"La Habana no aguanta más": Regionalism in Contemporary Cuban Society and Dance Music

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Por la forma en que me hablas	Because of the way you're speaking to me
Ahora yo decirte quiero,	I want to tell you right now
Como te gusta hacerte el habanero!	How you like pretending you're a Habanero!
Tu le vas a Los Industriales,	You root for the Industriales [Havana's baseball team],
Pero eres guantanamero	But you're from Guantánamo
Como te gusta hacerte el habanero!	How you like pretending you're a Habanero!
Deja las boberías y ve a ponerte tu sombrero	Stop being stupid and go put on your [country] hat
Verdad que La Habana es linda,	Havana really is beautiful,
Pero lo tuyo primero.	But your own [city] comes first.

The above lyrics, from a 2005 song released by Cuban dance band Adalberto Álvarez y Su Son, cut to the heart of this article's focus: regionalist sentiment within contemporary Cuban society and the ways it is expressed and performed through popular dance music. These lines of text issue several provocative statements about regional/local pride within Cuba, and allude to the prickly issue of internal migration to Havana by *gente del campo* (literally meaning "people from the countryside," but also understood as backwards and poor).

Since my first trip to the island in 2003, I have observed that expressions of regionalism are longstanding and pervasive, although acknowledgement and examination of this issue is largely absent from both Cuban and US academic scholarship.[1] This lacuna is surprising, given the frequency of assertions of regionalist sentiment both in everyday discourse among Cubans and in popular music, as reflected in three songs composed by premier dance bands that will be analyzed in this article: Los Van Van's "La Habana no aguanta más," Orquesta Original de

doi:10.1093/musqtl/gdp014 92:210–241
Advance Access publication October 6, 2009.

Manzanillo's "Soy Cubano y soy de Oriente," and Adalberto Álvarez's "Un pariente en el campo." I argue that notions of regional identity are being negotiated and contested through Cuban dance music in ways that threaten to undermine the hegemonic nationalist discourse.

Despite the revolutionary government's official rhetoric, which stresses national unity and celebrates the population's total and ongoing dedication to socialist ideals of egalitarianism and cooperation, many Cubans cling tightly to their regional identities. This means not only a fierce loyalty to one's province of birth, but often an explicit antagonism toward people from other provinces, particularly between *Habaneros* (people from Havana) and *Orientales* (people from the eastern provinces). My analysis foregrounds the importance of what cultural geographer Don Mitchell terms the "spatiality of identity," a notion positing that spaces and places have powerful effects on the production of social identities, whether they be locally, regionally, nationally and/or transnationally defined.[2] While the recognition of regional differences within Cuba are glossed over in the unifying nationalist discourse, I demonstrate through Cuban dance music how the politics of place constitute a real and very contemporary source of tension within the nation's capital.

Historical Tensions between Eastern and Western Cuba

Historian Ada Ferrer's *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–98* discusses the historic tensions between Havana and *Oriente*,[3] which can be traced back to the distinct social and economic conditions of the two regions under the Spanish colonial regime. In the mid-nineteenth century, while central and western Cuba were enjoying the economic boom produced by high levels of slave-driven sugar production, eastern Cuba was suffering from an economic downturn and the effects of harsh taxation by the colonial government.[4] In contrast to the mono-crop nature of western Cuban agriculture, dominated by sugar plantations, eastern Cuba's agricultural production had always been more varied—including coffee, tobacco, and cattle, in addition to sugar estates. Furthermore, the eastern plantations were generally smaller and less technologically advanced, with a significant percentage of free workers of color.[5] These social and economic conditions contributed greatly to what Ferrer terms the "geography of insurgency,"[6] or the fact that eastern Cuba was the site of the first rebellion in 1868 that began the thirty-year struggle for independence.[7] Meanwhile, Havana and much of western Cuba remained loyal to the Spanish crown until 1895, three years before independence. The *Grito de Yara* (Cry of Yara) on

10 October 1868, in the southeastern jurisdiction of Manzanillo, constituted the first call to arms against Spanish rule, thus beginning the Ten Years' War (1868–78). It was led by plantation owner Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, who freed his slaves on that day and invited them to join the independence struggle.[8] Ferrer suggests that the initiative taken by white eastern elites in advocating abolition and armed struggle against Spain was as much about their adverse economic situation and resentment of colonial taxation laws as it was about humanitarian ideals of racial equality and freedom.[9]

