unless otherwise specified. I include the original Spanish text only where I feel my interpretation is not word-for-word. This quote and article can be found at http://dominicanostry.com/articulos/archivos/2010/febrero/articulo/ceveza-presidente-refrescando-el-carnaval-dominicano (accessed 20 May 2010).
Carnival Parade in Santo Domingo. I suggest that the core of Dominican national identity, or *dominicanidad*, which includes the celebration of carnival, the embodiment of Dominican music and dance, and a history of anti-Haitian sentiment, is so deep in thought and habit within their society that these habits are unconsciously manifested as a disconnect between discourse and practice. This conflict is particularly salient between the discourse of Dominican state cultural politics and the actual practices of its people, making a unified concept of *the Dominican nation* both unique and problematic. Therefore, the celebration of Dominican National Carnival in Santo Domingo is an ideal case study for examining the construction of *dominicanidad*, mediating between Dominican state institutions and the Dominican people.

**TOWARD A THEORY OF 'CARNIVAL'**

In his book *Music and Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (2008), Thomas Turino writes, ‘Most of us live firmly in the day-to-day, the Actual. We have our routines and act out of habité .[but] we also need the Possible - dreams, hopes, desires, ideals: these are the elements of life that add dynamism and challenge and that make us want to keep living’ (17). Carnival enjoys a special status as a popular celebration that embodies the ‘Actual’ in the form of governing institutions and social networks that govern the celebration. Carnival also embodies the ‘Possible’ in the form of individual creativity and defiance of social norms of the people. Therefore, the analysis of carnival practices fosters an understanding of the social life of its practitioners, and vice versa.

As the home of the most famous and successful carnival, the celebration in the city of Rio de Janeiro has quickly transformed into the world-model for carnivals in Europe, Africa, Asia,

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3 In this work, I consistently use single quotation marks to signal discursive terms (*carnival*, *Dominican*, etc.) in order to distinguish it from actual practices, thoughts, or behaviors and foreign terms, translations, or direct quotations.
and the Americas. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the image of Brazil has played an increasingly influential role in the development of carnival throughout the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, the 2010 carnival season in the La Vega region of the Dominican Republic was independently sponsored for the first time by *Brahma Light* Beer, the flagship brand of the Brazilian-based AmBev Dominicana. In addition, carnival in La Vega, by far the most famous, most commercialized, and most *Brazilian* of all Dominican carnivals, rivals the popularity of the National Carnival in Santo Domingo. There are many factors that make carnival in Rio de Janeiro enviable: its economic success, mass tourist appeal, exaggerated grandiloquence, heightened sexuality, and its profound association with the musical genre *samba*. However, it is my assertion that the Dominican state’s desire to imitate *Brazilian* carnival is not wholly compatible with the customary carnival activities of the Dominican people, nor has it contributed to a substantial change in carnival practices within the Dominican Republic.

*The Case for Carnival as a Subject of Study*

Without a doubt, carnival celebrations have been an appealing object of study among scholars of folklore, anthropology, music, art, and dance. A wide variety of Dominican scholars have devoted the bulk of their work to the study of carnival in the Dominican Republic, focusing on the origin and history of Dominican carnival (see Valdez 1995; Estévez Aristy 2006; Tejeda Ortiz 2008) or carnival folklore and Dominican identity (see Tejeda Ortiz 1998; Khouri Zouain and López Cabral 2005; Tejeda Ortiz 2010b). As for Brazil, of the many factors that make carnival in Rio de Janeiro famous around the world, its association with the *escolas de samba*, or *samba schools*, and the musical genre *samba* has received special attention by Brazilian and
non-Brazilian scholars alike (see Gardel 1967; Cabral 1974; Goldwasser 1975; Raphael 1981; Guillermoprieto 1990; Raphael 1990; Araujo 1992; Pinto 1992; Browning 1995; Cabral 1996; Shaw 1999; Vianna 1999).

Unlike the plethora of sources on Brazilian carnival available in a variety of languages, there are few sources available on Dominican carnival written by non-Dominicans or published in a language other than Spanish (see Gonzalez 1970 and Derby 2000). Furthermore, unlike the multitude of sources on Brazilian carnival and music, there is no single published source available, in any language, that is primarily devoted to the study of music during carnival in the Dominican Republic. This particular deficiency is striking, considering the importance of both the celebration of carnival and the embodiment of music and dance in the construction of dominicanidad. Therefore, this thesis is one of the first published works that focuses on Dominican carnival music and is written in English. However, I utilize the subject of carnival as a tool for analyzing the disconnect between the Dominican state and the Dominican people in everyday life.

The idea that carnival occupies an important social function within society is not new, but there has been little agreement on the exact role that carnival serves. The earliest interpretation of carnival can be found in Mikhail Bakhtin's tome *Rabelais and His World* (1968). Bakhtin explores the literary implications of carnival, or the carnivalesque, in the work of medieval author François Rabelais. Bakhtin's most influential contribution to the way that scholars analyze actual carnival practices is the concept of the world turned upside down. Described by Simon Dentith, Bakhtin's carnival is not just a popular celebration, but a space for both subverting authority and symbolic inversion (1995: 66-67). The theme of carnival-as-popular-subversion permeates the works of many scholars. Marshall Eakin refers to carnival in Brazil as
an opposition to "a dura realidade da vida," or the hard reality of life (1997: 143). Dominican carnival scholar Dagoberto Tejeda Ortiz calls carnival in the Dominican Republic "el mundo al revés," or the world in reverse (2008: 33). There are several important aspects of carnival that allow for the opportunity of social subversion. The prominent use of disguise in carnival creates the space for individuals to hide their identity, as well as the potential to behave in ways outside of the social norm. This can include public harassment or illicit sexual behavior between men and women (see Chasteen 1996 and Prizer 2004). The disguise also provides the opportunity to subliminally hide social critique and popular revolt in plain sight of the authorities.

There has been an equal output of academic work demonstrating how carnival represents a by-product of social control and authoritarian domination. Alison Raphael's seminal dissertation describes the rise of carnival samba in Brazil as a mechanism for social control, to pre-empt Black social movements for equality (1981). Nancie Gonzalez calls carnival practices in Santiago a mechanism which reinforces class and ethnic boundaries, and assists in maintaining the whole cultural complex of the Dominican Republic (1970: 328). The King-for-a-day atmosphere ostensibly permeates carnival, but this group of scholars has argued that Bakhtin's "symbolic inversion" does not signify true social inversion. In these interpretations, carnival is analyzed in relation to governing bodies, such as: the state institutions and cultural organizations that influence the legal regulation of carnival, commercial establishments and private enterprises that influence the financial regulation of carnival, and the class structure and racial politics that influence the social regulation of carnival. Carnival takes on the role of a tension-release valve or a social compromise between the dominant and the dominated that is designed to maintain social order for the remainder of the year. Many carnival scholars have
analyzed the financial cost of carnival as the primary limiting factor of the who, what, where, when, and how of carnival celebrations (see Rapahel 1990 and Prizer 2004).

I propose that both of these interpretations of carnival – as social subversion and as social control – are accurate, but neither stands alone as the only operative during carnival. In fact, carnival is a unique social event because it operates on multiple levels at the same time. I will demonstrate how carnival mediates the political, economic, and social establishments that control everyday life and the potential for individuals to challenge social norms. In doing so, carnival automatically reflects many of the unique characteristics of its actors – both the people and its governing body. For this reason, I will examine the celebration of Dominican National Carnival in Santo Domingo in order to better understand the contradictions of [everyday] Dominican life (Austerlitz 1997: 150).

I now return to my original examination of which aspects of Brazilian carnival have proven compatible with Dominican carnival and which aspects have not. The concepts of Brazilian carnival or Dominican carnival are potentially misleading because they give the reader the impression that there are such things. Carnival itself may often simply be defined as a pre-Lenten festival celebrated within the Roman Catholic tradition, but actual carnival practices are not so easily bound (see Gulevich 2002: 51-58). In reality, carnival is a variable term that refers to a multitude of celebrations in very different places. Even in the context of Brazil and the Dominican Republic, there is no one single Brazilian or Dominican carnival. Brazil is a vast Republic comprised of twenty-six states and nearly 200 million citizens. Brazilian carnival practices vary greatly between the official state festivities in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Bahia, Pernambuco, and Minas Gerais that culminate during the four days before Ash Wednesday and the local practices of other towns and individual neighborhoods that begin as early as October.
The Dominican Republic is considerably smaller and is comprised of only thirty-one provinces and 10 million citizens. Nonetheless, in addition to the one national carnival celebration in Santo Domingo on the first Sunday in March, the Dominican Republic offers at least forty regional and municipal carnival celebrations beginning in February and lasting until August (Desfile Nacional 2008: 54). There may be no one carnival in either Brazil or the Dominican Republic, but the discourses of Brazilian carnival and Dominican carnival are useful for understanding how the celebrations in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Santo Domingo have created and shaped the discourse of carnival.

Thus, the term Brazilian carnival becomes a functional concept not for understanding actual carnival practices in Brazil, but as a catchall term for the way perceptions of carnival in Rio have transformed into a representation of carnival in the entire country. On the other hand, the concept of Dominican Carnival is valuable for understanding the way Dominican scholars and the Dominican state perceive their own carnival celebrations. In this way, the Dominican National Carnival Parade in Santo Domingo emerges as the Dominican carnival, purportedly because it selectively represents carnival traditions from all regions and provinces of the Dominican Republic. However, National Carnival has not superseded the prominence of several local carnivals, such as La Vega or Puerto Plata, that are each economically successful and independently influenced by the discourse of Brazilian carnival.

TOWARD A THEORY OF LATIN AMERICAN NATIONALISM

Just as carnivals have various meanings in various places, the Brazilian and Dominican identity markers have meant different things to different people at different times. The implications of Brazilian and Dominican national identities make them unique and
individual case studies. However there are several scholars that have contributed to a general understanding of nationalism as a discourse. Of these, I incorporate the nationalism theories of Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, and Thomas Turino in order to devise a historical framework for analyzing carnival practices in Brazil and the Dominican Republic.

In *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (1990), Eric Hobsbawm defines nationalism as both the principle and the program which supports that the political unit (state) and national unit (nation) should be congruent (nation-state) (9). Two of Hobsbawm's key points are first, that nationalism is a discourse and second, that national sentiment, or national patriotism, is the feeling one has of belonging to a given national identity unit (46). Hobsbawm also clearly distinguishes national sentiment from the related concept of state patriotism, which refers to the state-generated ideological construct of a particular version of the country that may or may not reflect its actual citizens (93). Another of Hobsbawm's contributions to this discourse is that the nation is neither a naturally-occurring nor a universal phenomenon; it is not a fixed entity, but one that can, and therefore does, change over time (10-11). Utilizing these main concepts, Hobsbawm develops a three-phase model in order to analyze general trends and developments of the nationalist program since the 1780s.

The first phase of Hobsbawm's model is proto-nationalism and nation-building (1830-1880). These processes are characterized by the initial linking of the nation to state-based institutions, the development of national economies, the creation of a national language and/or ethnicity, and an emphasis on the ideas of progressivism and modernity (see chapters 1-3). The second phase is characterized by the rise and culmination of nationalist discourse and the nation-state (1880-1950). Language and ethnicity became central in defining a nation and the new urban middle classes began to challenge elite-dominated state institutions (see chapters 3-5).
The final phase of Hobsbawm’s model is the phase of multicultural nationalism and poly-ethnic states. In this contemporary phase of nationalism, a nation no longer required its own state and assimilates into or embraces minority group status in an existing state. This phase is also characterized by the emergence of micro-states, such as Kosova, due in part to the rise of late capitalism and post-colonialism (see chapter 6).

By his own admission, Hobsbawm’s model only encompasses European and US nationalist programs without much consideration of Asia, Africa, or Latin America. In the second edition of his magnum opus Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (2006/1991), Benedict Anderson begins to question these exclusionary models for analyzing nationalist discourse. Anderson suggests the contradiction of nationalism’s apparent universality as a socio-cultural concept, while at the same time manifesting itself in localized ways in each individual case (5). Rather famously, Anderson proposes an alternative definition of the ‘nation’ as ‘imagined: imagined as community, or a human group that does not involved face-to-face interaction with every member; imagined as limited, or within a well-defined territory; and imagined as sovereign, meaning governing power need no longer be divinely-ordained (7). Additionally, Anderson emphasizes the role of the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of print capitalism as means of educating citizens with a state-generated national sentiment and making the imagined possible (see chapter 2).

Anderson’s treatment still does not offer a model for considering the discourse of nationalism specifically for the case of Latin America. In his article Nationalism and Latin American Music: Selected Case Studies and Theoretical Consideration (2003b), Thomas Turino offers a new model for considering Latin American nationalism by building off of the concepts of both Hobsbawm and Anderson yet, even Turino asserts that nationalism cannot be over-
generalized to fit every case, every time. There are, however, general nationalist trends for certain regions based on shared experiences, including Europe and Latin America (171). Turino discusses the concept of cultural nationalism, the process by which former colonies attempted to create a modern sense of a nation through the use of local expressive practices such as art, literature, and music (174-175). Like Hobsbawm's three phases of European nationalism, Turino utilizes a theoretical framework of two phases in Latin American nationalist discourse — nineteenth-century cultural elitism and independence movements (c.1814-1900s) and twentieth-century populist-reformism (c.1910-1970s).

Turino states that nineteenth-century Latin American nationalism projects were primarily state-generated and culturally elitist. During this phase, the land-owning criollo males of Spanish and Portuguese descent counted as the only citizens of these newly and ideally imagined Latin American states (2003b: 180). According to Turino, nationalism in the early republics was grounded in cosmopolitan rather than distinctive local popular traditions (2003b: 178). The term cosmopolitan, as described in another article by Turino, refers to a type of trans-state cultural formation bound by communication loops between cosmopolitans in various locations rather than by ties to one specific location or homeland (like immigrant or diaspora communities) (Turino 2003a: 62). The genres of Latin American music developed during this period, such as Brazilian modinha and the varieties of contredanse found throughout the Caribbean, resemble other cosmopolitan genres also present in Europe and the U.S. (see Vianna 1999 and Austerlitz 1997).

Beginning in the first decades of the twentieth century, Latin American nationalism became populist in character. Populist nationalism involves the concept that all people living within a territory have the right to be part of the nation and included as citizens of the state.
For Latin America, this generally meant the inclusion of subaltern groups like indigenous, black, or mixed communities as part of the imagined nation, formally linking these groups to the state for the first time (Turino 2003b: 181). Turino is careful to point out that these populist programs are rarely instigated from within these subaltern groups, but often by members of the urban middle classes co-opting the cultural expressions of these communities. Turino asserts that the impetus for populist-reform is not always enlightened liberalism, but instead is driven by the processes of modernity, industrialization, and capitalism. In general, these developing states' desire for political autonomy required economic autonomy. This meant that the state needed more workers for emerging industries and especially more local consumers to support these national industries. In Turino's model, music and the radio became primary tools for creating and disseminating the feeling of national belonging among the people in the early twentieth century, particularly in the lower classes and in marginalized communities (Turino 2003b: 187).

Many of the typical musical genres of Latin American countries emerged during this period, including Brazilian samba, Dominican merengue, Cuban son, and Peruvian huayno among others (see Vianna 1999; Austerlitz 1997; Moore 1997; and Turino 1993).

Following Hobsbawm's three-phase model of nationalism, I suggest the addition of a third phase of Latin American nationalism: redemocratization and the return of liberal politics. Many Latin American countries had previously housed dictatorial governments that came to an end between the late 1970s and the 1990s, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Peru. This third phase of nationalism in Latin America is similar to Hobsbawm's third phase of European-U.S multicultural nationalism and the creation of polyethnic states. Along with a renewal of progressivism and now multinational capitalism, new privatized corporations emerged as the centers of Latin American economic power. During this
third phase, Latin American identity became ‘international,’ as well as a new type of capitalist marketing label. Today, the international entertainment industry, the internet, and individuals often serve as more important actors than the state in the dissemination of new international Latin American identities. Although pan-Latin American identity strategies developed as early as the 1960s (see Rios 2008), the market potential for new pan-Latino cultural expressions increased exponentially after the 1970s. This includes many international genres of music (like *salsa, mambo, lambada,* and Latin jazz) that compete for a share of local markets with national genres, like *samba* and *merengue.*

Turino clearly describes the populist reforms of many Latin American countries during the first half of the twentieth century that turned to the cultural expressions of subaltern groups, including indigenous, black, or mixed communities. However, beginning in the 1970s, cosmopolitans began to narrow their focus onto the cultural expressions of black communities within their borders. This interest in afro-American communities even included Latin American countries with proportionately small or localized populations of African descent such as Colombia, Honduras, Panama, Peru, and Nicaragua (see Feldman 2006 and Scruggs 1999). In addition to creating local afro-Latino identity strategies, some Latinos also began looking to other internationally popular cosmopolitan ‘African’ cultural expressions, including music genres like rap and reggae. This pan-africano-American identity strategy can be explained, in part, by the international success of the *world beat* music phenomenon. According to Steven Feld, there was a substantial surge of cosmopolitan interest in the potential market for ‘African’ music, from both communities in Africa and the African diaspora in the 1980s, following albums like Paul Simon’s *Graceland* (1988: 31). Reggae and hip-hop music have had a profound impact on
multiple genres of music in Latin American, and particularly in the Caribbean, creating popular international music genres like reggaetón.