While Ferrer's book considers issues of race and nascent nation-building through the lens of the thirty-year struggle for independence, historian Aline Helg's groundbreaking work *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912* focuses on race, citizenship, and the gulf between legal/theoretical equality and practical equality. Helg foregrounds regional differences at various moments in the book, viewing them as an important factor that hampered Afro-Cubans from presenting a united front in their demands for equality after emancipation in 1886. Like Ferrer, Helg emphasizes the distinct socioeconomic conditions in different regions, illustrating the particular patterns of land ownership by blacks and mulattos respectively in various provinces. In the western province of Matanzas and the central province of Santa Clara, the sites of the largest concentrations of slaves, Afro-Cubans owned or rented land at a much lower percentage than whites. In Oriente, where a large rural free population of color had been concentrated before emancipation, the two racial groups owned land at approximately equal rates.[10] Correspondingly, racial barriers were stronger and more rigid in Matanzas and Santa Clara than in Oriente, which boasted a larger free population of color.[11] Support for the *mambises* (insurgents during independence struggles) was always strongest on the eastern end of the island. Not surprisingly, Cuban plantation owners in the western and central provinces were firmly opposed to abolition and, by extension, to the independence struggles, which were led primarily by an Afro-Cuban native of Oriente, Antonio Maceo.

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

Pinar del Río had always been Spanish colonial strongholds, the east was characterized by a spirit of rebellion and fervor for independence, partly due to the Afro-Haitian presence. In other words, racist colonial propaganda that conjured up the image of Haitian slaves expelling their white masters was also regionalist propaganda, the goal of which was to marginalize eastern Cuba. Helg states, "The Spanish authorities cleverly propagated the rumor that Maceo's real aim was to establish a separate black state in eastern Cuba with the support of the Liga Antillana (Caribbean League), an organization allegedly made up of blacks and mulattoes from Haiti and Santo Domingo."[12]

The racial anxiety stemming from the imagined threat of a Haitian-style black revolution ultimately succeeded in containing the major rebellions in Oriente for twenty-eight years, until Antonio Maceo successfully invaded the western part of the island in early 1896. Even important Afro-Cuban intellectuals were swept up in the racist hysteria, as exemplified by the attempts by Matanzas-born Juan Gualberto Gómez to disprove parallels between Haiti and Cuba by emphasizing the different African provenances of slaves from the two respective countries. Gómez asserted that while Haitian slaves had been taken principally from warlike tribes in Senegal and Dahomey (modern-day Benin), Cuban slaves had largely come from more "submissive" and "gentle" tribes of the Congo basin.[13] Given the regionalist logic underpinning these assumptions about different African ethnic groups, not to mention the history of regional tension within the country that colonized Cuba,[14] perhaps it is not surprising that regionalist sentiment has been such a longstanding and divisive issue in Cuba.

Helg provides a fascinating breakdown by province of the racial composition of the independence rebels in the final War for Independence (1895–98). Oriente's rebels were divided into two main regions, one battalion representing northwest Oriente led by a wealthy white planter Calalonian-born Bartolomé Masó, and the other led by Guillermón Moncada, a black carpenter from Santiago, representing the poorer and blacker southeastern part of Oriente. In the neighboring province of Camagüey, the rebels were mostly white, and in fact throughout the war they weakened rebel unity by pitting themselves against the darker-skinned Orientales. The central Santa Clara province was made up by a diverse range of Cubans, including landowners and former slaves. While the Matanzas rebels were largely of rural Afro-Cuban descent, regionalist sentiment was operative here as well and divided the mambises: Matanzas insurgents were hesitant to follow leaders from Oriente moving westward. Helg notes that despite these regional antagonisms, Maceo succeeded in fostering cross-regional unity as he moved

westward across the country and gained the respect and admiration of both black and white rebels. Although Havana and Pinar del Río- the latter with a large majority of Spanish and white Cuban-born peasants- had supported Spain during the Ten Years' War, Maceo was finally successful in invading Pinar del Río in January 1896. Helg views this victory as the strategic key in winning the war that led to Cuban independence and notes that it was only at that point that "the independence struggle had acquired a truly national dimension."[15] She thus suggests that Cuba could have only gained independence by overcoming, albeit temporarily and perhaps only partially, the regionalist antagonisms between the eastern and western provinces.

As is well known, Oriente's tradition of rebellion did not end with the wars of independence. The Cuban Revolution officially began on 26 July 1953, with a failed attack on the Moncada barracks in Santiago by a group of rebels led by Fidel Castro, a native of the Holguín province in northwest Oriente. In an homage to the failed rebellion, which led to the death or jailing of many of the conspirators, Castro named his group of revolutionaries *El Movimiento 26 de Julio* (The 26th of July Movement). After being released from jail in 1955 and spending a year in exile in Mexico gathering forces for another invasion, Castro landed in the southeastern province of Granma in late 1956. From that point on, guerilla activity against dictator Fulgencio Batista's forces was based in the Sierra Maestra, in the provinces of Santiago and Granma. Thus, like the struggle for independence from Spain, the Cuban Revolution has been unequivocally linked to Oriente, evidenced by the fact that the city of Santiago is known as *la cuna de la Revolucíon* (the cradle of the Revolution). Political scientist Mark Sawyer asserts that during the early years of the Revolution, "Castro himself suggested that the capital be moved from Havana to Santiago de Cuba, a largely Afro-Cuban city, as a symbol of the priorities of the Revolution."[16]

Contemporary Regionalist Antagonisms in Havana

While Ferrer and Helg provide illuminating analyses of the social and economic foundations for regionalist tensions between eastern and western Cuba in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there has been almost no scholarly attention to the enduring effects of this antagonism on contemporary social relations, identity formation, or popular culture in Cuba. Several scholars have broached the subject in passing,[17] exemplified by dance scholar Yvonne Daniel's assertion that "the general Cuban world view [is] also influenced by a regional outlook."[18] However, there has not been an in-depth exploration of the

ways that regional identity informs societal and individual beliefs or musical creativity in Cuba, or the ways it can create tensions between Cubans of different provinces. Moreover, it is not only the legacy of the historical strains between eastern and western Cuba that is brought to bear on the current situation, but also newer, present-day pressures that continue to fuel this regionalist sentiment.[19] The level of hostility has grown since the Special Period[20] as a result of the marked increase in migration to Havana by Cubans from *el campo* (the countryside), particularly Orientales, seeking better employment opportunities.[21] Like the natives of many capitals throughout the world, Habaneros consider every locale outside the capital to be the *campo*, even large cities like Santiago and Camagüey.[22] A revealing example of the enduring force of regionalism is illustrated by the pervasive use in Havana of the term *Palestinos* (Palestinians) to refer to eastern Cubans, a word that not only reveals the longstanding unequal power dynamics between Havana and eastern Cuba, but also contains racialized overtones.[23] In fact, the term "Oriental" often functions as a discursive stand-in for rural and/or poor blackness and backwardness generally. Another term utilized to refer to Orientales is *nagüe* (slang that translates roughly to "brother"), a regionally specific way of referring to a male friend in Oriente, which Habaneros often invoke in mocking fashion, presumably to highlight Orientales' backwardness.

One of the only academic discussions of regionalist sentiment is provided very briefly by historian Alejandro de la Fuente in his highly esteemed *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba*. In elucidating the racial inequalities and prejudices that have crept back into the Cuban public sphere since the Special Period and the expansion of the tourism industry, de la Fuente states, "The migration of people from the eastern provinces to Havana has been frequently interpreted as a black assault on the city."[24] He further highlights widespread assumptions concerning the link between race and region with a quote from a white male professional who asserts that "*negros orientales* [blacks from Oriente] are taking over" and refers to them as *Palestinos*.[25] De la Fuente also emphasizes the racialization and regionalization of access to US dollars since they were legalized as tender in 1993: not only are black Cubans much less likely to be the recipients of remittances sent from abroad, principally from immigrants to the United States who were overwhelmingly white until recent years, but the remittances are disproportionately sent to residents of the capital rather than the outer provinces.[26]

In the eyes of many Habaneros, Orientales have colonized large sections of their city, packing themselves and their large families into

crumbling, colonial apartment buildings and thus contributing greatly to the deterioration of the capital's once-great architectural accomplishments. The overcrowding is especially intense in two of the principal municipalities that constitute the center of Havana, *Habana Vieja* (Old Havana) and *Centro Habana* (Central Havana).[27] Furthermore, Habaneros tend to paint Orientales as the main culprits in the increasing rates of petty theft and hustling-oriented crime targeting tourists.[28] Many Habaneros assume that Orientales' intentions in migrating to Havana are sinister, i.e., to try and make a living *jineteando* (hustling tourists)—which can involve a large variety of activities in addition to exchanging sex for material goods or money—or to engage in the illicit buying and selling of goods on the black market. Political scientist Mark Sawyer quotes one of his informants thus, "'I just bought a pair of gym shoes, Nikes. Because I am black and an Oriental, everyone will call me a hustler . . . I work hard for my money, but people think I am a pimp because I am black and from Santiago de Cuba.'"[29] Orientales are seen as either *jineteros* (hustlers) or Palestinos, refugees from a foreign country who have no real homeland. Considering the fact that Israelis occupy significant portions of Palestinian land, the use of the term Palestino to refer to Orientales is curious since they are characterized by Habaneros as the occupiers, not the occupied, of Havana.