As I have demonstrated, it is vital to construct a more expanded general theory of nationalism in Latin America. In doing so, one can now more accurately analyze some current nationalist trends not covered by conventional Western discourse.

THE IMAGE OF BRAZIL AND DOMINICAN NATIONAL CARNIVAL

Though embodying different characteristics, there are two factors that make Brazil the most desirable and logical model for the construction of carnival in the Dominican Republic. First, Rio de Janeiro’s economic success makes its carnival an attractive selection. Second, Brazilian national identity, or brasilidade, like dominicanidad, is rooted in cultural expressions that are present during carnival, including art, dance, and above all music. However, the two factors that differentiate Brazil and the Dominican Republic are their economic histories and the manner in which these countries have historically approached the discourse of race and blackness. In chapter two, I examine the historical processes of cultural politics behind the formation of Brazilian and Dominican nationalism in order to provide a foundation for my analysis of carnival in subsequent chapters. The model of nationalism that I have constructed (drawn from the works of Hobsbawm, Anderson, and Turino) explains general trends and similarities in Latin American nationalist projects and is useful for establishing a framework of both Brazilian and Dominican political, economic, and social history. Therefore, I explore the impact of cultural politics on the development of Brazilian and Dominican nationalism during three parallel phases: the phase of independence and emerging national sentiment (nineteenth
century); the phase of dictators, military regimes, and cultural nationalism (early-twentieth century); and the phase of redemocratization and liberal politics (late-twentieth century).

In chapter three, I explore accounts of actual carnival practices in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Santo Domingo during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In general, the nineteenth-century pre-nationalism period in Brazil and the Dominican Republic was dominated by elite cosmopolitanism. However, the countries were populated both by ‘white’ citizens looking to other cosmopolitan countries as ideal cultural models and by ‘black’ non-cosmopolitans practicing local cultural expressions. The nineteenth-century origins of Brazilian and Dominican national identity would culminate with state-generated cultural nationalism projects directed by Brazilian dictator Getúlio Vargas and Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo, especially in regards to ‘race.’ The cultural nationalism of these two dictators was quite different and, naturally, created very different results. Thus, I explore the role of the dictatorships on the emergence of new national music genres, the *samba* in Rio de Janeiro and the *merengue* in Santo Domingo. First, I analyze the emergence of carnival practices and musical nationalism in Brazil in order to understand how carnival in Rio developed into the most successful and desirable model for carnival. Second, I analyze the emergence of carnival practices and musical nationalism in the Dominican Republic in order to understand the development of anti-Haitian sentiment and how it would impact the compatibility of a ‘Brazilian carnival’ model for Dominican carnivals in the twenty-first century.

In chapter four, I explore how the discourse of ‘Brazilian carnival’ influenced the creation of the Dominican National Carnival Parade in Santo Domingo and its continual affect on the discourse of ‘Dominican carnival’ in the twenty-first century. As one can hardly fathom carnival in Rio de Janeiro without *samba*, one might expect *merengue*, often considered the
national music/dance of the Dominican Republic, to be central to carnival in Santo Domingo.

The state institutions in charge of the National Carnival Parade have made an effort over the past decades to place *merengue* in the center of Dominican National Carnival. However, the state has failed in this endeavor, leading some scholars, and Dominicans alike, to believe that "there is no music" at Dominican carnival (see Hutchinson 2009 and Hajek 2010). Drawing on fieldwork conducted during the 2010 carnival season throughout the Dominican Republic, I examine contemporary performances of music during the Dominican National Carnival Parade in Santo Domingo and regional carnival celebrations in La Vega, Santiago, and La Romana in order to understand the potential for Dominican people to challenge the state’s implementation of a "Brazilian" model for "Dominican" carnivals.

In chapter five, as a conclusion, I briefly look at how current carnival practices in Brazil, including Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, also challenge the contemporary discourse of "Brazilian carnival." I also discuss the aspects of "Brazilian carnival" that have proven unsuccessful and incompatible with actual carnival practices in the Dominican Republic. Through a discussion of the recent emergence and popularity of the Dominican carnival music/dance groups called *Ali-Babá*, I demonstrate how the people of the Dominican Republic have developed their own carnival practices independently of, and often in opposition to, state-generated carnival discourse.
CHAPTER 2

CULTURAL POLITICS OF THE BRAZILIAN AND DOMINICAN STATE

How can the study of carnival as discourse and practice foster a greater understanding of the idiosyncrasies of social life in a given society? In his seminal work *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Erving Goffman writes,

> The expressiveness of the individual appears to involve two kinds of sign activities: the expression that he *gives* and the expression that he *gives off*... Thus, when an individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so in fact, than does his behavior as a whole... [thus, there is often a] discrepancy between appearance and actual activity (2, 35, 44; emphasis in original).

Although Goffman’s stated focus of his report is theatrical performance (2), this concept of a discrepancy between *who one is* and *who one seems to be* is also applicable for evaluating the theatrical-like performances during other social events, including carnival. However, what does this process look like when the individual actors engaged in an act of (mis)representation are not only people, but larger governing bodies, like state institutions, cultural organizations, commercial establishments, and private enterprises?

In this chapter, I examine the foundation of the Brazilian and Dominican states and their national identities in order to create a basis for my analysis of carnival in later chapters. In his book *Política Cultural* (2009), Dominican Sub-Secretary of Culture Mateo Morrison (now Vice-Minister of Culture) defines cultural politics as *the conjunction of operations, principles, practices, and procedures of budgetary and administrative processes* that serve as the state’s base of action (35). This means that, despite general historical trends, the governing bodies in
both Brazil and the Dominican Republic would inevitably develop independent manifestations of cultural politics that would best serve its own state. It is necessary first to determine the possible sources of the discrepancies that exist between the Dominican state and the Dominican people in order to understand the potential reasons for the individual characteristics of these two states. Utilizing the three-phase theory of Latin American nationalism as my framework, I consider the political, economic, and social histories of these two states in order to establish which elements created the greatest differences between Brazil and the Dominican Republic. In the next two sections, I explore the historical antecedents of Brazilian and Dominican nationalism.

ANTECEDANTS TO NATIONALISM: THE COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

Sixteenth century colonial Brazil operated more like the other Portuguese networks of trading posts than a functional colony (Skidmore 1999: 8). Unlike more profitable Portuguese territories in Africa and India, trade with the early Brazilian economy was not a significant portion of the Portuguese revenue (Fausto 1999: 14). At first, the Portuguese primarily occupied the eastern coastal region from the capital city Salvador in the north, founded in 1549, to the city of Rio de Janeiro in the south, founded in 1565. The large expanses of unoccupied territory and a small colonial population left regions vulnerable to foreign invasion. The Dutch invaded the northeastern city of Recife and occupied the city from 1624 to 1654 (41). Some Brazilian scholars argue that the defeat of the Dutch in 1654 was the birth of the earliest Brazilian national sentiment (Skidmore 1999: 12).

The Portuguese engaged in the Atlantic slave trade in order to provide a workforce for the sugar plantations beginning in 1580, totaling over 3 million slaves by the time the practice was abolished in 1850 (Skidmore 1999: 17). Brazil was the world’s largest producer of sugar
cane throughout the seventeenth century (Skidmore 1999: 19). After the discovery of gold at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the colonial and slave population migrated to the south and established the territory of Minas Gerias (Fausto 1999: 50). In 1763, the Brazilian capital moved from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro because it was closer to the emerging mining industry in the southern region (14). Brazil’s mineral wealth resulted in an increase of its economic prominence as a Portuguese colony (50).

The Brazilian and Dominican colonial experience had little in common. The island of Hispaniola was Spain’s first colony in the New World but it was by no means the biggest or the most profitable. By the 1520s, most of Hispaniola’s original goldmines were depleted, the majority of the original native population was eradicated, and most of the small Spanish population began to leave the colony (Moya Pons 1995: 34-37). Santo Domingo was, at first, the only port authorized to trade directly with Spain. When Havana became the new Caribbean hub in 1543, the decision inadvertently led to the colony’s isolation from Spanish trade and foreign merchants, furthermore leading to the abandonment of Santo Domingo and, by extension, the entire colony (42). The fledgling Dominican sugar mill industry quickly began to fail, forcing the sugar plantations to become self-sufficient and independent of the port cities. This also increased the number of run-away slaves and the number of smuggling port communities in the north and west parts of the island (50).

In the seventeenth century, Spain lost its monopoly on Caribbean possessions to other colonial forces, including the Dutch, French, and English (Moya Pons 1995: 51). Spain had even lost control of the western portion of Hispaniola. The French-Spanish Treaty of Ryswick officially established the French colony of Saint Domingue and the Spanish-controlled Santo Domingo on the island in 1697 (Enrique Díaz and González Camacho 2005: 88). During the
eighteenth century, the French colony flourished as the center of the French Caribbean sugar and tobacco industries. The colonial economy in Santo Domingo shifted to cattle ranching and timber harvesting instead of sugar (Moya Pons 1995: 87).

The existence of a significant African slave population in the French colony eventually resulted in several intense slave revolts, beginning in 1791, that became the Haitian Revolution. The Revolution not only confounded the Western world, but would also have a dramatic affect on the Santo Domingo colony (Enrique Díaz and González Camacho 2005: 101). The Haitian rebel leader Toussaint Louverture advanced on the city of Santo Domingo in 1801 (Moya Pons 1995: 98). Toussaint was eventually defeated and expelled by the French and Dominican troops in 1802, leaving Santo Domingo for a time under French control. After the official proclamation of the independent Republic of Haiti in 1804, Toussaint’s successors, Henri Christophe and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, returned to Santo Domingo in order to help the Spanish and Dominicans expel the French from the island (112). The continual fighting left the remaining Dominican sugar and cattle industry in ruins (115).

ANTECEDENTS TO NATIONALISM: THE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE

Portugal had long considered the possibility of moving the seat of its government to its prosperous Brazilian colony long before Napoleon invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 1807 (Fausto 1999: 64). In order to preserve the monarchy, Dom João IV and the majority of the Portuguese royal court uprooted and reestablished the Portuguese Empire in the New World in 1808. This made Brazil the only former colony to serve as the residence and political center of the government of its mother country, which elevated Brazil’s status from Portugal’s colony to its equal (Skidmore 1999: 36).
The arrival of the Portuguese court resulted in many economic and social changes in Brazil (Skidmore 1999: 36). However, the Portuguese royals were shocked by the situation they encountered upon arriving in Salvador and Rio. Brazil had a large population of blacks and mulattos that would complicate the growing list of tension between the Portuguese and Brazilians. The Portuguese court remained in Brazil after the defeat of Napoleon in 1814, creating the United Kingdom of Portugal (Fausto 1999: 68). When Dom João returned to Portugal in 1821, Prince Regent Pedro stayed behind and subsequently declared Brazil independent in 1822. Dom Pedro assumed his role as the ruler of the new Brazilian Empire, but returned to Portugal in 1831 (Skidmore 1999: 37, 41). Pedro II, Dom Pedro’s five year-old son, officially became the new Emperor, but only physically assumed power in 1840 (46).

Unlike Brazil, the Dominican Republic began its independence movement against Haiti and not Spain. France continued efforts to recapture the Republic of Haiti between 1814 and 1816, providing fodder for the Haitian President Jean Pierre Boyer’s fear that the French would reclaim the island through Santo Domingo. The Santo Domingo government faced a difficult choice to prevent all-out war: realign with Spain, annex with the Republic of Gran Colombia, or align with Haiti (Moya Pons 1995: 123). The Santo Domingo government chose to align with Haiti and the Haitian Occupation of the city began in 1822 (Enrique Díaz and González Camacho 2005: 136).

There were many positive social and political changes in the Santo Domingo colony during the Haitian occupation. These included the official abolition of slavery, a new land tenure system, and the establishment of a plantation agriculture economy focused on coffee and sugar (Moya Pons 1995: 130). However, the Dominican population resisted these progressive changes and formed the secret society of La Trinitaria in 1838 (Hernández and Hernández Grullón...
The Dominican national sentiment fostered by this group was based on perceived fundamental differences between the Dominicans and the Haitians, including dissimilar economies, legal systems, culture, and above all language, race, and religion (Moya Pons 1995: 151). After years of internal battle, members of La Trinitaria proclaimed Dominican independence on 27 February 1844 and created the Dominican Republic (152).

THREE PHASES OF NATIONALISM IN BRAZIL AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Brazilian colonial experience leading up to independence was characterized by economic stability and a status equal to its European colonizer. The Dominican colonial experience leading up to independence was characterized by economic ruin and twenty-two years of Haitian occupation that would forever impact the way that the Dominican nation-state would imagine itself. Sub-Secretary Morrison contends that an independent Dominican national sentiment was born out of the desire to create an identity distinct from Haiti (2009: 52). The state positioned Haiti as 'black,' 'French-speaking,' and 'voodoo-practicing' as the official Dominican ideology and constructed an imagined national sentiment positioned in direct opposition. This Dominican national identity fueled a history of Dominican state cultural politics that were defined, at least in part, as anti-'Haitian,' anti-'African,' and anti-'black.' This predictably produced a conflict between the Dominican state and its large, predominantly mulatto population. This problematic nature in defining the Dominican nation throughout Dominican history therefore impacted the nature of the timeline for the Dominican nationalist program. Whereas the origins of Brazilian national sentiment can be traced back to the seventeenth century, Dominican national sentiment would not emerge until the nineteenth
century. How did these differences in cultural politics impact the formation of Brazilian and Dominican states and their development of nationalism?

PHASE ONE: INDEPENDENCE AND EMERGING NATIONAL SENTIMENT

As the colonial era came to an end in the early nineteenth century, both Brazil and the Dominican Republic faced uncertain futures. The Brazilian and the Dominican economies were still driven primarily by agriculture instead of industrialization. Brazil and the Dominican Republic were now states, but not yet a nation. Both countries were still substantially internally fragmented and divided into fairly autonomous and independent regions. The land-owning criollo elites counted as the only citizens of these newly and ideally imagined states (Turino 2003b: 180). Therefore, these newly independent republics were rigidly divided along class identity lines. The Brazilian and Dominican elites primarily identified with cosmopolitan cultural expressions imported from Europe or the United States. Like other Latin American countries, the Brazilian and Dominican elites also formed literary movements founded on romanticized links to indigenous culture. These indigenist movements were a post-colonial strategy of defining emerging independent national sentiments, yet operated differently in the two republics.

Brazilian Independence, Indianismo, and Cosmopolitanism

The nineteenth century Brazilian literary indianismo movement, spearheaded by authors like José de Alencar, emerged as a strategy for Brazilian state patriotism. Dom Pedro II supported the indianismo movement, learned to speak Guarani himself, and proposed the study of the Tupi-Guarani language family (Treece 2000 92). This imagined Brazilian indigenous
identity was only prevalent in a small population of elites and was disconnected from the reality of other individuals living in Brazil (Skidmore 1999: 48). Brazilian independence cast a large shadow on the European ideal of liberalism. Brazil had a small population of elites, a large quantity of African slaves, and an indigenous population forced to the periphery of society (Treece 2000: 10). The majority of the Brazilian elite had been educated in Europe since the eighteenth century. Once in Europe, these students were exposed to the ideals of the Enlightenment and cosmopolitan culture expressions. On the other hand, the majority of the indigenous population survived in the interior of Brazil, far removed from cosmopolitan Rio de Janeiro.

The social climate of Brazil in the 1830s was plagued by political unrest. Regional politics were dominated by the southern-based liberal party (São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Rio Grande do Sul) and the northeastern-based conservative party (Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro) (Skidmore 1999: 49). The depletion of its gold mines and lack of urban industrialization forced the post-independence Brazilian economy to remain based in agriculture and found economic success in growing coffee, sugar, and tobacco (40, 49). *Indianismo* utilized the Romantic image of the noble, natural, and exotic Guaraní Indian in order to create an elite identity that was *mestizo*, bypassing the contradictions of a slave-based economy in the Brazilian empire (15). The slave trade had initially been banned by the British in 1826, but the importation of slaves did not officially end until 1850 (68). The abolition movement quickly emerged in tandem with a rise in positivist and republican sentiment in the 1870s (Bello 1966: 32). After several partial legislative acts in 1871 and 1885, slavery was legally abolished in 1888 (Fausto 1999: 126). The Brazilian agriculture industry now lacked both skilled-labor and forced-labor. The Brazilian government encouraged European immigration as a way of supplying
workers to its coffee fields and as a way of avoiding the "social question" of integrating a newly freed, black population (Skidmore 1999: 70-71). Dom Pedro II ruled the Brazilian Empire for nearly 50 years and became the emblem of Brazilian independence and unity, a unity toppled by growing military dissent in 1889 (73).