While it is true that the Central Havana neighborhoods of Colón and San Leopoldo are filled with large numbers of Cubans from the eastern provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo, my observations and conversations with Habaneros have led me to identify certain contradictory tendencies in their disdain for Orientales: many of these "natives" either migrated from the east to Havana with their families during childhood, or have parents from Oriente or other Cuban provinces. Habaneros do not deny this irony, and in fact often joke that there are no more "real" Habaneros left in Havana, that they have all left for the United States or Europe.[30] Thus, the term "Habanero" has become infused with many different meanings and regional subjectivities, and the line between Habanero and Oriental is sometimes quite blurry.

Another principal source of tension between eastern and western Cubans is the composition of the police force: many officers are recruited by the state from the interior and eastern provinces. A commonly held view among Habaneros is the notion that Fidel Castro routinely practiced regional bias during his regime by recruiting government officials and police officers from Oriente, of which his natal province of Holguín is a part. Given that the police function as the main agents constricting Cubans' freedom of movement, Orientales represent by proxy the repressive state forces that Havana residents

collide with on a daily basis. Policing tactics take on a variety of forms in contemporary Havana, the most common one being the random detention of citizens on the street to ask for identification, particularly if they are black Cubans walking with (white) foreigners. I have been party to this experience in many different circumstances, where my friends or musician informants were stopped and questioned about what they were doing with me. Habaneros engaged in black-market activities—from non-licensed taxi driving to the illicit buying and selling of goods—often rail against the "Palestino" cops for curtailing their economic ventures and enforcing the heavy-handed policies outlawing nonlicensed, individual private enterprise. Orientales thus function as scapegoats for a whole range of social problems in contemporary Havana: housing shortages, the crumbling infrastructure, police repression, black-market activities, petty crime, hustling, and prostitution.

The irony contained in the fact that a significant proportion of the police force is from the eastern provinces is that the most heavily criminalized and policed population in Havana is the Orientales themselves. When randomly stopped on the street, Cubans are always asked for their *carnet* (identification card), and one of the first things checked by the police is the citizen's place of residence. If the citizen does not have a Havana-based residence listed on their carnet, they are questioned as to the purpose of their stay in the capital, the result of a 1997 law that prohibits Cubans from the outer provinces from being in Havana without authorized permission from the local police. Non-Havana residents must have a "legitimate" reason to be in the capital, such as visiting a family member or working there temporarily through the auspices of a state agency, and must register with the local police for a finite period of time. While it has been possible in the past for Havana residents to add non-Havana residents to the registry of occupants in a given domicile, thereby providing the latter with legal residency in the capital, the state authorities have been curbing these permits in the past decade due to what they consider to be overpopulation within individual homes and within Havana generally.[31]

Owing to the stereotype of Orientales as petty criminals and hustlers, and the already large proportion of them in the capital, they are less likely to be given authorization to stay in Havana for a non-work-related reason, and many do in fact stay in Havana "illegally." One Santiaguero (native of Santiago) has caustically likened himself to an undocumented Mexican in the United States, asserting that in addition to Palestino, the term *indocumentado* (undocumented) has recently entered the popular lexicon as a way of referring to Orientales. In fact, the analogy is apt in many ways: Orientales, like undocumented

Mexicans in the United States, are employed disproportionately in low-paying manual labor jobs in Havana, such as construction. I have witnessed what I deem to be *regional profiling* when Orientales are stopped by the police;[32] not only does the officer radio in to the precinct to check if the detained citizen has a criminal record, but even if they have no prior convictions, the individual is automatically brought into the precinct in a police car and must wait several hours while the authorities conduct a more in-depth investigation. At the very least they are detained at the precinct for several hours, sometimes released after midnight and forced to walk home. If they have had prior convictions or *advertencias* (warnings) on their record, they are sometimes deported back to their province of origin and prohibited from coming back to Havana for a certain period of time.[33] In sum, there is a sad irony inherent in the fact that the criminalization of Orientales in Havana is often perpetrated by their regional counterparts. On the other hand, the police officers recruited from Oriente and other provinces often have very few occupational options, and in the end are constrained to carry out orders.[34]

Expressions of Regionalism in Cuban Dance Music

Cuban dance music constitutes a particularly rich terrain of interpretation for exploring contemporary expressions of regionalism.[35] The country's elite bands often combine eminently danceable music with socially relevant lyrics that issue critiques in veiled terms so as to evade censorship by state cultural officials.[36] While my interpretations of the songs discussed below are gleaned largely through textual analysis, my conclusions are deeply informed by my fieldwork experiences and the many informal discussions I have had with musicians and other Cubans about regionalism and the ways it is addressed in musical performance. Correspondingly, I have inserted quotes and other ethnographic commentaries from informants about the songs where relevant.

The title of this article, "La Habana no aguanta más" (Havana can't take any more), is borrowed from a hit song recorded in 1984 by Los Van Van, Cuba's premier dance band since their formation in 1969, whose longevity has earned them the nickname *El tren de la salsa* (the salsa train).[37] Los Van Van is beloved and critically esteemed for their unparalleled musical creativity-drawing on and combining diverse popular-music influences principally from Cuban and African American sources- and their ability to evolve through time and tap into the hippest sounds at any given moment. The band has also created a widespread and loyal fan following by utilizing the salsa song as a vehicle for social and political commentary, sometimes explicitly and at other times

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

"La Habana no aguanta más" was recorded during a particularly fruitful period of composition for Formell and his band, the decade of the 1980s, when Los Van Van's repertoire was considered to have achieved an almost-perfect synthesis of catchy, danceable music and satirical commentary on diverse social issues and controversies.[38] The song's lyrics lament the constant influx of people migrating from other provinces to Havana in search of greater economic prospects, asserting that housing and job opportunities are available all over the country and that there is no need to overcrowd the capital.[39] Following are the song's lyrics:[40]

Verse 1	
He recibido un telegrama de Cachito y Agustín,	I received a telegram from Cachito and Agustín,
Son mis primos que me dicen	They're my cousins and they tell me
(Coro) Que en La Habana quieren vivir	(Chorus) That they want to live in Havana
(Solista) Somos siete de familia	(Lead) There are seven of us in the family
Con dos perros además.	With two dogs as well.
Con cuidado, mis parientes,	Take it easy, my folks,
Que La Habana no aguanta más!	'Cause Havana can't take any more!
Bridge	
(Coro) Y ya tú ves que en Cuba entera	(Chorus) And now all over Cuba
Hay condiciones para vivir,	There are good living conditions,
Y hasta se han hecho pueblos nuevos	And they've even built new towns
Por montones, de verdad.	A bunch of them, it's true.
Verse 2	
(Solista) Sin embargo aquí en La Habana	(Lead) Even so, here in Havana
Se me quieren colar.	They're trying to squeeze in.
Con cuidado, mi familia	Take it easy, my family,
Que La Habana no aguanta más!	'Cause Havana can't take any more!
Montuno (call-and-response) section[41]	
(Coro) Que va!	No way!
Que va, está bueno ya!	No way, enough already!

Que La Habana no aguanta más! (3x)	'Cause Havana can't take any more!
(alternates with instrumental repetition of chorus)	
(Solista) Con cuidado, mi familia!	Take it easy, my family
(Coro, same until otherwise noted)	
Que La Habana no aguanta más!	Cause Havana can't take any more!
(Solista) Mis parientes, ***vamos a ser conscientes***	My folks, **we have to be conscious**
- Que problema me voy a buscar si viene mi hermana Pastora	What problems I'll have if my sister Pastora comes
- Con sus seis vejigos que son candela	With her six kids that are a handful
- Sin embargo aqui en mi casa se me quieren colar	Even so here in my house they're trying to squeeze in
- Y además de todo eso mi mujer quiere tener otro negrito (Bridge)	And if that wasn't enough, my wife wants to have another (black) baby
(Solista, spoken) Manolo, el tumbador de la sonrisa amplia! YA!	Manolo, the conga player with a big smile! ENOUGH!
(Shortened Coro) Que La Habana no aguanta más	Cause Havana can't take any more!
(4x, alternating with instrumental repetition of chorus)	
(Flute solo)	
(Solista, spoken) Sopla Armando, sopla!	Blow Armando, blow!
(Solista) ***Bibliotecas, cines de estrenos y un a buen bailable***	**Libraries, new movie theaters and good dance club**
(Coro, same until otherwise noted)	
En toda Cuba vas a encontrar	All over Cuba you'll find
(Solista) Sí, una pizzeria y un Coppelita, mamita	**Yes, a pizzeria and a Coppelita,**[42] **baby**
- Apartamentos bien amueblados	**Well-furnished apartments**
- Hay que aclararle esto a mis parientes	We have to make this clear to my relatives
(Coro) Que La Habana no aguanta más!	That Havana can't take any more!
(Solista) Ya no sé que va a pasar si mi hermana se decide llegar	I don't know what I'll do if my sister decides to come
- Porque como yo le dije, trae seis vejigos que son de ajá	Because like I told you, she'll bring six Misbehaved kids
- Oye, ahora que en mi casa me la quieren llenar	Listen, now they want to fill up my house
- Que va, que va, no aguanta más	No way, no way it can't take any more
(Coro, until fade out)	
(Solista, spoken over chorus)	
Por eso yo me quedo en La Jata,	That's why I'm staying in La Jata [Havana neighborhood]