After the fall of the Empire, the liberal party politically dominated the new Brazilian Republic, turning to Europe as the ideal model for positivism, cosmopolitanism, and modernity. Paris became the most salient model for the city of Rio de Janeiro. The city was rebuilt in 1902 with a newly designed urban grid and a strictly enforced public health code (Fausto 1999: 180; see also Needell 1987). During World War I, Brazil implemented mass industrialization projects in order to manufacture basic items that could no longer be easily imported (Skidmore 1999: 84, 98). Industrialization did not occur evenly throughout Brazil and was concentrated in southern states like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (84-85). The increased urbanization projects in the south encouraged waves of in-country migration from the northeast regions to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

A vast number of rural migrants arrived in Rio and brought their regional styles of culture and music with them. This included the *lundu* dance, a descendent of fast rural afro-Brazilian dance and song-type primarily from the Bahia region in Brazil based on the *batuque* rhythm and originally brought to Rio between 1763 and the 1880s. The *carioca* elite in Rio borrowed the novel *lundu* rhythm and incorporated it into the *modinha*, descended from the Portuguese sentimental *moda* song genre popular during the early eighteenth century (Vianna 1999: 17-18). The elite classes in Brazil were attracted to the novelty and local distinctiveness of *lundu*, transforming this "traditional" and "exotic" dance into a "modern" cosmopolitan genre (Turino 2003a: 55, 72).
Dominican Independence, Indigenismo, and Foreign Hegemony

In addition to cosmopolitan culture imported from Europe, the Dominican state contended with newly problematic cosmopolitan cultural expressions imported during the Haitian occupation. As in Brazil, the Santo Domingo colony population was relatively small, racially mixed, and highly decentralized by the time of independence. The *indigenismo* movement emerged from the intelligentsias as a new strategy for Dominican state patriotism. There was a negligible indigenous population, but Dominican authors like Manuel Jesús de Galván utilized an imagined indigenous heritage that descended from the line of the Taíno caciques Enriquillo and Anacaona. Dominican *indigenismo* was incredibly popular because it conveniently and simultaneously rejected Spanish and Haitian heritage (Austerlitz 1997: 20 and Morrison 2009: 55).

Unlike Rio de Janeiro, Santo Domingo was not a cosmopolitan city and suffered from economic ruin and political isolation from Spain. The culmination of these factors not only encouraged the rise of regional politics, but centered Dominican political power both in Santo Domingo in the South and Santiago in the North (Moya Pons 1995: 185). The Dominican state suffered an internal struggle for power fueled by the economic, political, and cultural autonomy in the Northern and Southern provinces. The first years of Dominican independence were therefore characterized by the political tug-of-war between two regional leaders, or *caudillos*: Buenaventura Baéz from liberal Santiago and Pedro Santana from conservative Santo Domingo. Santana eventually rescinded Dominican independence and unfavorably annexed the Dominican Republic as a province of Spain while serving as president in 1861 (Enrique Díaz and González Camacho 2005: 208-209). The returning Spanish administration found that Dominicans had
different customs and were for the most part mulatto, due to the colony’s long isolation from Spain. The Dominican provincial status was complicated by its large mulatto population and the fact that slavery was still legal in other Spanish colonies (Moya Pons 1995: 206). A provisional government was re-established in Santiago in 1863 to fight the Restoration War against Spain. After two years of intense fighting, Spain officially annulled the Annex in 1865 (Enrique Díaz and González Camacho 2005: 223).

The next three decades of Dominican politics were fragmented by regional caudillos that were politically, geographically, economically, and socially segregated (Moya Pons 1995: 219, 256). Under President Gregorio Luperón, the liberals achieved some political stability between 1879 and 1886, but his presidency was eventually undermined by his own military commander General Ulises Lilís Heureaux. Originally a liberal politician, Lilís quickly changed political orientations under pressure from conservatives in Santo Domingo, extended his term as president, and remained in power until his assassination in 1899 (265, 269).

The Dominican Republic was recentralized under the Lilís regime, but his assassination was followed by another Northern-lead rebellion. The country was again divided by two competing caudillos that left the Republic unstable and vulnerable in 1903 (Enrique Díaz and González Camacho 2005: 259). The United States became weary of European intervention and sent marines in order to maintain order in the Dominican capital (Moya Pons 1995: 317). By the end of 1916, the U.S. government had announced its official occupation of the Dominican Republic (320). The U.S. eliminated the threat of European imperialism on the island but replaced it with a new tradition of U.S. interference in the Dominican Republic. Unlike the cosmopolitan elites in Rio de Janeiro, the Dominican elite class in Santo Domingo was heavily influenced by U.S. cosmopolitan aesthetics, instead of utilizing traditional cultural expressions.
to create new Dominican cosmopolitan styles (Austerlitz 1997: 46). In this way, cosmopolitan hybrid genres emerged mixing Dominican and the "Yankee style," like the *pambiche*, and were, as described by Dominican local Ramón Emilio Jiménez, "easier for the foreigner, who does not have the sensibility of the native, to dance" (qtd. in Austerlitz 1997: 41).

PHASE TWO: DICTATORS, MILITARY REGIMES, AND CULTURAL NATIONALISM

After a brief triumph of republicanism and liberal politics, the early twentieth century produced a period of military dictatorships in these two countries. The processes behind the formation of independent Brazilian and Dominican republics were plagued by internal conflict. These conflicts were caused in part by regional political factions and increased racial issues. The elite classes imagined themselves as "white" and cosmopolitan in opposition to an ever increasing population of non-whites and non-citizens. Despite the brief triumph of liberal politics, both republics managed to produce a conservative dictator backed by military force in the very same year, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil and Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. After the rise of the dictatorships in 1930, Brazil and the Dominican Republic each began moving in the direction of a unified state, centralized in Rio de Janeiro and Santo Domingo.

The dictatorships introduced new forms of state patriotism and cultural nationalism. The Vargas regime was marked by populism and included, to a certain extent, afro-Brazilians and their cultural expressions as part of the nation. The Trujillo regime was notably elitist and being "Dominican" still meant being "white." During this period, Trujillo visibly suppressed afro-Dominican and Haitian cultural expressions. Dominican cultural politics during the first half of the twentieth century were a continuation of state-driven cultural elitism that occurred during the nineteenth century in other Latin American countries, including Brazil. The political and social
regimes of Vargas and Trujillo operated very differently, but they both successfully utilized cultural-nationalist projects to create a national sentiment deeply embodied in their people. I will explore musical nationalism and the relationship of Vargas with *samba* and Trujillo with *merengue* as a separate case study in chapter three.

*Getúlio Vargas and the Military Regime: Populism and Repression*

From the time he took office as president, Vargas faced a country that was divided politically and fragmented regionally. Vargas cemented his iron-clad grip on the Brazilian state by proclaiming himself dictator and forming the Estado Novo in 1937 (Skidmore 1999: 114). Despite repressing civil liberties, Vargas also built a powerful centralized government, increased public education, enacted new working class labor policies, expanded industrialization, built new international airports, and increased international trade (Skidmore 1999: 115 and Fausto 1999: 200). Under Vargas, Brazil became a corporatist state, economically controlled by the central government (Skidmore 1999: 116). Much like his predecessors, Vargas focused most of his attention on the development of urban areas in the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Minas Gerias (Bello 1966: 303).

Keenly aware of the political power of popular culture, Vargas began implementing several programs to foster popular support for his dictatorship. According to Daryle Williams, "the fight for [emerging Brazilian] nationhood [took] place within state-sponsored venues" (2001: 24). This included state-sponsorship of soccer, promotion of afro-Brazilian cultural expressions, the creation of museums, and the restoration of historical landmarks (Skidmore 1999: 118). Vargas became the champion for the new Brazilian national identity of the Estado Novo. In 1933, the celebrated Brazilian author Gilberto Freyre penned his now infamous *The
Masters and the Slaves. In his work, Freyre redefines the Brazilian national identity as comprised of three heritages: Portuguese, Indigenous, and African. Freyre did not utilize the term ‘racial democracy’ himself, but many Brazilian scholars consider Feyre’s work to be the basis of this concept. The theory of ‘racial democracy’ claims that racism does not exist in Brazil and that, through the process of miscegenation, the Brazilian people would emerge as an elevated, ‘white’ race (see Freyre 1933).

With his populist programs, Vargas slowly began integrating the mulatto and afro-Brazilian population the Brazilian nation. In 1937, Vargas organized the Exposição do Estado Novo, or the ‘Estado Novo National Exhibition,’ to showcase Brazilian ‘national renewal’ (Williams 2001: 195-197). According to Williams, in his book Culture Wars in Brazil (2001), Vargas also capitalized on the ‘export quality’ of these new Brazilian cultural expressions and sent delegations to the New York World’s Fair in 1939 and the Portuguese World Exposition in 1940 (192). Williams states that, ‘overseas, the Estado Novo could celebrate a hegemonic national culture in full possession of its faculties’ (Ibid.). The centralized power of Vargas’ regime climaxed during World War II, but the paradox of ‘fighting a dictator abroad while living with a dictator at home’ began to create tension between the Vargas and the Brazilian people. Under the pressure of another military coup in 1945, Vargas resigned and the Estado Novo came to an end (Skidmore 1999: 124-125). After resigning, Vargas worked on new populist political strategies as a means of creating a more democratic image. Vargas was re-elected as president of Brazil in 1951 (Fausto 1999: 243). However, under escalating national dissatisfaction, Vargas committed suicide in 1954 (Bello 1966: 321-322).

During the next ten years, Brazil confronted both incredible progress and terrible inflation (Skidmore 1999: 147-148). Beginning in 1955, President Kubitschek initiated a new
economic development plan that included the creation of a national automobile industry, more industrialization, and a new capital in the interior. In 1960, Kubitscheck unveiled the new centrally located capital of Brasília (Eakin 1997: 50-51). The populism of the Kubitschek presidency was eventually defeated by economic turmoil and an extreme rate of inflation. After two brief successive presidents, the military intervened in order to suppress populism. The coup installed conservative military General Castelo Branco to the presidency in 1964 (Skidmore 1999: 153). U.S. President Lyndon Johnson quickly acknowledged Castelo Branco’s military regime, but the coup had no real legitimacy (157). As a way to self-legitimize its new regime, the military government created several “Institution Acts,” encouraged land reform, dismantled the current political parties, and began implementing a system of repression, censorship, and torture (159, 177).

The period between 1969 and 1974 were the most repressive years of the Brazilian military regime. In spite of the extreme control and repression of the authoritarian government, the Brazilian cosmopolitan classes created new radically-national cultural expressions (Eakin 1997: 149). This included the cinema novo film movement and the tropicália music movement (Skidmore 1999: 168, 170). According to John P. Murphy, tropicália effectively ended in 1969, when [musicians] Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil were arrested by the military government and then spent several years in exile in London (2006: 47). Beginning in 1974, the military dictatorship’s grip on the Brazilian people began to loosen. The state restored many Brazilian civil liberties as well as enacted amnesty laws in 1979 for those who participated in, or were victims of, the regime (Skidmore 1999: 184). Free democratic elections were restored in 1985, thus ending the military dictatorship and beginning the long process of redemocratization.
Like Vargas in Brazil, Trujillo also focused on implementing several nation-wide reconstruction, industrialization, and modernization projects. Unlike Vargas, Trujillo was motivated more by personal gains and glorification rather than for the betterment of the Dominican people (Moya Pons 1995: 360-361). Despite rampant violence and total autocracy, Trujillo successfully unified the Republic in a way never achieved by another caudillo leader. Trujillo established a centralized government based in Santo Domingo (renamed Trujillo City in 1936) and created his unrivaled Partido Dominicano, or the “Dominican political party” (Galíndez 1973: 148). Trujillo’s government gained financial independence from the U.S. by 1941. However, the question of Haitian foreign influence still remained.

The final, official border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic was not established until 1929 (Moya Pons 1995: 368). The unintended impact of the final demarcation was that now many Haitian citizens were residing within Dominican territory. Trujillo’s solution to the problem was to massacre of no less than 15,000 dark-skinned Haitians and Dominicans living in the border region of Dajabón in 1937 (Enrique Díaz and González Camacho 2005: 322). The infamous test for establishing Dominican nationality was based on language, whereby ‘race’ could be equated with ‘language’ and one’s proper pronunciation of the word perejil. Trujillo’s sequel to the massacre was a less violent plan in 1941 to culturally Dominicanize the frontier regions (Moya Pons 1995: 369). Despite the increase of civil unrest in 1949, the Republic under Trujillo enjoyed economic growth and political stability, albeit sustained by force and torture (374-375). The Trujillo era created a very rich upper class, an educated middle class, and the extremely poor masses (376).
Trujillo’s megalomania only grew during the 1950s (Morrison 2009: 63). After the Cuban Revolution in 1959, Cuban radio stations encouraged the Dominican people to rebel against Trujillo (Moya Pons 1995: 372). Trujillo was known as a chronic womanizer throughout his tenure, but his pursuit of the three Mirabal sisters would ultimately signify the end of his regime. After being imprisoned and tortured, the Mirabal sisters were murdered by Trujillo guards in the mountains near Santiago because they refused to surrender to Trujillo’s sexual advances (Enrique Díaz and González Camacho 2005: 345; see also Alvarez 1994). Following the assassination of the Mirabal sisters in 1960, the majority of Dominicans turned against the Trujillo regime (Moya Pons 1995: 372). In 1961, on his way to visit one of his many mistresses, Trujillo was assassinated in a coup orchestrated by his own associates and high-ranking officials (Moya Pons 1995: 373).

The presidency was assumed by then Vice-President Joaquín Balaguer, promising a more liberal Republic, but, instead, instigated an era of Neo-Trujilloism (Moya Pons 1995: 381). Juan Bosch was legally elected President in 1962, but he was later labeled a communist by U.S. President Lyndon Johnson, deposed in 1963, and sent into exile (383, 387). The U.S. sent a military force to Santo Domingo in order to suppress the escalating Civil War in 1965 and Balaguer was once again elected as President in 1966 (Enrique Díaz and González Camacho 2005: 372, 382). Balaguer continued Trujillo’s urban modernization projects and policies of terror. Balaguer also continued Trujillo era anti-Haitian sentiment. In 1983, he published *La Isla al Revés: Haití y el Destino Dominicano* as a follow-up to his 1947 work on a similar subject. These works chronicled the continued threat of Haitian imperialism and the “Haitianization” and “darkening” of the Dominican people (see Balaguer 1947 and Balaguer 1983).
Unlike the *tropicália* movement in Brazil under the military regime, the Dominican cosmopolitan classes did not produce new cultural expressions in response to the post-Trujillo era. However, a few Dominican musicians borrowed the political musical genre *nueva canción* from other Latin American countries like Chile, Argentina, and Cuba. In 1974, Dominicans organized a *nueva canción* festival, called "Seven Days with the People," to protest the Balaguer Regime (Austerlitz 1997: 109). Only a few Dominican groups achieved any mainstream success, such as Convite (with original members Luis Días and Dagoberto Tejeda Ortiz) and Expresión Joven (see Expresión Joven 1974). Not surprisingly, the Dominican *nueva canción* movement was relatively short-lived. Balaguer’s first regime lasted until 1978 when U.S. President Jimmy Carter’s administration prevented him from fraudulently reassuming power. This allowed social-democrat, President-Elect Antonio Guzmán to claim his rightful victory as President of the Republic (Moya Pons 1995: 403).

**PHASE THREE: REDEMOCRATIZATION AND LIBERAL POLITICS**

The 1980s signified a return to democracy in both Brazil and the Dominican Republic and a shift in nationalist policies. Although the processes of the Brazilian and Dominican dictatorships were unique, in the end, both governments managed to industrialize certain sectors of the country and successfully implement cultural-nationalist projects that created deeply embodied national sentiments in their people.

As both Brazil and the Dominican Republic returned to social democracy in the 1980s, each country would continue to confront new political, economic, and social questions. These included an increase in women’s rights, the ascendancy of the workers’ political party, and the revival of pride in African heritage and cultural expressions. Whereas Brazil enjoyed a

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4 A recording of the original 1974 concert is available on the CD *7 Días con El Pueblo* (2002).
continued surge of afro-Brazilian cultural expressions from regions like Bahia, the Dominican Republic began to identify with its afro-Dominican heritage for the very first time. Afro-Dominican cultural expressions began to gain national attention and legitimacy among the Dominican people, but the newly integrated Dominican national identity still did not encompass the Haitians living in the Dominican Republic. Like the poetic imagery of colors bleeding together after a rainstorm in the song "Aquarela do Brasil," twenty-first century Brazil is a multicultural nation and being Brazilian is tied to place of birth rather than the color of one's skin. Conversely, continued exclusionary politics prevent the Dominican Republic from approaching anything close to a multicultural nation or a poly-ethnic state.

Brazilian Cultural Politics after the Opening

The return of democracy in Brazil did not automatically signify the return of prosperity. The political and economic climate of Brazil in the 1980s only exacerbated the emerging social changes. Urban cities, like Rio and São Paulo, suffered tremendous increases in crime. Urban life in Brazil was complicated by a decrease in education levels, a decrease in public health care, and the deterioration of roads and the telephone system (Skidmore 1999: 199-200). Brazilian intellectuals began leaving the country because of the dire economic and social situation (195, 198). After decades of artistic production during the military dictatorship, the upper and middle classes were far less culturally creative during the 1980s. Cosmopolitan cariocas of all colors revived an interest in afro-Brazilian cultural identity, but the tricky nature of Brazilian racial politics and generally ambiguous racial categories made it difficult for solidarity movements to form between white, mulatto, and black Brazilians (208). The economic and social situation in Brazil also created a gap along class and race lines among those who did not emigrate.
Redemocratization fostered afro-Brazilian cultural movements, celebrating these communities’ art, music, language, and religion, but these afro-Brazilian population viewed themselves as a separate ethnic entity in opposition to a single, unified Brazilian culture (209).