Allí voy a hacer un doce plantas.	There I'm gonna build a twelve-story building[43]
Pregúntale, pregúntale a Bomba, el limpiabotas	Ask, ask Bomba, the shoe shiner.
Oye! Sígueme.	Listen! Follow me.

The song is framed as a sort of morality tale directed at the narrator's (and, by extension, many other Havana residents') relatives, in which he makes an appeal for them to consider the greater social good, and not just their own individual desires to move to the capital. The lead singer's solo early in the montuno section borrows a word commonly used in socialist ideology, *conscientes* (meaning to be socially conscious or aware), in order to elicit a feeling of social duty in the population not to overcrowd the capital city. Fidel Castro has often called upon Cubans to sacrifice their individual desires for the good of the country and for the purposes of advancing socialist ideologies during periods of economic and social crisis, most recently during the Special Period. The references in the bridge and montuno sections to the construction of housing, educational institutions, entertainment, and food venues all over the island function as an attempt both to prove the existence of the attractive living conditions outside Havana, and to convince people to stay in their own provinces.

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

While the narrator never provides any details about which province he is from, the meanings of this message, and the probability that it is directed primarily at Orientales, must be considered in light of the regional identity of lead singer Pedro Calvo, known as "Pedrito." Calvo, undeniably one of Los Van Van's most visible and beloved stars, who played a major role in the group's popular ascent in the 1970s and 1980s, is from Cuba's second-largest city and the unofficial capital of Oriente, Santiago de Cuba. Rebecca Mauleon and Rachel Faro state, "No visual icon represents Los Van Van's identity more than lead singer Pedro Calvo, with his broad-rimmed hat, his overwhelming sexuality

(both physically and vocally), and his ebullient humor."[44] Indeed, despite the fact that Los Van Van, as Cuba's premier salsa band, is identified primarily with the capital city, Calvo's longstanding image—with his wide-rimmed hat, bandana, and long, bushy mustache—has always conjured up the image of a *campesino* (peasant or farmer from the countryside). What sort of message can be inferred from having a Santiago native, whose visual presence signifies him as an outsider to Havana, police the boundaries of the capital in this song? Whatever the intentions of Formell (a Habanero) in composing and Calvo (a Santiaguero) in interpreting this song, it is clear that its meanings are more complex than a simple regionalist defense of one's city from overcrowding by Cubans from other provinces. Formell seems to have been prophetic in writing this song several years before the fall of the Soviet bloc and the onset of the Special Period that provoked much larger waves of migration to Havana. The liner notes for a Los Van Van compilation CD state, "In 1996 the government initiated a resolution (which may or may not have been inspired by the song) to 'thin out' the capital city by encouraging those Cubans who migrated from other provinces to return to their original homes."[45]

In order to contextualize the song's multivalent meanings vis-à-vis regional identities and hostilities between different provinces, it is worth highlighting the career trajectory of Formell and the majority of the band's founding members prior to the formation of Los Van Van. Complicating the direct association of the band with the capital city is the fact that Formell, whose family has roots in Santiago, received much of his musical formation during the few years he spent with the pioneering eastern Cuban dance band Orquesta Revé. Formed in 1956 in the easternmost province of the island, Guantánamo, and led by Elio Revé until his death in 1997,[46] Orquesta Revé has drawn heavily on musical elements from the traditional *changüí* genre.[47] Before joining Orquesta Revé in the mid-1960s Formell had been drawn more toward rock and jazz rather than Cuban dance music.[48] He introduced rock-oriented elements into the Orquesta Revé such as electric guitars and a trap drum set, musical features he carried over into Los Van Van a few years later.[49] More importantly, he effectively decimated Orquesta Revé when he left to start his own band, taking at least nine core members with him to Havana, including the other principal Los Van Van composer, pianist Cesar "Pupy" Pedroso.[50]