The debt crisis continued into the presidency of Fernando Collor de Melo in 1990. Collor’s general incompetence forced him out of office in 1992, but to be democratically replaced by his vice-president Itamar Franco (Eakin 1997: 63). In 1993, President Franco introduced the Real under the direction of his finance minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso. This new successful Brazilian currency successfully controlled the runaway Brazilian inflation rates (Skidmore 1999: 223-224). Cardoso was then elected to the presidency in 1994 and again in 1998. The relative economic stability of the Cardoso presidency was coupled with agrarian land reform policies and an inspirational victory at the 1994 Soccer World Cup (Eakin 1997: 161). President Cardoso openly confronted Brazilian racism with the creation of the Advisory Council on Race Questions in 1995 (Skidmore 1999: 210). The Brazilian Worker’s Party candidate and social democrat Lula da Silva was elected president in 2003 and reelected in 2008. Lula implemented new social projects like “Zero Hunger” and “Family Allowances.” The current Brazilian economic plan is to elevate Brazil out of its status as a developing country and into a position as an economic power-player in the international economy.

Dominican Cultural Politics Since Balaguer

The Dominican state democratically elected only two Presidents before the return of Balaguer and his second regime from 1986 to 1996. Balaguer created an economic dictatorship that raised inflation rates and created the Dominican black market (Moya Pons 1995: 428). Many Dominicans chose to riot or to emigrate during the 1980s and 1990s (432,
435). In 1992, Balaguer commissioned the construction of the Columbus Lighthouse in Santo Domingo in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the New World, which cost the Dominican people several million dollars. The controversial Lighthouse proved to be yet another drain on the economy and the demand for electricity. Balaguer was reelection president two more times before the legitimacy of his election was called into question in 1996. The election was held again and won by Leonel Fernández, candidate for Juan Bosch’s Dominican Liberation Party. Fernández was reelection in 2004 after the one-term presidency of Hipolitio Mejía in 2000. President Fernández’s most recent accomplishment was the construction of a multi-million dollar state-of-the-art subway system in the heart of the Santo Domingo Federal District and a plan for a total of six lines in the future.

NATIONALISM: GENERAL TRENDS AND INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES

After five hundred years of individual political, economic, and social histories, Brazil and the Dominican Republic have developed different strategies for engaging with cultural politics. The process of nationalism in Brazil and the Dominican Republic rendered these states outwardly alike in many ways. Both countries seemed to experience strikingly similar phases of political history, informed by colonialism, imperialism, republicanism, dictatorships, and redemocratization. Both countries seem to share an economy that is historically based in agriculture that delayed industrialization and progressivism. Both countries seem to share a history of strong regional identification in conjunction with political decentralization and regionally-based conservative and liberal political factions. Both countries seem to face issues of white-black racial politics in conjunction with an imagined indigenous heritage. Finally, both countries seem to have a national identity rooted in local cultural expressions.
Even though the Brazilian and Dominican states have shared a similar political history, the issues of economic prosperity and the social construction of ‘race’ have altered how cultural politics have historically operated in these two states. I first turn to how Brazilian and Dominican cultural politics of ‘race’ historically influenced the carnival practices of these two countries. How did the multiple meanings of being ‘Brazilian’ or ‘Dominican’ create very different carnival practices in Brazil and in the Dominican Republic? In the next chapter, I examine carnival practices in Rio de Janeiro and Santo Domingo in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, investigating the space for individuals to participate in carnival and their practices that competed with state-generated cultural discourse.
CHAPTER 3
CARNIVAL PRACTICES AND MUSICAL NATIONALISM
IN RIO DE JANEIRO AND SANTO DOMINGO

As was discussed in chapter two, Brazilian national identity, or *brasilidade*, and Dominican national identity, or *dominicanidad*, are both rooted in cultural expressions that are present during carnival, including art, dance, and, above all, music. Not surprisingly, the national dance/music of Brazil and the Dominican Republic are also intertwined with the discourse of carnival and nationalism. The first stages of nationalism in both of these countries created multiple competing identities in different segments of the population: a state-generated patriotism, a cosmopolitan identity of the elite classes, and the reality of the masses. Not surprisingly, the state-generated vision of the country and the elite imagined identity did not always include the vast majority of people living in the Republics, including female, indigenous, mixed, and black populations. Although these two countries share a very general political history, the two factors that distinguish Brazil and the Dominican Republic are their economic histories and the cultural politics of *race* and *blackness*. In this chapter, I examine the influence of social differences on the distinct trajectories of carnival in Brazil and the Dominican Republic.

Of the potential case studies in these two countries, the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Santo Domingo emerge as the most salient examples of this relationship between nationalism and carnival practices for three reasons. First, as the capital or former capital of the Republics, Rio and Santo Domingo represent centers of political and economic power, cultural institutions, and social organization under the direct control of the state government. Second, Rio and Santo
Domingo support both urban-industrial and rural-agricultural economies, resulting in a population of stratified and segregated social classes. Finally, Rio and Santo Domingo are the two cities that would eventually dominate the formation of Brazilian and Dominican nationalist carnival discourse. In order to understand the desirability of the image of Brazil as a model for Dominican National Carnival in the twenty-first century, I first explore the political, economic, and social influences behind the success of carnival in Rio de Janeiro up through the mid-twentieth century.

CARNIVAL PRACTICES IN RIO DE JANEIRO

The practice of *entrudo* was the earliest style of carnivalesque celebration brought to the colony of Brazil. The Portuguese pre-Lenten celebration of *entrudo* was a type of street celebration, characterized by participants throwing rotten food and *limões de cheiro* (wax lemons), or water balloons filled with sewer water or glue, at passersby in the street (Gulevich 2002: 39 and Chasteen 1996: 36). John Charles Chasteen considers *entrudo* to be a relatively democratic celebration, characterized by water fights and other mischief not permitted in everyday life. However, the earliest *entrudos*, in fact, were rather socially segregated. The elite classes celebrated a more docile salon-style *entrudo* and the popular classes practiced a cruder version of *entrudo* in the streets (1996: 37). The celebration of *entrudo* experienced the height of its popularity during the transfer of the Portuguese court in 1808 and even continued after Brazilian independence (36). The ascendancy of Dom Pedro II as the first Brazilian emperor in 1841 coincided with the rise of Brazilian patriotism and carnival practices among the elites living in Rio began to change as a response to a new Brazilian identity independent from Portugal. Yet, the elite *cariocas* still imagined a Brazilian identity that was cosmopolitan rather than
The cariocas turned to Paris as the ideal model because the city represented the center of the cosmopolitan world and the principles of democracy and liberalism. Accordingly, carnival in the 1840s also began to imitate the Parisian-style of masked carnival balls instead of the Portuguese *entrudo* (37). The carioca elite danced to only the best orchestras, playing Parisian quadrilles, waltzes, polkas, gallops, and especially the can-can (Ibid.). The carioca elites added a carnival procession in the 1850s, complete with floats and exclusive *grandes sociedades*, or *parading societies* (38). By the 1860s, *entrudo* had all but disappeared from the streets of Rio. The elite practice of Parisian-style carnival was the new fashion, dominated by the elite *parading societies* (Raphael 1981: 57).

The social stratification of carioca society was firmly fixed after the formation of the Republic. By the 1890s, the *parading societies* began combining luxurious costumes and *carros críticos*, or floats with hidden social criticism on political issues, such as the abolition of slavery (Raphael 1981: 67). The emerging middle and working class parading groups, called *Ranchos dos Reis*, were less prestigious and selected far less controversial carnival parade themes (such as Roman mythology) instead of Brazilian politics (71). The lowest class was primarily comprised of blacks or mulattos and was not included in the elite practice of carnival. This began to change after the official banning of *entrudo* in 1904. The city’s poor also took to the streets in parade groups called *blocos de sujos*, or *dirty brigades*, despite elitist disapproval (Raphael 1981: 65 and Chasteen 1996: 42). The *blocos de sujos* were relegated primarily to the northern parts of the city. Accordingly, these other cariocas were not dancing to the Parisian can-can, but rather the *lundu*.

The *lundu* had been popular in the carioca salons during the first decades of the nineteenth century, but the dance fell out of favor with the elite around the same time as the
practice of entrudo in the 1860s (Chasteen 1996: 35). However, the lundu dances remained popular among the lower classes of carioca society, who mixed the lundu with the polka and other popular dances. This resulted in a new style of dance called maxixe that emerged in the 1880s (Chasteen 1996: 40). This style of syncopated dance movements was named after the stereotypical mulatto maxixeira female dancer. As maxixe transitioned from the dance halls to the streets in the early twentieth century, it encountered two emerging styles of popular carnival practices. The first type of parading group, the cucumbys, was comprised of black male and female immigrants from Bahia dressed as ãndians. This group typically danced a style of capoeira, originally a type of afro-Bahian game-dance that mixed martial arts and dance choreography, and performed rhythmic accompaniment on an assortment of percussion instruments (Béhague 1998: 345-346). The second parading group, called Zé Pereiras, was not associated with dance, but marched to the sound of bass and snare drums (Chasteen 1996: 41). By the 1890s, new carnival groups emerged that combined the lundu and cucumbys dance styles with Zé Pereira percussion ensemble, becoming the first to march and dance to the sound of maxixe during carnival in Rio (Ibid.).

In response to the rise of liberal and populist politics in Rio, the Brazilian state began to move away from the European-dominated cultural models in 1922 (Raphael 1981: 60). This meant that the state became interested in promoting more authentically ãBrazilianõ cultural expressions (61). In turn, this paved the way for afro-Brazilian genres like maxixe and, later, samba to supplant the cosmopolitan polka and can-can as the new ãnationalõ Brazilian dance-music. The first commercially registered ãamba,õ titled Pelo Telefoneõ in 1917 by Donga, still contains the telltale polka rhythm of the maxixe (Araujo 1992: 66). This shows that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the ãambaõ was not yet a singular genre. However, in the
1920s, these groups of ranchos, blocos, and Zé Pereiras would ultimately transform into the typical escolas de samba, or samba schools, and become the centerpiece of carnival during the Vargas era.

**Rio Carnival, Samba, and Populist Nationalism**

As a populist politician, Getúlio Vargas understood that his best chance at consolidating political power was to appeal to both the elites and the masses living in the slums of Rio (Raphael 1981: 90). Maxixe and samba had been cultivated by the popular classes in the slums of Rio since the turn of the twentieth century. Vargas's industrialization and modernization projects needed to co-opt the masses as cogs in the machine of corporatist Rio. Samba quickly became one of the central tropes of Vargas's tactics to integrate, yet regulate, the black Brazilian population. The first factor that contributed to the rise of samba was the appointment of Pedro Ernesto as mayor of Rio in 1931 (Raphael 1981: 93). The populist mayor authorized government subsidies for small carnival groups, including the escolas de samba (94). Ernesto also ended government subsidies for the grandes sociedades due to budget restrictions and growing distaste for the opulence of the elite parading societies (96). For the first time, the popular classes and the afro-Brazilian became a legitimate part of the Rio carnival soundscape (90, 96). The trade-off for the escolas de samba's official inclusion and position in Rio's Carnival was that they were obligated to follow new regulations starting in 1933 (117). These regulations included requiring each school to: obtain a parade permit; create an official name; designate official officers; submit to official judging of their music, float, parade, and costume design; include a folkloric wing of Bahian women; prohibit the use of woodwind instruments; and limit their parade themes to politically and ideologically acceptable content (Raphael
The rule prohibiting the use of wind instruments effectively eradicated maxixe's presence in Rio carnival and paved the way for the rise of samba performance during carnival. These new policies also began integrating elite and popular carnival practices in Rio (Raphael 1981: 90). With the disappearance of the grandes sociedades, the carioca upper and middle classes began accepting samba as the authentic expression of nationalist music and an authentic Brazilian musical form (102). Beginning as early as the 1940s, samba schools were even being invited to perform at exclusive clubs in the prestigious Copacabana suburb of southern Rio (120).

Samba increased national attention also caused the increase of commercialization and cosmopolitan aesthetics in the samba schools. More and more upper class cariocas from the south began performing with the escolas de samba. As samba became popular on the radio during the 1920s, upper and middle class cariocas would also venture to the slums in hopes of buying, recording, and selling the next big samba hit (Raphael 1990: 4). Samba changed even more noticeably after the carnival regulations of 1933. By the 1960s, Samba performance and presentation had to meet even higher standards, which encouraged the desire to hire professional float and parade designers; the creation of uniformed costumes in the school colors for each wing of the group; and the use of manufactured, uniform samba percussion instruments (Guillermoprieto 1990: 134; Raphael 1981: 151; Raphael 1990: 79). These aesthetic transformations continued to increase exponentially after 1960. The move of the capital from Rio to Brasília increased the importance of tourism for Rio's economy (Raphael 1990: 78). What had started as a community samba celebration in the hills of Rio had turned into what Raphael calls profit-seeking microenterprises by the 1970s. The samba schools now appealed to the upper and middle classes in order to supply the funding needed to win more
money for carnival the next year (83). With the rising cost of carnival, the upper and middle class cariocas assumed the roles of the *star* of the *samba* school. These stars rode on the tallest floats with the best costumes simply because they were the only ones who could afford to do so (Raphael 1981: 154). In this way, Rio carnival transformed into the spectacle and economic success that it is known for today, with mass tourist appeal, exaggerated grandiloquence, heightened sexuality, and *samba*.

Different carnivals around the world have incorporated elements of the Rio de Janeiro carnival-model into their local celebrations. The success of Rio carnival is certainly desirable, but this does not necessarily ensure that it can be duplicated in every case. Therefore, a look at the historical development of carnival in Santo Domingo reveals the ways in which carnival in the Dominican Republic would eventually find itself incompatible with certain elements of the Rio carnival-model. In this next section, I explore the political, social, and economic influences behind the celebration of carnival in Santo Domingo before the creation of the Dominican National Parade.

CARNIVAL PRACTICES IN SANTO DOMINGO

Much like the Portuguese in Brazil, the Spanish also brought carnivalesque celebrations to the Santo Domingo colony. These earliest activities included jousting, running of the bulls, and different types of masquerades, including the *mojiganga* (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 60-63). The *mojiganga* was a type of short dramatic performance that was popular in Spain during the celebration of the equinox, the solstice, and Corpus Christi (Buezo 1992: 49). The *mojiganga* performers rode on carriages and each carried a *vejiga*, a hardened cow or pig *bladder* that they would use to hit unsuspecting bystanders (Olivero n.d.: 7). Carnivalesque celebrations continued
in the Spanish colony unhindered and unregulated until 1820. As a reaction against the threat of Haitian Revolution and French Invasion, the Spanish official banned all public festivals (Tejeda Ortiz 2008 82). This decision only increased the tension between the colonial government and its subjects leading up to the Haitian occupation between 1822 and 1844.

Fueled by the occupation, the Dominican state promoted a Dominican identity that was ‘white, Spanish, and Catholic.’ However, even carnival had absorbed many characteristics that resembled the mixed heritage of the Dominican population and it transformed into more than bull runs and mojigangas. The state began to realize the importance of carnival as a medium for an emerging nationalist program. In 1848, Dominican President Pedro Santana first utilized carnival to promote state-generated patriotism. Santana established the state’s official festival calendar and united carnival celebrations with Independence Day on February 27th rather than the Catholic calendar (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 88). In 1863, President Sanchéz also organized a new carnivalesque celebration to coincide with Restoration Day on August 16th (91). Lilís, his political successor, also realized the importance of carnival celebrations as a tool for bolstering support for his regime among all classes of Dominicans. Like carnival in Rio, carnival in Santo Domingo was segregated along class lines, which resulted in separate elite and popular carnival celebrations with diverse customs and practices. However, the state promotion of an ideal ‘Dominican’ identity contradicted both the social reality and the carnival practices of the people.

In his historical novel La Sangre: Una Vida Bajo la Tirania, (originally published in 1914), Dominican author Tulio M. Cesteró traces quotidian life at the end of the nineteenth century. This includes a description of typical carnival celebrations during that time. As in Rio, the elite carnivals in Santo Domingo were modeled after the carnival balls and processions of Venice and Paris (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 93-94). The elite carnival processions were dominated by
grandiose carriages, prestigious costumes, and the requisite marching band. In his novel, Cestero describes an event on the final night of a nineteenth century carnival procession:

Al fin, el 27 de febrero en la noche, el Parque de Colón a las diez, la charanga partió tocando marcial paso doble, la muchedumbre se derramó por las calles. Aquella noche Lilís le pareció menos perverso (1970: 79-80).

(At the end, the night of February 27th, Columbus Park at 10 o'clock, the brass band took off playing a martial paso doble, the crowd overflowed into the streets on such a night Lilís seemed less wicked to them )

This excerpt demonstrates how different the carnivals in Rio and Santo Domingo were at the end of the nineteenth century. Unlike the street processions in Rio that were already populated by afro-Brazilian percussion bands by the 1890s, Santo Domingo elite processions still preferred the prestigious sound of the brass band. Likewise, there were also many surprising differences in the salon practices of these two cities. While visiting a Santiago social club in 1895, Cuban patriot José Martí described his experience by stating, “I was received by the brass band [and] with a typical waltz, easy and demure, on piano and flute with güiro and tambourineé carnival is already near” (qtd. in Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 96). This quote demonstrates that, unlike the salon carnivals in Rio de Janeiro that were dominated primarily by European dances, waltzes and polkas were not the only dances vying for a place in Santo Domingo carnival balls.

The first local dances in the Dominican Republic emerged from French-derived contredanses and other cosmopolitan ballroom dances that were imported to Santo Domingo during the Haitian occupation of the city in 1801 and again 1822-1844 (Austerlitz 1997: 15). The Haitian soldiers in Santo Domingo introduced the city’s population to a complex of related
dances including, *cuadrilla, carabiné, danza,* and *merengue*\(^5\) (see Lizardo 1974 and Larrazabal Blanco 1979). After Restoration and the rise in Dominican patriotism, these Haitian-influenced dances fell out of favor with the Dominican state and the Dominican intelligentsia. Lilís promoted elite, European ballroom dances even though he was black and banned from attending the most exclusive social clubs (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 96 and Austerlitz 1993: 72). Beginning in 1855, Dominican intellectuals and state officials began an active propaganda campaign against indecent dance music, particularly the *danza/merengue.* These dances, considered lewd and indecent, compelled politician and author Ulises Espaillat to proclaim that *merengue,* ñfor the greater goodñ should be ñcompletely expelled from the countryñ in 1876 (qtd. in 1 Tejeda Ortiz 1998: 147). Yet, Cesteroñ depiction of late nineteenth century salon carnival shows that despite state propaganda, Dominican elites danced European polkas and waltzes in addition to these ñindecentñ *danzas, merengues, cuadrillas* and *carabinés* of Haitian origin.

In his novel, Cestero describes the variety of dances performed at elite carnivals at the end of the nineteenth century:

¡Nunca fueron las fiestas como aquel año!...La orquesta de baile llegada de Santo Domingo estaba formada por los mejores instrumentosÉ a los acordes de danzas y valsosÉ ¡La cuadrilla! ¡la cuadrilla! claman voces. En los tres salones se organizan sendas tandas. El Presidente, ceremonioso, baila con garboÉ mientras güira y pandereta coquilllean los nerviosÉ .El *caribiné,* danza final, es bailadoÉ con su disfraz de *pierrot*...


\(^5\) Although Cestero and other nineteenth century Dominican writers never use the term *merengue,* American scholar Paul Austerlitz has found evidence that the terms *merengue* and *danza* were originally interchangeable. Austerlitz cites Dominican scholar Ulises Francisco Espaillat as stating, in 1909, that ñ*merengue* was called *danza* [in the Dominican Republic] for a period of time (qtd in Austerlitz 1997: 22; see also Espaillat 1909: 61).
(The parties were never again like that yearâ€¦!...The dance orchestra from Santo Domingo was comprised of the best instrumentsâ€”in harmony with the danzas (also implying merengues) and waltzes.â€ The cuadrilla! the cuadrilla! voices exclaimed. In the three salons they lined themselves up in tandem. The President, ceremoniously, dances with graceâ€—while the güira and tambourine tickled oneâ€™s nervesâ€”The caribiné, the last dance, is danced with oneâ€™s Pierrot maskâ€”

This passage demonstrates the contradiction between Dominican state cultural policy towards Haitian-influenced ballroom dances and the actual practices of its people. As President, Liliés promoted Dominican patriotic sentiment as â€œdefinedâ€œand â€œEuropean.â€œ However, even the president would dance to an â€œindecentâ€œmerengue at carnival.

As Dominican carnival scholar Dagoberto Tejeda Ortiz emphasizes, carnival in Santo Domingo during the nineteenth century transformed into a festival with national characteristics (2008: 97). Although dominated by the elite classes, all social classes had space to participate in their own way (Ibid.). Despite state cultural politics, the actual cultural expressions during popular carnival in Santo Domingo were as diverse as their practitioners. The elite classes struggled with the Dominican state identity purported to be â€œwhiteâ€œand â€œEuropeanâ€œwhile culturally influenced equally by European and Haitian cosmopolitan ballroom dance styles. The popular masses developed yet a different strategy for navigating the â€œDominicanâ€œidentity promoted by the state. Because many Dominicans living in the barrio neighborhoods surrounding Santo Domingo were often darker-skinned than the urban elite, these populations developed an identity that vacillated among the â€œwhite,â€œâ€œblack,â€œand â€œIndianâ€œheritages. The indio and indio oscuro identity-marker became a key strategy for even the darkest Dominicans to differentiate themselves from Haitians (Puleo 1997). These identity strategies of the lower classes were also present in their carnival practices.
In his novel, Cestero provides a glimpse of popular carnival at the end of the nineteenth century, demonstrating the interplay of Dominican cultural heritages among the masses:

El carnaval de este año señala un hito en su existencia. Los diablos cojuelos, de toscas caretas, cencerros, puercas vejigas [todos] del mismo color. La vieja roba-la-gallina, que recorría las calles. [L]as comparsas de indios emplumados treñan danzas que remedan a los negros Minas, que en las Pascuas del Espíritu Santo venían de San Lorenzo a bailar sus tangos africanos al son de los cañutos. Las mojigangas barrocas del Almirante y Aguacate acompañándose de acordeón y güira (Cestero 1970: 44-45).

(This year’s carnival signals a milestone in its history. The diablos cojuelos, with crude masks, cowbells, pig bladders [all] in the same color. The old roba-la-gallina, who ventured down all the streets. [T]he comparsas of feathered indios crisscrossing dances that imitate the blacks from Minas, who during Pentecost came from San Lorenzo to dance their African tangos to the sound of the drums. The baroque mojigangas from Almirante and Aguacate accompanying themselves with accordion and guira...)

In this passage, Cestero describes a carnival group dressed as Indians that imitates the dance style of the East Santo Domingo barrio of San Lorenzo. San Lorenzo is a community founded by escaped slaves in the seventeenth century and is now famous for congos, an African-influenced style of drumming. Cestero also describes comparsas of diablos cojuelos, roba-la-gallina, indios, and mojigangas. These other comparsas demonstrate how the Dominican masses also freely borrowed traditional Spanish carnival practices, like the diablos cojuelos and the mojigangas, and mixed them with characters created out of Dominican folklore, like the absurdly voluptuous cross-dressing roba-la-gallina or the indio.

Most importantly, Cestero depicts the group of mojigangas as playing accordion and güira. As the Haitian-influenced ballroom dances traveled outward from the salons of Santo...
Domingo, they became popular in other rural regions of the country (Austerlitz 1997: 24). By the end of the nineteenth century, the *merengue* was one of many dances popular during carnival. The ballroom-style *merengue* was altered to fit regional aesthetics and instrumentation, becoming the *merengue cibaeño* in the central Cibao region and *merengue palo echao* in the South and East (136). The *merengue cibaeño* is also called *perico ripiao* and is still very popular in northern cities like Santiago. The music is performed by a *conjunto* of button accordion, *tambora* double-head drum, and *güira* scrapper (see Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1 Excerpt from the *Merengue Cibaeño* “Compadre Pedro Juan”**

The melody is the primary feature of this *merengue* genre and is typically sung in two-part harmony. The accordion provides both basic harmonic support and intricate melodic support for the melody. The *tambora* and *güira* provide the stereotypical rhythmic drive of this *typical* merengue (Austerlitz 1997: 25-28).

The *merengue palo echao* is sonically very different from the *merengue cibaeño*. This *merengue*, also called *prí-prí*, is much less common in the Dominican Republic today, but can

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6 Excerpts of a transcription of Luis Alberti’s “Compadre Pedro Juan” by Paul Austerlitz (1997: 39, 45)

Key: 1 - right hand with a drumstick, open tone; 2 - right hand with a drum stick, rim hit; 3 - left hand, bass slap.
still be found in the barrios surrounding Santo Domingo. The music is performed by a conjunto of button accordion, a tall single-head drum called the palo, and güira scrapper (see Figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2 Excerpt from a Merengue Palo Echao from Villa Mella (Santo Domingo)**

The melody is sung by a single vocalist in merengue palo echao and the accordion plays a highly syncopated counter-melody. Unlike the merengue cibaeño, the palo and güira perform the stereotypical driving triple feel in the rhythmic accompaniment (136-137) (see Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3 Comparison of Merengue Cibaeño and Merengue Palo Echao Grooves**

Using Cestero’s narrative, one can infer that this comparsa of mojigangas from Santo Domingo is performing a dance/music genre like merengue palo echao, which, much like their reality as Dominicans, blends European and African expressive elements. These passages from

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Key: 1 - left hand, open tone; 2 - right hand slide with left foot pressure on the drum; right hand finger slide; 4 - right hand, open tone
Cestero’s novel show that a variety of dance/music genres shared the space of popular and elite carnivals at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In summary, the carnivals in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro and Santo Domingo became a space where actual cultural expressions could confront state-generated cultural politics. Segregated along class lines, both the Rio and Santo Domingo elites developed their own imagined cosmopolitan identities that were independent of the popular masses. However, the political environment in Brazil and the Dominican Republic began to transition toward liberal politics with the outset of the twentieth century. Even though dictatorships emerged in Brazil and the Dominican Republic in the same year, the social agenda of these dictators had little in common. The Brazilian national identity formulated during the Vargas regime turned to the afro-Brazilian masses and their cultural expressions as the new model. The Dominican national identity propagated during the Trujillo regime remained focused on the elite and ‘white’ Dominican classes. As a result, carnival practices in these two countries during the twentieth century also developed along these political lines.

*Trujillo, Merengue, and Cultural Elitism*

Much like Vargas, Rafael Trujillo also realized the power of rural cultural expressions to act as national emblems and bolster popular support for his regime. However, Trujillo’s racist cultural policies resulted in the entrenchment of a state-generated ‘Dominican’ national identity positioned as ‘white,’ ‘Spanish,’ and ‘Catholic’ (Morrison 2009: 61). Trujillo intensified his propaganda and Dominicanization border-campaigns in order to repress afro-Dominican and Haitian cultural expressions throughout the Dominican Republic. Trujillo’s cultural policies further exemplified the Dominican state’s inability to represent the Dominican people. Despite
all of his outward attempts to hide his heritage and pedigree, Trujillo could never escape the fact that he himself was born to a lower middle class family of mixed Spanish, criollo, and Haitian heritage in the southern provincial town of San Cristóbal (Austerlitz 1997: 53).

Politically, the most infamous of Trujillo’s state-sponsored cultural nationalist projects was his merengue cibaeño cultural campaign. Trujillo preferred the merengue from the central Cibao region even though he grew up in a southern province dominated by afro-Dominican cultural expressions like merengue palo echao. In a letter, composer Juan Francisco García, goes so far as to claim that Trujillo elevated the Santiago-based merengue to the status of “authentic Dominican culture” (qtd. in Austerlitz 1997: 55). However, merengue cibaeño was only an ideal match for the “authentic Dominican culture” of Trujillo’s racist cultural nationalism. The Cibao region had the highest concentration of “white” Dominicans, making the merengue cibaeño relatively free of a negative association with afro-Dominican practices (Austerlitz 1997: 63-64). Trujillo went on to single-handedly support several merengue orchestras for himself in Santo Domingo, including Luis Alberti and the Orquesta Presidente Trujillo and the Super Orquesta San José (54, 56). In 1945, Trujillo moved his brother’s radio station from Bonao to Santo Domingo and renamed it La Voz Dominicana, or “The Dominican Voice” (71). Trujillo capitalized on his monopoly of the airwaves and popularized both the merengue big-band orchestra and the smaller typical merengue combo, featuring accordion, saxophone, tambora, and güira. Trujillo’s monolithic support of merengue cibaeña was furthered by its subsequent saturation on radios throughout the Dominican Republic. Trujillo turned the merengue into an emblem of his Dominican nation, performed by all social classes in all regions of the country (Austerlitz 1993: 81).
What was merengue’s place in the carnivals of the Trujillo era? Although Trujillo fancied himself as a “populist reformer,” his cultural politics were directed only toward the light-skinned elites, ignoring the cultural expressions of the black and mulatto masses. In spite of danza and merengue’s origins as a cosmopolitan ballroom dance in Santo Domingo less than a century before, Trujillo’s merengue failed to fully reintegrate as a “popular dance” in the highest echelons of Santo Domingo society. Regardless of Trujillo’s unquestioned political domination of Santo Domingo, the president was never fully accepted as one of the Santo Domingo cultural elite, due in part to his modest origins and indeterminate racial-heritage (Austerlitz 1997: 67). The merengue dance did manage to supplant the many Puerto Rican and U.S. cosmopolitan musical styles that, after the U.S. occupation, dominated the salons of Santo Domingo carnival (47). However, the merengue cibaeño was also irrevocably associated with rural campesino culture and with the contemptible Generalísimo.

As a result of Trujillo’s racist cultural policies, carnival practices during the first years of the dictatorship became strictly segregated along class lines. The elite social club carnival balls with their merengue orchestras became ultra-exclusive, severely limiting the privilege of participation (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 122). In addition, the elite carnival processions were transformed from displays of prestige into military parades that reflected Trujillo’s total authority over the Dominican state (118). These military processions were sonically dominated by the Dominican Army marching band and not merengue orchestras. The carnival of 1937, detailed by Linda Derby, culminated on February 23rd, which was the anniversary of Trujillo’s ascendancy to power (2000: 220). Also for that year’s carnival, the same year as the Haitian massacre, Trujillo elected Lina Lovatón as queen. Exemplifying Trujillo’s cultural elitism, Lovatón was
the daughter of a traditional, white, Spanish, and Catholic aristocratic family from Santo Domingo (Derby 2000: 218).

Towards the end of his dictatorship, Trujillo had turned his attention from nationalist projects to seeking international validation. Like Vargas’s promotion of Carmen Miranda and the samba at the New York World’s Fair in 1939, the Dominican merengue also became a prominent cultural export during the era of Trujillo (Araujo 1992: 85). For the year 1955, the 25th anniversary of his ascendency, Trujillo planned a grand International Fair, La Feria de la Paz y la Confraternidad del Mundo Libre, or “The Free World’s Fair of Peace and Brotherhood.” This was both a demonstration of Trujillo’s power and an attempt to gain international approval, instead of focusing on the growing domestic disapproval of his dictatorship (Austerlitz 1993: 81 and Derby 2000: 1127). Carnival of that year was subsumed by the Fair and was rather inconsequential. The carnival of 1937 had served as a tool for propagating Trujillo’s vision of a culturally elite and racist Dominican nation. The carnival of 1955 instead reflected Trujillo’s increasing megalomania. The official carnival celebration that year was postponed until April 1st in order to coincide with his daughter’s birthday, after also appointing her as carnival queen (Derby 2000: 226). Instead of commissioning his great orchestras to compose merengues for a national carnival celebration at home, Trujillo commissioned world-famous music-megastar Xavier Cugat to compose internationally-flavored big band merengues\(^8\) that promoted the Fair abroad (Austerlitz 1993: 81).

Trujillo’s push to inter-nationalize merengue resulted in prominent Dominican orchestras only becoming the big attraction in the carnivals of other countries, including Colombia, Cuba, and Panama (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 139 and Austerlitz 1993: 81). Abroad, Trujillo’s merengue

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\(^8\) These merengues are available for purchase on iTunes, in addition to the original Columbia recording (Cugat 1986).
became an externally directed, state-sponsored emblem of the Dominican Republic. At home, Trujillo codified a single, national *merengue* genre and popularized it across the country. Although ballroom *merengue* orchestras dominated the Santo Domingo soundscape, the dance was never fully accepted by the elite classes in Santo Domingo because of its connection to rural culture and Trujillo’s state. Though the *merengue cibaeño* became extremely popular among working-class Dominicans, it eliminated most other regional styles of *merengue* that otherwise may still have been performed at carnival (see Austerlitz 1997 and Cestero 1970: 45).

Trujillo never had any official policy that condemned or condoned popular carnival. Many localized street celebrations became bound within the limits of their neighborhoods as a result of Trujillo’s suppression of afro-Dominican cultural expressions (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 120, 122). This unintended isolation had the effect of insulating several subaltern communities and caused the rapid growth of several unique cultural expressions in historically black communities. One of the expressions to become deeply rooted throughout the entire country was *gagá*. *Gagá* is a direct import of the Haitian Lenten street-celebration *rara*, a syncretic religious practice that mixes West African religious elements with Catholicism. The *gagá* ritual consists of songs sung in call-and-response style accompanied by a percussion ensemble of *palos* drums, *tamboras*, and single-note bamboo tubes and metal trumpets called *bambúes* and *fututos* respectively (Rosenberg 1979: 59). The songs are sung in a mix of Haitian *kreyol* and Dominican Spanish dialects. This ritual ultimately results in spirit possession (75).