The fact that Los Van Van's founding members and most influential musicians began their professional careers with Orquesta Revé (Formell, Pedroso, and many others) or other eastern Cuban dance bands suggests a strong legacy of musical creativity that moved from east

to west. In fact, *timba*, the dominant style of Cuban dance music since the early 1990s, would arguably not have developed into its current manifestation if not for the musical schooling of many of its principal innovators within eastern Cuban dance bands formed in the 1950s. Beginning their careers with Ritmo Oriental (literally "Eastern Rhythm")—a highly influential dance band that emerged as an offshoot of Orquesta Revé in 1958—were Los Van Van's Pedrito Calvo and several other future timba stars. Timba scholar Vincenzo Perna states, "In the 1970s the band [Ritmo Oriental] was known in Cuba as the charanga with the best percussion, and had a powerful, spectacular presence, featuring two musicians who would become key figures of timba, David Calzado (the future leader of La Charanga Habanera) and Tony Calá (the singer of NG La Banda)."[51] Indeed, La Charanga Habanera and NG La Banda are perhaps the two bands most intimately associated with timba, albeit for very different reasons: the former has enjoyed unparalleled mass popularity among youth throughout Cuba since its emergence in the 1990s, and the latter is widely viewed as the first band to pull together all the musical elements that define timba.[52]

Addressing precisely this issue of the formative influences of eastern Cuban musical creativity, and speaking/singing back to the antagonistic rhetoric issued in "La Habana no aguanta más," the eastern Cuban dance band Orquesta Original de Manzanillo released "Soy Cubano y soy de Oriente" (I'm Cuban and I'm from Oriente) in 1985. The discursive counter attack was led by the Santiago-born singer Cándido Fabré, widely considered to be one of the best vocal improvisers within Cuban popular music and one who is known for his spontaneous composition of songs that comment on the social issue or situation of any given moment. The song contradicts the notion that Orientales always travel to Havana with intentions of staying and asserts the significance of Oriente's musical contributions to Cuban popular music as a whole.[53] Here I reproduce the song's lyrics in their entirety in order to illustrate the various narrative strategies used by Fabré to respond to Los Van Van, specifically to his fellow Oriental native, Pedrito Calvo:[54]

Verse

Yo que pensaba en las vacacciones llegar a La Habana,	I thought I would go to Havana for my vacation,
Para pasear con Pedrito, con mi familia y con Juana.	To take a stroll with Pedrito, with my family and Juana.
Llegarme por Tropicana, pasar por el malecón	Go to the Tropicana, pass by the *malecón*[55]

Visitar el capitolio y escuchar al Aragón.	Visit the capital building and go hear the [Orquesta] Aragón.[56]
Porque vivo convencido que en toda Cuba hay escuelas,	Because I am convinced that all over Cuba there are schools,
Hay hospitales, trincheras, casas, mujeres y cines.	There are hospitals, trenches,[57] houses, women and movie theaters.
Y yo por eso no vine las vacacciones pasadas.	And because of this I didn't come during my last vacation.
Y aunque soy del monte adentro, nadie me puede engañar.	**And although I'm from the boondocks,[58] no one can fool me.**
No existe otro capitolio, ni he visto otra catedral.	There is no other capital building, nor have I seen another cathedral.
Igual que no hay en La Habana ninguna Sierra Maestra.	Just like in Havana there is no Sierra Maestra.[59]
No hay ningún Cuartel Moncada,	There are no Moncada Barracks,[60]
No hay Gran Piedra, no hay Caney,	There's no Gran Piedra, there's no Caney,[61]
No hay Granjita Siboney,	There's no Granjita Siboney, [62]
No hay Bayamo, no hay Glorieta.	There's no Bayamo, there's no Glorieta.[63]
Tampoco existe otra fiesta criolla como la mía	Nor is there another creole [Cuban] party like mine,
Que empieza por la mañana y termina al otro día.	That begins in the morning and ends the next day.
Pero como me enteré que ya La Habana no aguanta más,	**But since I found out that now Havana can't take any more,**
Porqué no cogen al son y me lo mandan pa'cá?	**Why don't they take the [musical genre] *son* and send it to me here?**
Porqué no cogen al son y lo devuelven pa'cá?	**Why don't they take the *son* and return it back here [Oriente]?**
Soy cubano, yo soy de Oriente.	I'm Cuban, I'm from Oriente.
Pero qué pasa en La Habana?	What's going on in Havana?
Qué pasa, mi gente?	What's going on, my people?
Montuno section	
(Coro, same until otherwise noted)	(Chorus)
Soy cubano, yo soy de Oriente	I'm Cuban, I'm from Oriente.
Pero qué pasa en La Habana?	What's going in Havana?
Qué le pasa a mi gente?	What's going on with my people?
(Solista) En cualquier parte se puede vivir,	(Lead) One can live well in any place,
Lo voy a decir a gritos:	I'm going to say it at the top of my lungs:
Cuba es la tierra más linda	Cuba is the most beautiful country
Que ojos humanos han visto!	That human eyes have ever seen!
(Coro)	(Chorus)