Today, *gagá* is practiced throughout Lent and most notably during the Holy Week when these groups travel from the *batey* to perform in the local towns (Gillis 1978: 2). *Gagá* found its

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way in to the Dominican Republic by way of the Haitian communities living along the ill-defined Haitian-Dominican border and by those attracted eastward by a promise of employment within the burgeoning Dominican sugar industry in the late nineteenth century. Most of these batey communities of sugar cane workers remained an invisible part of Trujillo’s Dominican state and were completely isolated from urban centers. Once entrenched in the southern and eastern provinces, these batey communities further developed their distinctive linguistic and religious traditions. Despite state-generated racist politics, afro-Dominican musical practices were already performed by Dominican people during carnival in the nineteenth century. In La Sangre, Cestero describes the comparsa of indios performing the drum-led dances of the congos from San Lorenzo (1970: 45).

Another cultural expression to become established during the Trujillo era was guloya dance-theater. The guloyas were originally Christmas season masquerades performed by the cocolos in the eastern provincial town of San Pedro de Macorís. As a way of limiting Haitian immigration, yet still requiring a large quantity of workers for the emerging sugar cane industry, the Dominican government began a program to import English and Dutch black laborers from the Lesser Antilles in 1893 (Inoa 2005: 24). This community was derogatorily referred to as cocolos, the pejorative term for dark-skinned foreigners (28). Trujillo began limiting the number of imported foreign workers in 1931 and prevented the populations already in the country from migrating to Dominican cities (61, 63). The importation of cocolo laborers stopped completely by 1942. The entrenched cocolo community in San Pedro, primarily protestant and English-speaking, developed distinct cultural expressions based on traditions brought from the Lesser Antilles.
The irony of this is that Trujillo forcibly isolated and suppressed the afro-Dominican, Haitian, and cocolo populations within the Dominican Republic but failed to eradicate the development and performance of these cultural expressions. Moreover, Trujillo actively supported and promoted the merengue cibaeño as the ideal Dominican national music, yet still failed to transfer merengue to the carnival celebrations in the barrios because of its continued tradition as a ballroom-style couple’s dance. With the decline of salon carnival balls after the end of dictatorship, the national merengue of the Trujillo era faded from the soundscape of Dominican carnivals. In comparison to merengue, samba dances manifested in Rio as grassroots carnival practices among afro-Brazilians before being codified as the samba’ during the Vargas regime in the 1930s. After the decline of the Rio elite parading groups, samba integrated into middle and upper class society, transformed into the national dance/music of Brazil, and created a variety of new urban and ballroom-dance genres that are still popular throughout Brazil today (see Béhague 1998 and Reily 1998).

Surprisingly, merengue maintained its national status and even grew in popularity, despite its strong association with the Trujillo dictatorship. Merengue’s successful reintegration into Dominican society was due in part to its success abroad. The link between Dominican national identity and merengue became particularly strong among Dominican immigrant communities in New York who, returning to the Dominican Republic in the mid-1980s, brought merengue back with them (Austerlitz 1997: 124-125). At home, the decline of orchestra merengues between the 1960s and 1980s also created a space for the development of urban-popular “typical” merengue combos. In the hands of merengueros like Johnny Ventura and Wilfrido Vargas, merengue acquired new sonic features including an increased tempo, more rhythmic contrast, an emphasis of the saxophone over the accordion, and the addition of
synthesizers and other electric instruments (Austerlitz 1997: 92-93). In the 1980s, the prominence of salon carnival in Santo Domingo began to fade. The Grand Carnival Gala in Santo Domingo, the most exclusive elite carnival ball, began to be broadcast on television alongside live broadcasts of local popular carnival parades (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 129). In 2010, the Grand Gala had representatives from several provinces, with the winners taking part in the National Carnival Parade instead of a formal ball (Desfile Nacional 2007 and Desfile Nacional 2010). By the 1980s, the street emerged as the location for the new authentic identity of Dominican carnival for the elites and the masses (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 128).

CARNIVAL AND MUSICAL NATIONALISM SINCE THE DICTATORSHIPS

By the beginning of the twentieth century, both Rio and Santo Domingo had nurtured the development of carnival music and dances that reflected the unique character of each society. Each had also developed the very beginnings of music/dance genres with national characters: samba in Rio and merengue in Santo Domingo. As dictatorships surfaced in Brazil and the Dominican Republic in 1930, both samba and merengue emerged as central focal points of state-generated cultural nationalism projects. The Brazilian state successfully placed samba at the center of carnival in Rio under the auspices of liberalism and populism of the Vargas regime. However, the Dominican state failed to successfully place merengue at the center of carnival in Santo Domingo. This is due in part to Trujillo's national merengue campaign and state-generated national identity that were inherently founded in racist politics and cultural elitism. These social differences between Vargas' Brazil and Trujillo's Dominican Republic are an important source of certain incompatibilities between the carnival in Rio and the Dominican National Carnival. In the next chapter, I analyze the influence of the Rio economic-model of
carnival and current Dominican cultural politics on the performance of music during the celebration of Dominican National Carnival in Santo Domingo since 1982 in order to demonstrate the various levels in which the discourse of the Dominican state is disconnected from the thoughts, activities, and behaviors of the Dominican people.
CHAPTER 4
THE IMAGE OF BRAZIL IN 21ST CENTURY DOMINICAN NATIONAL CARNIVAL

On 10 February 2010, the Dominican Ministry of Culture unveiled the newest exhibition to grace Independence Park, entitled "Carnaval Dominicano." The exhibition showcases 167 photographs of representative carnival groups from every province in the country that participated in the 2009 National Carnival Parade in Santo Domingo. In a message serving as the introduction to the exhibition, Minister of Culture José Rafael Lantigua writes:

Carnival is the most popular expression of Dominican culture. Each year, men and women, boys, girls, children of all ages, come out to dance in the streets and express, through masks and comparsas, their concerns, their most intimate desires, their reality, their dreams, their revelry, their celebration, this is carnival!...Dominican carnival is an authentic expression of our national identity. Let's defend the people's right to happiness!

Each display in the exhibition contains a photo of a carnival group along with the group's name, place of origin, competition category, and a brief description. Although not exhaustive, the exhibit features the photos of typical Dominican carnival characters popular throughout the country, and others specific to a single region.

What is the Dominican national identity and Dominican carnival to which Lantigua refers? Today, the term Dominican carnival typically signifies the National Carnival Parade in Santo Domingo. The 2010 National Carnival Parade featured 191 registered comparsas selectively representing all thirty provinces plus Santo Domingo. Each province was required to select its own representative delegations for national carnival from the best comparsas performing at their region's local carnival events. For example, there were over thirty groups
that performed at the carnival in the municipality of La Romana on 28 February 2010, but only four *comparsas* from La Romana participated at the National Parade on March 7th (*Desfile Nacional* 2010). Of the over 150 *comparsas* registered at the carnivals in La Vega, only one *comparsa* represented La Vega at the National Parade (Tejeda Ortiz 2010a: 31). In Santo Domingo, a maximum of eighteen *comparsas* are chosen each year from each of the local carnivals held in the four different Santo Domingo municipalities. Each *comparsa* that performs in National Carnival must be pre-registered so that group names and categories can be published in the Carnival program. Each group is also eligible to receive a small government subsidy. In 2009, the Dominican government provided over US$17,000 in aid to registered carnival groups, which purportedly is the equivalent of RD$500\(^{10}\) per person or roughly US$14 (*Desfile Nacional* 2009: 4).

Like carnivals in other parts of Latin America, there are many typical carnival characters and *comparsa* groups found throughout the Dominican Republic. The *roba-la-gallina* is a female character with exaggerated breasts and buttocks wearing an ample multicolored skirt and carrying an umbrella. She is one of the most popular Dominican carnival characters and is almost always performed by a cross-dressing male. The *diablos cojuelos* are the famous flameo devil character found in various forms across the Dominican Republic. *Califé* is the king of Dominican carnival. The performer wears blackface and white-painted lips, completed by an oversized top hat. The *tiznao* is another blackface character whose whole visible body is painted black with burnt motor oil. This character often performs as African or slave characters. The *indio* is another prominent character in various Dominican carnivals. The performers are either

\(^{10}\) Regional carnival organizers may report a lower number of performers to the Carnival Commission than are actually participating. When this occurs, the *comparsas* are paid according to the number reported. When the *comparsa* distributes the subsidy to its participants, each individual actually receive less that RD$500.
dark-skinned or painted brown or red in order to represent tainos, the indigenous heritage of the Dominican people, or other American indigenous tribes like the Aztecs, Mayans, or Native Americans. As a group, the gágá comparsa is based on a religio-festive dance from the Lenten season that is now integrated into carnivals across the country.

There are also several popular carnival characters and comparsas that are unique to specific regions of the Republic. The taimáscaro of Puerto Plata is a giant devil character that is influenced by indigenous taino art and religion. The lechón of Santiago is the local řuckling pigdevil. These devils are complete with a pair of long horns, a whip, and vejigas or fake řpig bladders for hitting spectators. The cachúa of Cabral is a whip-cracking, fire-breathing devil character originally appearing only during Holy Week. The guloyas of San Pedro perform dance dramas of the cocolo population originally popular during the Christmas season. The Ali-Babá of Santo Domingo is one of the most popular comparsas. Each Ali-Babá includes characters dressed in stereotypical řoriental garb dancing in unison. In all, these varieties of comparsas accounted for the majority of the winning groups and individuals for the 2009 and 2010 National Parade (Observatorio 2009a and Observatorio 2010). The nine competitive prize categories today are: historical, traditional, devils, fantasy, popular creativity, Ali-Babá, traditional mask, fantasy mask, and individual character. In 2009, the Dominican state awarded a total of RD$2,280,000 or over US$60,000 in prize money (Desfile Nacional 2009: 4). These comparsa groups are at the very foundation of what makes this carnival řDominican. However, as I have demonstrated, the state řidea of řDominican identity is generally disconnected with the actual practices of the Dominican people.

Since the 1980s, the Dominican state had also turned to the image of řBrazil and řRio carnival as the ideal model for economic success. I have demonstrated that carnival practices in
Rio and carnival practices in Santo Domingo have many significant differences. How have the complexities of Dominican national identity hindered the state’s ability to create a Dominican carnival-based, in part, on the Brazilian carnival model? What effect has the Dominican state’s efforts to imitate Brazilian carnival had on the actual carnival practices of the Dominican people?

DOMINICAN NATIONAL CARNIVAL, STATE CULTURAL POLITICS, AND MERENGUE

In 1982, a group of Dominican scholars in conjunction with the Secretary of State of Tourism (now the Ministry of Tourism) conceived of the idea to create a national carnival celebration to be held in Santo Domingo. The National Parade was designed to showcase the best of the various regional carnivals at one time, in one place. The practice of carnival in Rio during the first part of the twentieth century seemed to provide the perfect model for the creation of Dominican National Carnival. The Dominican Secretary found Rio carnival to be ideal because of its economic success, the grandiloquence of its costumes and floats, and its association with carnival samba music and dance. Like samba in Brazil, merengue is often considered the national dance/music of the Dominican Republic, and it seemed as though state-sponsored urban-popular merengue would occupy a central space at the national parade. The Dominican state renewed its attempt to implement an economic and commercial model like Rio’s into the National Parade in 2005. However, the Dominican state still failed to place merengue at the center of carnival in Santo Domingo.

The decision to create a national carnival parade came about as a result of a favorable reception of a 1982 documentary highlighting regional carnival practices in the Dominican Republic (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 129). The Secretary of Tourism remained in direct control of the
National Carnival Parade for its inauguration in 1983 and until the formation of the National Carnival Commission in 2002. In direct imitation of Rio’s carnival, the organizers, including Dominican scholars and officials, wanted the parade to be a “popular manifestation” and devised new rules and regulations that would set the tone for National Carnival. These rules included the election of the carnival king and queen, the awarding of prizes for the best comparsas, the creation of the nine original judging categories, the dedication of the celebration theme to a single carnival comparsa or individual, the selection of a musical theme and poster design, and the allotting of government subsidies for comparsas from the barrios and the interior of the country. The National Carnival was also permanently scheduled for the first Sunday in March (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 131-133). However, the creation of a uniform celebration comprised of widely divergent regional traditions has proven nearly impossible.

Between 1984 and 2005, the carnival organizers selected the central theme for carnival and commissioned a poster design and merengue composition for the centerpiece of each year’s festivities (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 139-140). The first merengue to be recorded for National Carnival was “Baile en la Calle” by Luis Días (sometimes spelled Díaz) in 1984. After being rerecorded by Fernando Villalona in 1986, this carnival merengue became popular, supposedly because of its fusion of multiple regional Dominican musical styles, including merengue palo echao, congos, and gagá (141). One can still hear many carnival merengues broadcast during the carnival season, both on the radio and from flatbed trucks carrying loud sound-systems, locally known as “disco lights.” Although a new carnival merengue was composed every year until 2006, the original success of “Baile en la Calle” was never duplicated at the national parade after 1986. The 2009 carnival celebration marked the 25th anniversary of the song (Observatorio 2009a: 1). The 2010 National Parade was also dedicated to Días who had recently passed away.
(Desfile Nacional 2010). However, the only live performance of ÑBaile en la CalleÑ to be found in the 2010 carnival parade were the renditions by marching bands like the Firemen Corp and from the Free School of Río San Juan.

Recordings of Dominican carnival music produced either privately or by the state are dominated by urban merengues and particularly DíazÑs ÑBaile en la CalleÑ. However, there are few recordings that are commercially available. In 2006, the Bayahonda Cultural Foundation re-released its CD Música de Carnaval, which contains the original Díaz recording in addition to VillalonaÑs 1986 rendition. That same year, the Secretary of Tourism released its own CD Carnaval Dominicano, which contains two new cover versions of the song performed by Diómedes Núñez and the group Tes-a-T. One of the most striking features of many of the merengues found on these CDs, including ÑBaile en la CalleÑ, is the use of a samba whistle, otherwise not typical to merengue, but indexing the sound of carnival in Río. There are also two privately produced CDs of Dominican carnival music that can be purchased from street vendors. Produced in 2004, Carnaval de Santo Domingo features nineteen of the biggest carnival merengue hits, including VillalonaÑs recording of ÑBaile en la CalleÑ. There is also a CD produced by Caminante Records aptly titled Carnaval del Merengue. However, Tejeda Ortiz states that of the nineteen merengue tracks included on this CD, none are merengues that were actually composed for carnival (2008: 148).

In 2005, the newly formed National Carnival Commission overhauled the national carnival parade in an attempt to transform the procession into a more grandiose spectacle like the carnival parades held in RíoÑs Sambadrome since 1984. The results of the CommissionÑs first National Carnival Congress, called Ñthe springtime of Dominican identityÑ by Avelino Stanely, were sixty-eight Ñacords, twenty-six Ñgeneral recommendations, and eight Ñfinal resolutionsÑ...
for improving National Carnival (*Primer Congreso* 2006: 11). Some of the Commission’s decisions included giving priority to Dominican music[,] motivating *comparsas* to bring their own musicians[,] which in addition to fomenting musical creativity would avoid the problem of the transit of the so-called *disco ligths*[sic][,] creating mechanisms to facilitate the movement of musical groups that participate in the National Parade(22, 33). The Commission also decided to fence off the parade route to better separate participants and spectators, to increase security to maintain order, to establish provincial carnival conferences to pre-select its carnival representatives, and to limit *comparsa* delegations to 150 participants. In 2006, the Secretary of Culture began printing official programs for the celebration in order to help *orient* spectators. These programs were distributed by hand and contained *comparsa* names, competitive category, and a brief description (*Defile Nacional* 2009: 4). The National Carnival Commission has deemed the transformation of National Carnival into a grand spectacle a *complete success*(*Defile Nacional* 2009: 3). Is this really the case?

The visible impact of the Dominican state’s efforts to model Brazilian carnival at the National Parade is very limited. The actual carnival practices of the Dominican people remain rooted in regional traditions and customary practices. The image of Brazil appears in only a few *comparsas* primarily from Santo Domingo that compete in the *fantasy* or *Ali-Babá* category. The program for the 2010 Parade defines the *fantasy* category as one in which its content overflows the imagination and the common displays by means of characters, costumes, masks, artistic dimensions, originality and unlimited creativity. Its characteristics are the variety of color and the use of glitter(*Defile Nacional* 2010). Some *fantasy* groups from the capital invoke the spirit of *carioca* grandiloquence or its association with *samba*. One *comparsa* from East Santo Domingo called *Classical Empire* competed under the *fantasy* category in 2007.
and described its theme as, "inspired by the elements of Brazilian samba combined with the carnival expressions of our barrios" (Desfile Nacional 2007: 29). An Ali-Babá group from the Federal District was the only other comparsa that year to invoke Brazilian elements and whose creation was inspired by Brazil's carnival and adapted to the Dominican reality accompanied by the music and dance of the Ali-Babá groups (14). In 2010, a comparsa called The Grand Tri-Color Fantasy described its theme simply as, "inspired by the samba schools from Brazil" (Desfile Nacional 2010).

However, the actual image of Brazil at Dominican carnival only exists on a superficial level. There are no samba schools that actually perform during the National Carnival Parade. The soundscape of the parade in Santo Domingo is surprisingly quiet. Only eighteen groups out of 190 performed live music during the 2009 procession. Only fourteen groups out of 191 performed live music during the 2010 procession. It is worth repeating — although merengue may be present in the form of prerecorded carnival music, it is not present as a live performance during the carnival parade; samba is absent altogether. The Dominican state has unquestionably had some success incorporating the Rio economic-model into the national carnival celebration. Why, then, have the efforts of the Dominican state to place the commercially-successful urban-popular merengue at the center of the national parade failed?

As stated in chapter three, with the decline of salon carnival balls after the dictatorship, the national merengue of the Trujillo era proved incompatible with a transition to the street and has resulted in the lack of a suitable carnival music genre for the majority of Dominicans (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 128). Despite its repopularization in the 1980s, a second reason that the state failed to reintegrate merengue into national carnival, as stated by Tejeda Ortiz, is that carnival merengue is not commercially incorporated into the national parade (139). Unlike samba during
Rio’s carnival season, recordings of the Dominican musical theme were not distributed to 
comparsas until right before carnival, were not promoted in the media before carnival, and 
lacked any coherent marketing strategy either within the population or for tourists (Ibid.). If the 
parade participants and the over 500,000 spectators are supposed to ñdance in the street,ás the 
Días song ñBaile en la Calleñsuggests, what are they dancing to? In the next section, I analyze 
the four types of relationships than contemporary comparsas have with music and dance. First, I 
detail the comparsas that ñdanceñwithout musical accompaniment, with a particular focus on 
regional practices in La Vega and Santiago. Second, I discuss carnival characters (such as the 
roba-la-gallina and Califé) that are associated with ñsongñand ñdance,ñbut are not associated 
with musical accompaniment. Third, I discuss comparsas that incorporate musical instruments 
as auxiliary parts of their performance. Finally, I evaluate the few comparsas that are deeply 
associated with ñmusicñand ñdance.ñ

CONTEMPORARY CARNIVAL PRACTICES OF THE DOMINICAN POPULATION

First, there are many Dominican carnival groups that traditionally do not require musical 
accompaniment. Besides the national parade, the regional carnival celebrations in Puerto Plata, 
Santiago, and La Vega have also independently imitated the economic and commercial models 
of Río Carnival. The regional carnivals in La Vega are by far the most economically successful 
carnivals in the country. In addition to Santo Domingo, La Vega is one of the oldest cities in the 
Dominican Republic. Its carnival practices date back to the beginning of the sixteenth century 
and today are held on every Sunday in February and on Independence Day (Tejeda Ortiz 
2008: 60). In the twenty-first century, the regional carnival practices in La Vega directly 
compete with the national parade in Santo Domingo for the right to be called ñthe capital of
Dominican carnival (Tejeda Ortiz 2010a: 8). In 1985, La Vega residents began implementing their own carnival regulations like those established for the national parade. The citizens of La Vega organized their own committees with the specific purpose of developing Vegano carnival into its own spectacle (Tejeda Ortiz 2010a: 21). Beginning in 1988 and 1991 respectively, the UCAVE, the Vegano Carnival Union, and the COCAVE, the Vegano Carnival Organizing Committee, have worked together in order to demarcate the official carnival zone in La Vega, decide each year’s official carnival route, create the regulations for Vegano carnival participation, provide security, and solicit sponsors (Ibid.).

With the rise of commercial interest in Dominican carnival during the 1970s, the Vegano carnival transformed from a “cultural expression” to “commercial spectacle” in the style of Rio carnival (Tejeda Ortiz 2010a: 23). Vegano carnival can afford to be bigger and better because of sponsorship by the La Vega beverage industry. In the 2010 Brahma Light beer commercial, the entire city of La Vega even magically transforms into a carnival wonderland where every building is decorated and thousands of people fill the streets. Just as the national carnival parade attracts an audience of some 500,000 people, the Vegano carnival season alone draws nearly 600,000 tourists and local spectators to the province (Desfile Nacional 2009: 5 and Tejeda Ortiz 2010a: 34). The Vegano carnival costs nearly US$4.5 million to produce for the entire month of February alone, including the US$350,000 subsidized directly to the comparsas (Tejeda Ortiz 2010a: 30, 38). Sponsors invest nearly US$3 million in Vegano carnival, including Brahma Light, but nearly US$2 million is funded directly by the Veganos themselves (28). The biggest personal expense of Vegano carnival is the elaborate design of the costume of the famous diablo cojuelo character, who initially gained national attention during the first televised broadcasts of

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11 This commercial is available on YouTube and can be viewed at the following web address: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsuMNO3hUTk
carnival (25). There are over 3,000 individual *diablo cojuelo* performers in La Vega alone and each costume costs somewhere between US$450-$1,500 (31).

Vegano carnival culminates with large outdoor concert venues at the end of each carnival parade (Tejeda Ortiz 2010a: 23). The Vegano Brewery first sponsored a concert of New York *merengue* band *La Gran Manzana* in 1988. In 1992, the television station *Micro Ondas Nacionales* and Mario Peña Batista sponsored separate stage-areas for the ultimate *merengue* and *bachata* concerts to conclude Vegano carnival that year (24-25). Even the *Brahma Light* commercial features *diablos cojuelos*, a *roba-la-gallina*, and an *Ali-Babá* character all performing their customary dances to the sound of an urban-popular *merengue*. However, the commercial is misleading because these carnival characters typically do not perform to *merengue* music. Vegano carnival has successfully adopted the Rio economic-model more than any other carnival in the Dominican Republic. *Merengue* bands headline the evening concerts in La Vega and *merengue* music is heard in commercials on television. During the parade, however, the *diablos cojuelos* continue to perform their customary dances without live music accompaniment. This lacuna’s very existence, for non-Dominicans, often seems nonsensical or even impossible to grasp. So inherent is dance’s typical association with music that one must witness the performance of this choreography in person to comprehend its absence.

In her 2009 paper "Cultural Policy from Below: The Making of Music, Dance, and Locality in Dominican Carnival," Sydney Hutchison examines the impact of commercialization and the Rio economic-model on carnival in Santiago. Hutchinson explains that Dominican carnivals throughout the country have focused primarily on costumes and masks as the principle way of differentiating regional practices and have generally ignored music’s potential to act as an identity marker. Located less than an hour from La Vega, Santiago’s carnival directly competes
for spectators and sponsorship with its economically successful neighbor. Like the Vegano carnival, carnival in Santiago is dominated by a devil-character called the lechón (see Gonzalez 1970). The lechones principally perform their customary dance accompanied only by the sound of their cracking-whips and the jingle bells sewn onto their costumes. As noted by Hutchinson, many of the individuals in Santiago who perform as a lechón believe that there is no ‘music’ and even no ‘dance’ in Santiago carnival at all. The economic prestige of these regional groups makes them formidable at national carnival. At the National Parade of 2010, the delegations from Puerto Plata, La Vega, and Santiago each exceeded the limit of 150 performers. The effort of the Dominican state to place merengue in a central position has failed even with largest and most commercialized Dominican carnival groups.

Second, there are some Dominican carnival groups that are deeply associated with a particular song and dance, including the roba-la-gallina and Califé. These customary songs are sung in call-and-response fashion and are well-known by local carnival attendees (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 211 and Cestero 1970: 45). The roba-la-gallina performer has three calls each with a unique response (see Table 4.1)

### Table 4.1 Typical Calls of the Character Roba-la-Gallina (With Typical Responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call</th>
<th>ŐRoba la gallina (4x)</th>
<th>Őňi-tîd</th>
<th>ŐTon-tónô</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>ŐPalo con ellaô</td>
<td>ŐManatîô</td>
<td>ŐMolondrônô</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike roba-la-gallina, the Califé character improvises a narrative, with the same response after each strophe of text: ŐCalifé, Califéô (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 214-215). The themes of the narrative are often humorous, but may also be critical of current political, economic, or social conditions in the Dominican Republic. The songs do not require additional musical accompaniment, but the dance will sometimes be accompanied by a tambora and güira for rhythmic support or to draw
attention to their character. The *Carnival Dominicano* CD (2006) features some of these typical songs arranged as carnival *merengues*. The track "Carnival Santiago" includes the call-and-response that accompanied the *roba-la-gallina* among others. The second half of the track "Gagá y Califé" includes a typical *Califé* narrative text, interjected by the response "Califé, Califé." 

Third, carnival groups, such as the *indios* and the *tiznaos* will occasionally incorporate percussion instruments as props or auxiliary parts of their performance. The historical and political importance of the *taíno* people in the Dominican imagination has resulted in the popularity of their characters in Dominican carnivals. In the 2010 National Parade, nine of the ten *comparsas* performing as *indios* competed in the "historical" category. These groups typically describe themselves as "representations of our [Dominican] indigenous roots" or "recreations of the indigenous people who inhabited the island" (*Desfile Nacional* 2010). In 2009, an individual performance called "Taíno Fantasty" described himself as "the presence of indigenous culture as a cultural vestige in the historical memory of the Dominican people" (*Desfile Nacional* 2009: 26-27). Some of these *indio* groups representing Taíno people will also perform an *areito* as part of their presentation. The *areito* was a pre-Colombian ritual ceremony and musical event originally practiced throughout the Greater Antilles (Davis 1998: 846). In 2010, the *comparsa* called "Taíno Prayers," performed by the cultural dance theater company *Batey Azua* from province of Azua, was one of the *indio comparsas* that competed in the "historical" category. This group described their performance as "areitos" and litanies sung and danced by *taíno* tribes (*Desfile Nacional* 2010). This *comparsa* incorporated güiras, *tamboras*, and log drums as a part of their performance. The *areito* and the *indio* characters are still a viable method of re-imagining a proud Dominican indigenous past during carnival.
Unlike the imagined taino past of the Dominican people, there is much African cultural heritage extant in the Dominican Republic. Thus, unlike most indio groups who compete in the ŕhistoricalô category, many tiznao groups compete in the ŕtraditionalô category. There are many versions of tiznao characters that perform in blackface, and even ŕblackbody,ô found throughout the Dominican Republic. These include multiregional Califé, the wikiki of Santo Domingo, the Wild Indian of San Pedro de Macorís, the pepes of San Cristóbal, the wampa of Cotuí, and others simply called africanos or congos in various other regions (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 218).

Unlike the representation of the indios, tiznaos all have different, and sometimes contradictory, symbolic meanings during carnival performance. In addition to his call-and-response narrative song, the Califé often carries a güira as part of his standard costume. Califé is the most intriguing blackface character in Dominican National carnival and competes in several categories, including ŕtraditional,ô ŕfantasy,ô or even ŕAli-Babáô. According to Tejeda Ortiz, Califé emerged as the ŕcritical, satirical, and playfulô manifestation of the Santo Domingo intelligentsia during the U.S. Marine occupation and the Trujillo era (2008: 214-215). In this way, Califéô narrative texts began to take on a political role as a method of popular revolt against the state.

Following the Rio de Janeiro carnival model, carnival organizers were in need of a king for Dominican carnival for the first National Carnival in 1983. Carnival organizers elevated Califé as the king-character of the parade, instead of utilizing the carnival character Rey Momo (prominent in other Latin American and some local Dominican carnivals). Unlike Rey Momo, Califé is not a regal character and is not performed by a fat man. Califé is a black, thin ŕjokesterô and the character will often perform on stilts or on roller blades, and sometimes
breathes fire. The choice to elect a black king-character of National Carnival seems counterintuitive when one considers the Dominican Republic's history of racist politics.

Today, even though the photo exhibition "Carnaval Dominicano" described Califé as the conscience of carnival and the spirit of Dominican political protest and resistance, his popular origins as a blackface character are neither celebrated nor clearly understood. Califé was the dedicatory character of the 2010 National Carnival and his image appeared on the promotional posters and programs printed for the celebration. The photo exhibition also described the Califé character as inspired by Dominican Restoration War hero Juan Sampol combined with a satire of Uncle Sam [from the U.S.]. However, Dominican scholar Fradique Lizardo suggests Califé is actually a Dominicanized version of the similar Haitian character Baron Samedi, or the vodou spirit of the dead (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 214). There is visual evidence of this connection between Califé and Baron Samedi. Occasionally, Califé performers will paint their entire face white, like the skull-face of the Haitian Baron, instead of black.

Other tiznao characters also embody residual African and Haitian influences and stereotypes among the Dominican people. Comparsas of tiznaos are not always clearly labeled in the carnival program and are often described simply as negros or esclavos (blacks or slaves). In 2010, the comparsa "The Sorcerers" from the province of San Juan de la Maguana competed in the traditional category. This comparsa included participants acting as divine-healers, fire-breathers, snake-handlers, and spirit-possessions. The program describes this group as the representation of magico-religious manifestations that are practiced in the San Juan province, such as witchcraft, casting spells, santería, vudú, papa Liorio [the living Saint of Maguana] and others (Desfile Nacional 2010). In 2009, the comparsa "Vudú and Magic in the Dominican Republic" from the province of San Cristóbal also competed in the traditional category.
category. The program describes this group as representing some of typical characteristics of the gods that shape popular Dominican religiosity (Desfile Nacional 2009: 42). These groups both incorporated Dominican palos drumming as a sporadic part of their performance because of its association with Dominican vudú practices. If the indio represents the shared past of all Dominican people, the tiznao often marks the other in Dominican society.

In general, the national carnival parade in Santo Domingo remains primarily a visual spectacle and is dominated by non-musical comparsas. In 2010, the Parade prominently featured seven individual performances of roba-la-gallina and forty-five different groups of devil characters. In comparison, there were only fourteen groups that performed live music during the National Parade. (Desfile Nacional 2010). The few comparsas that are associated with music and dance typically perform one of three genres: gagá, guloyas, and Alí-Babá. These dance/music genres have roots in formerly subaltern, historically black communities that began to gain national attention with the rise of afro-Dominican popular reformism in the 1980s.

The first shift in populist cultural politics began with the rise in academic interest of afro-Dominican cultural expressions. This intelligentsia movement was spearheaded by Dominican scholars Fradique Lizardo (1975, 1979) and Julio César Mota Acosta (1977) and American scholars June C. Rosenberg (1979) and Martha Ellen Davis (1976, 1981, 1987). The work of these scholars resulted in a national awareness of African musical and cultural heritage in the Dominican Republic. This included a particular interest in Dominican palos (similar to Cuban santería or Haitian vodou practices), merengue, the guloyas, and gagá.

Of these, Dominican gagá practices continue to suffer the most from the Dominican state cultural policy. Since the creation of the Secretary of State of Culture as a separate government entity in 2000 (renamed the Ministry of Culture in 2010), there has been a concerted effort by
Dominican folklorists to Dominicanize gágá and to legitimize it as a part of Dominican folklore, further folding it into Dominican carnival. Because the carnival season extends from February until August, the Lenten practices of gágá are now also performed in the context of Dominican carnival. Gágá musical performance during carnival is a simplified version of the music that accompanies the religious ceremonies, and is typified by intense drum rhythms and an ostinato melodic pattern performed by one-note bamboo and metal trumpets, called bambúes and fututos respectively (see Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1 Gágá Motives from National Carnival 2010**

In his book *Los Carnavales del Carnaval* (2003), Dagoberto Tejeda Ortiz stresses that gágá is in fact “not only an expression of the bateyò and ñís not a ñub-culture, ñbut that it is ñu part of Dominican culture” (198). Citing Rosenberg (1979), Tejeda Ortiz emphasizes that the integration of gágá into carnival does not devalue the practice of gágá, but integrates Haitian-Dominican batey residents into the Dominican nation as ñDominicans. ñOrtiz points to the fact that other types of afro-Dominican Lenten practices, such as the cachúas of Cabral, are already

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12 This is a conflation of the primary motives that occurred during the performance of the Gágá from Tigason on 7 March 2010 (transcribed by the author).
recognized and included as part of the Dominican carnival discourse (197-198). Today, there are at least one million people of Haitian decent living in the Dominican Republic (Listín Diario 2010a). However, these individuals either pass as Dominican or are still considered Haitian because multi-ethnic identities such as Haitian-Dominican are not in everyday use. The question of whether gagá is still Haitian or can pass as Dominican has been an issue for the Dominican state and the Dominican people since the late 1970s (see Rosenberg 1979).

In response, the Dominican state decided to reframe gagá commercially as merengue in the context of carnival. Pride in merengue is one essential part of the national identity of the Dominican state and merengue is still one of the few commercially viable musical genres in the Dominican Republic. In this way, the Secretary often promotes gagá as merengue in order to pass gagá as Dominican (instead of Haitian and, therefore, also as a commercially viable genre. The first visible manifestation of the Dominicanized gagá, after Verna Gillis’s important 1978 ethnographic recording of Haitian rara and Dominican gagá, is the “Gagá y Califé” track found on the Carnaval Dominicano CD (2006) (see Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2 Excerpt from “Gagá y Califé” on Carnaval Dominicano (2006)**

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13 This is a conflation of general rhythmic and melodic motives from the first half of the track “Gagá y Califé” performed by Victor Tolentino (Carnaval Dominicano 2006) (transcribed by the author).
In the included CD booklet, this gagá is accredited to Dominican Folklore and is labeled as a “merengue.” However, unlike the other fifteen tracks of carnival merengues on the CD, neither the Gagá nor Califé sections are true merengues. This composition features the basic gagá rhythmic groove performed by the palos and maraca and lacks the standard merengue rhythm performed by a tambora and güira (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 Comparison of Basic Palos and Merengue Grooves

The Secretary’s oversight is not simply accidental. The track Pipí en Carnaval on the same CD also utilizes Dominican palos drumming rhythms. However, this track arranges the palos groove along with a typical merengue rhythm. Unlike the track Gagá y Califé, this track is also clearly labeled in the CDs notes as “merengue & palos.” Since 2006, other cultural institutions have produced CDs with more complete treatments of gagá and merengue. The CD Sí Gagá was produced in conjunction with the Cofradia Cultural Foundation in 2008. Although not directly linked to carnival performance, this CD features traditional style compositions accompanied by gagá from San Pedro, Barahona, and La Romana in addition to newly composed urban gagá-merengue hybrids.

During the 2010 National Carnival Parade, the Gagá from Tigason competed in the “traditional” category and was the very first comparsa to perform. This year, the National Parade began with a Special Block that contained full festive and ritual expressions that have

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acquired carnivalesque characteristics (Desfile Nacional 2010). The program also provides a brief description of the ÑGagá from Tigason:Ñ

This comparsa emulates the expressions of religious syncretism from the [Southwest] Bahoruco province. With their ritual movements and their contagious music, the gagá from this area reclaims all of the cultural specter left by Haitian immigration in our bateys and recreates it with a touch of very authentic Dominican form (2010).

The gagá is a legitimate and viable cultural-religious expression of the Haitian-Dominican batey communities. However, there were also other comparsas at the 2010 Parade purportedly representing Haitian cultural expressions. Comparsa twenty-three, Ñlos zombisÑ from the northern province of Valverde, competed under the Ñpopular creativityÑ category. This group dressed in stereotypical Hollywood-movie zombie clothing and periodically stopped to writhe in the street. The program describes this group as, Ña representation of the resurrection of the deadÑ. This is the way the culture of our neighbor country Haiti has influenced us with their imaginary belief in the tortured dead (Desfile Nacional 2010). This comparsa, present in the National Carnival Parade at least since 2007, expresses the extant Dominican negative stereotypes of imagined Haitian cultural expressions in a way that gagá practices do not actually embody.

Unlike the Haitian population in the Dominican Republic, the cocolos have transitioned more easily into the Dominican nation since the 1980s. The image of the dancing guloya first burst into the national imagination during a series of Barceló-brand rum commercials of the mid-1980s, one of which highlighted San Pedro de Macorís (Inoa 2005: 78). The cocolo dance dramas were originally Christmas-season masquerades but have also merged with the Dominican

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15 This commercial is available on YouTube and can be viewed at the following web address:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUfwFvt5Tt0&feature=PlayList&p=A8B445491464F6C6&playnext_from=PL&playnext=1&index=10
carnival season, including a variety of dances like the Momis, the Wild Indian, and the David y Goliat (90-94). The guloya dances are accompanied by a small group of musicians playing snare drum, bass drum, triangle, and ornamented by sporadic high-pitched flourishes on fife (88-90) (see Figure 4.4).

**Figure 4.4 Guloya Motives from National Carnival 2010**

![Guloya Motives from National Carnival 2010](image)

**Guloya groups also compete under the “traditional” category.** In 2005, UNESCO proclaimed the cocolo dance drama tradition as part of “Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity” of the Dominican Republic. The other Dominican cultural expression that holds a UNESCO title is the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the Congos from the Villa Mella barrio of Santo Domingo, proclaimed in 2001 (Desfile Nacional 2006). As a way of highlighting this honor, the National Carnival theme for 2006 was dedicated to the guloyas. Between 2007 and

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16 This is a conflation of typical motives that occurred during the performance of the Guloyas from San Pedro on 7 July 2009 and 7 March 2010 (transcribed by Catherine Hennessey).

Key: - open hit, one hand; - open hit, two hands; - rim shot; - buzz role; - flam; + - muted
2009, the National Carnival programs offered strikingly similar descriptions of the *guloya comparsa*, proudly describing it as:

é representing *cocolo* dance and culture, an immigrant group from the English [Antilles] that arrived in San Pedro de Macorís at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century and because of their contribution to Dominican culture, in November 2005 were declared by UNESCO as a masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (2009).

Donald Ñ Linda Henderson, Ñ the king Ñ and longtime leader of the *guloyas*, passed away on 12 July 2009. Perhaps as an indirect result, there was only one *guloya comparsa* this year instead of the usual two. In the 2010 National Parade, the *guloyas* were placed as the ninth *comparsa* in the Special Block, alongside with the *gagá*. In previous years, the *guloyas* always performed with the *comparsa* of Ñ *little guloyas* Ñ and the other groups from San Pedro. The brief description offered by the program this year only read, Ñ *Cocolo* dance theater Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (Desfile Nacional 2010). Despite the prominence and prestige of the Dominican *cocolos* at the state level, *guloya* music is not commercially viable. The Dominican state neither promotes cultural ethnographic recordings nor commercial versions of their music.\(^{17}\) Despite the commercial absence of *guloya* music, the impact of the *guloyas* music on other carnival practices of the Dominican people can not be diminished.

The final group associated with music at National Carnival is also the most common and most popular. Originating in Santo Domingo, the *Ali-Babá* is an integral part of the local carnival identity in the capital's municipalities and, unlike *gagá* or the *guloyas*, it is not linked to a specific community, tradition, or context outside of carnival. During the early 1980s,

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\(^{17}\) One of the few popular artists that incorporated *guloya* cultural elements into his music is Juan Luis Guerra, particularly his 1987 hit *Guavaberry* (named after a local drink in San Pedro de Macorís) from the album *Mientras más lo pienso... tú*. Guerra borrows local idiomatic expressions in English (*Good morning*), although the only musical element in this *merengue* borrowed from the *guloyas* is the use of the triangle (Inoa 2005: 74-76).
according to the legend, Luis Robert ÑChachónô Torres was a young choreographer living in the Villa Francisca barrio of Santo Domingo. He was in desperate need of an impressive new costume in order to win a salsa-dancing competition. As luck would have it, being carnival season, a band of marching guloyas passed outside his house at the exact moment Chachónô mother came into the living room with a towel wrapped around her head. He was then inspired to create the oriental-themed Alí-Babá costume and dance (Tejeda Ortiz 2008: 219). Within a few years, residents of other barrios began to introduce this new style into carnival practices, in imitation of Chachónô oriental-styled costumes, flashy dance steps, and guloya inspired music. In the very first National Carnival in 1983, Chachónô Alí-Babá comparsa tied for first place in the Ñfantasyô category along with the more established and commercialized comparsa of diablos cojuelos from La Vega (Tejeda Ortiz 2010a: 21). In 1993, as the popularity of the Alí-Babá comparsas grew, carnival organizers were compelled to create a new, separate competitive prize category for the Alí-Babás (Desfile Nacional 2009). Chachónô comparsas have consistently placed within the top-three winning comparsas during national carnival. In 2009, Chachón also won the prestigious Felipe Abreu National Carnival prize of RD$100,000 or about US$3,000 (Desfile Nacional 2009). As of 2010, there were eleven comparsas of Alí-Babá out of the sixty groups representing Santo Domingo. Each Alí-Babá choreographs its own dance steps and hand movements inspired by Chachónô original patterns. The Alí-Babá is typically accompanied by its own ÑAlí-Bandaô a marching band with snare and bass drum to supply the fundamental rhythm and with tambora, güira, or other percussion instruments sometimes added for support (see Figure 4.5). In general, the rhythmic groove of the ÑAlí-Bandaô is more regular than the guloyas and the snare, especially, is less improvisatory in nature. The melodic instruments of the ÑAlí-Bandaô vary greatly between groups, but can include fututos, trombones, whistles, or the
occasional flute. These instruments perform repetitive motives that punctuate the comparsa’s dance steps.

**Figure 4.5 Excerpt from “Mambo Alí Babá” on Música de Carnaval (2006)**

In the state-sponsored photo exhibition in Independence Park, each caption under the five photos of Alí-Babás describes these groups as performing ñchoreography done to the rhythm of bass and snare drums.Ñ These captions fail to mention any of the cultural influences of the cocolos or Haitian-Dominicans. Although Dominican scholars duly credit the guloya musical influence in the rhythm of the snares and bass drums (see Tejeda Ortiz 2008), there is no consideration of the sonic influences of gagá on the ñAlí-Banda.Ñ I assert that the prominent use of fututos as the primary ostinato instrument is clearly borrowed from the gagá. There is one visible example of a connection between gagá and Alí-Babá that can be found on the CD Sí Gagá (2008). This CD includes one gagá/Alí-Babá hybrid track aptly named ñAlí-Gagá.Ñ

In the twenty-first century, a new iteration of commercial merengue has dominated the urban airwaves throughout the Dominican Republic. This genre, known as mambo or merengue de calle, ñstreet merengue,Ñ combines sonic features of merengue and reggaetón. There are

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18 This is a conflation of the basic rhythmic motives from the track ñMambo Alí Babá,Ñ performed by Los Reyes de Carnaval from Villa Francisca (Música de Carnaval 2006) (transcribed by the author).

Key: - open hit, one hand; - open hit, two hands; - buzz role; - flam

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currently several prominent Dominican *merengue de calle* acts, including Tito Swing and Omega. *Merengue de calle* is sonically less dense than typical *merengue*, with simpler melodic structures and more rhythmic repetition. In 2010, new carnival-themed *merengues de calle* was featured in the *Brahma Light* commercial, which included the image of a dancing *Alí-Babá* and the stereotypical rhythm of the *Alí-Banda*. According to Tejeda Ortiz, the rhythm of the *Alí-Babá* has also sonically contributed to the formulation of this twenty-first century popular genre (2008: 220). Los Reyes de Carnaval, a *comparsa* from Villa Francisca, recorded a composition called *Mambo Alí-Babá* in 2001 that is a medley of various typical *Alí-Banda* rhythms and even a rendition of Días’s *Baile en la Calle* on *fututos*. However, this track can only be found buried among twelve other typical carnival *merengues* on the *Bayahonda* Cultural Foundation CD (2006) and many Dominicans outside of the capital are still unaware of the existence of this music genre.

In the twenty-first century, the discourse of *Brazilian carnival* has continued to provide a model for the organizational structure and economic commercialization of carnival practices throughout the Dominican Republic. *Samba* performance in Rio carnival has successfully mediated between state-generated cultural politics and the Brazilian national identity of its people. However, the Dominican state continues to promote *merengue* as the Dominican national carnival music without consideration of the actual carnival practices of the Dominican people. As a result, there is still no single musical genre that is deeply associated with Dominican carnivals.
The Dominican state continues to emulate Brazilian carnival, but state cultural policy continues to have little effect on the carnival practices of the Dominican people. Not surprisingly, the Brazilianism in Dominican carnival is poorly defined, though typically signifies some general concoction of carnival practices in Rio de Janeiro. Dagoberto Tejeda Ortiz claims that, carnival manifests itself as a spectacle of magic and fantasy [that is] ideal for commercialization [and it] projects the carnivalesque imagination of carnival in Rio de Janeiro world-wide (2010a: 24). Rio’s carnival is certainly the most well-known, but even carnival in Rio is more than just samba schools. Afro-Brazilians in Rio formed a new grassroots samba revival called pagode in direct response to the middle and upper class presence in and commercialization of samba (Murphy 2006: 25 and Béhague 1998: 251). Emerging between the 1960s and 1980s, pagode reintroduced afro-Brazilian cultural elements and a new slower samba rhythm called partido-alto (Murphy 2006: 24-25). Popular until the early 1990s, Rio carnival pagode was eventually overtaken by other new popular carnival musical genres in Bahia.

Carnival in Salvador offers more alternatives to Rio’s samba schools. Salvador carnival features two alternatives to samba, the blocos de afros and the trios elétricos (see Crook 1993). The blocos infused afro-Brazilian and West African cultural expressions with the sounds of a relaxed samba rhythm, mixed with a reggae groove. Samba-reggae mixes percussion instruments from Rio samba with other afro-Caribbean percussion, like timbales (Béhague 1998: 352-352). The trios are groups of electric guitars that play a variety of popular songs and
perform on top of large floats during the Salvador parade, including Brazilian *frevo*, U.S. rock music, and even Dominican *merengue* (Crook 1998: 338).

The Dominican state’s attempt to create a Dominican National Carnival Parade based on the Rio carnival-model of economic and tourist success have been misguided. In 2007, the tourism industry in the Dominican Republic accounted for about 7% of the annual GDP and attracted over 3.5 million tourists (World Bank 2006: 5). The Department of Tourist Infrastructure (INFRATUR) was created in 1972 and is funded by the federal bank (*Banco Central*) of the Dominican Republic. INFRATUR primarily invests money for the development of areas like Boca Chica, Juan Dolio, Punta Cana, and Puerto Plata (Rainieri 1986: 58). However, most of the primary tourist sectors in the Dominican Republic are coastal regions that specialize in all-inclusive resorts. This means that there is little interaction between the tourist economy and local economies outside of the resort areas. Some other sectors of the Dominican economy have benefited from the tourism industry, but the state’s economic policy towards tourism has only created greater divisions of wealth among the Dominican people (62). In general, the state’s interest in tourism has focused on attracting external revenue and not encouraging internal consumption. Dominican scholar Fernando Raineiri claims that tourism [as an industry in the Dominican Republic] is a commercial business and not a political one (Ibid.). This is why the state’s investment in the National Carnival celebration is so remarkable because of the direct involvement of, and impact on, the Dominican people.

The Dominican state may have created the *Lo nuestro es lo verdadero* cultural campaign, but the Dominican state is often disconnected from the *Actual* practices of the Dominican people. Since the creation of the Dominican National Carnival Parade in 1983, the Dominican state has consistently endorsed its own version of *Dominican carnival.* The
Dominican state and cultural organizations continue to promote urban-popular *merengue* as the central carnival musical genre simply because it is the most commercially viable form of Dominican music. *Merengue* performance may not occupy a central place in carnival, but recorded *merengue* CDs are often blasted from the giant speakers of a *colmado* store or from the giant speakers of a float or "discolight" passing by spectators in the street. These *merengues*, even at a deafening volume, remain unheard during the parade and only seem to fill the "empty spaces" that accompany the multitude of *comparsas* that do not perform live music.

Dominican carnival practices throughout the Dominican Republic are characterized by strong regional traditions, a spirit of improvisation, and the "possible." This intense connection to regional identity and creativity is one of the most significant reasons that many people of the Dominican Republic have resisted both the state's cultural nationalist initiatives and the influence of Rio's carnival model. The spontaneous creativity in Rio carnival is very limited because of years of commercialization and regulation. Some Dominicans dread the day that all Dominican carnivals will look the same. Tejeda Ortiz insists, "that [Dominican] carnival seems every time more like carnival in Rio de Janeiro, even though [this means that] it looses its [Dominican] identity and transforms into a commercial spectacle for tourist marketing" (2008: 106). Commercialization in La Vega and Santiago has effectively locked in the *diablo cojuelo* and *lechón* as the only central character. Few other *comparsas* now represent these regions during either local carnivals or the national parade (see Hutchinson 2010).

If the state's answer for the creation of a Dominican carnival was *Brazil* and *merengue*, then the Dominican people's answer is the *Ali-Babá*. *Ali-Babá* has always been a grassroots cultural expression of the street. It mixes equal parts of popular carnival traditions, prestigious costumes, and choreographed footwork. The music of the *Alí-Banda* is a marching
band comprised of mixed percussion with sonic elements borrowed from many Dominican cultural expressions, much like the original escolas de samba in Rio. Even typical carnival characters like the roba-la-gallina, Califé, and diablos cojuelos are now turning to the ÑAlí-Bandaò as an alternative to a tradition of dancing without musical accompaniment. As more comparsa groups desire to incorporate live music performance into their comparsas, the relative low-cost, ubiquity, and portability of typical ÑAlí-Bandaò instruments make it a logical choice for a majority of Dominicans, considering that many comparsas from outside of Santo Domingo must travel several hours to participate in the parade. Moreover, including an ÑAlí-Bandaò does not necessarily limit the potential creativity or spontaneous nature of regional carnival practices. The rhythm of the ÑAlí-Bandaò even has commercial potential in the form of its fusion with merengue de calle.

The ÑAlí-Bandaò has already spread to regional carnivals at the edges of Santo Domingo and beyond, yet the Dominican state has failed to commercially capitalize on the popularity of the Alí-Babás. Rather ironically, the success of the Alí-Babá among Dominican carnival practitioners may be due to its apparent resistance to state co-option or corruption. I would not be surprised if the day comes when many typical Dominican carnival comparsas are all accompanied by an ÑAlí-Banda, especially the musically-silent diablos cojuelos and roba-la-gallina. Alí-Babá encompasses the Dominican national identity of the Dominican people during carnival in a way that typical merengue of the Dominican state never could. Carnival's ability to mediate between the state and the people makes Alí-Babá the perfect representative cultural expression of dominicanidad, as Ñrealò and as ÑDominicanò as carnival may ever be.
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DISCOGRAPHY


EXTERNAL LINKS


Presidencia de la República Dominicana. 2010.