(Solista) Pero por eso no hay razón pa' que me digan	(Lead) So there's no reason for them to tell me
Que ya La Habana no aguanta más.	That Havana can't take any more.
Mañana temprano recojo lo mio y	Tomorrow early I'll gather all my things
Con mi familia me voy pa'llá.	and with my family I'll go there [Havana].
- Pedrito! Dale la mano al que llega,	Pedrito! Give a hand to he who arrives,
Bríndale hospitalidad.	Offer him hospitality.
Que cuando el vea que no cabe	Because when he sees that there's no
Solito se marchará.	room for him, he'll leave by himself.
- En Oriente tengo un humilde bohío	In Oriente I have a humble hut
Con un techado de guano,	With a roof made of palm leaves,
Que tiene la puerta abierta para todos los cubanos.	Whose door is open for all Cubans.
(Instrumental interlude)	
(Shortened Coro, same until otherwise noted)	
Soy cubano, yo soy de Oriente	I'm Cuban, I'm from Oriente
(Solista) Antonio Maceo nació en	(Lead) Antonio Maceo was born in
Majaguabo y fue a morir a Occidente.	Majaguabo[64] and went to die in the west.
(Coro)	
(Solista) José Martí que nació en La Habana	(Lead) José Martí who was born in Havana
Y vino a caer en Oriente.	And fell [died in battle] in Oriente.
- Ay, esos grandes corazones cayeron en opuestas regiones!	Oh, those two brave hearts fell [died] in opposite regions!
- Ay, pero por eso le voy a cantar que venga, si quiere, Alberto y Vicente	Oh, because of this I'll sing for Alberto and Vicente to come if they want
- Que tengo esta rumbita, esta rumbita caliente	'Cause I have this little rumba [song], this hot little rumba
- Vamos a gozar, que baile toda la gente!	We're gonna have fun, everyone dance!
(Shortened Coro, same until the end)	
Yo soy de Oriente	I'm from Oriente
(Solista) Hace tiempo esta es la tierra caliente	This has been the "hot land"[65] for a long time
- A ver, Ud., Ud., de dónde es?	**Let's see, you, you, where are you from?**
- El sol sale por aquí, y se esconde en Occidente	**The sun rises here [in the east] and hides in the west**
(Coro, with instrumental response replacing solo voice)	
(Flute solo added on top of call-and-response)	

Fabré utilizes different narrative techniques to respond to Pedrito's and Formell's assertions concerning the availability of housing and other social services all across the island. He affirms that this statement is true

in both the verse and montuno sections, hence suggesting that one need not travel to Havana and that any Cuban city provides the necessary conditions for living well. However, by listing the unique monuments and attractions in both the capital and different locales in Oriente, Fabré also makes a broader statement about the natural and manmade diversity that can be found on the island. This counters Los Van Van's homogenizing rhetoric implying that all places offer more or less the same amenities. In the verse section, Fabré asserts that just as the capital building, the cathedral, and the seaside *malecón* (promenade) are unique to Havana, Oriente has unparalleled sites of natural beauty and historic importance, such as the charming colonial city of Bayamo and Santiago's Moncada Barracks, where the Cuban Revolution was launched in 1953. In fact the song's title, "I'm Cuban and I'm from Oriente," functions to discursively emplace eastern Cuban identity at the center of national identity and thus challenge the implication that Orientales are not as "native" to Cuba as Habaneros—a notion that is currently more pervasive than ever in Havana with the term "undocumented" used to refer to eastern migrants.

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

Fabré issues perhaps his most witty and acerbic barb at the end of the verse when referencing the origins of the traditional dance music genre *son*, stating, "Porqué no cogen al *son* y lo devuelven pa'cá?" (Why don't they [Habaneros] take the *son* and return it back here?). Here he alludes to the fact that Cuba's most influential popular musical genre originated in Oriente, and was subsequently brought to the capital in the first decade of the twentieth century, where it became a symbol of *Cubanidad* (Cubanness) both on the island and abroad. The implication is that a regional genre, and eastern Cuban musical creativity in general, have been appropriated by Habaneros and redefined as the island's quintessential musical practice.[66] Furthermore, Fabré could be interpreted as issuing a veiled critique at the many eastern Cuban musicians, such as Pedrito, who have abandoned Oriente for the capital and

apparently forgotten their regional roots. In fact, Fabré constitutes a rare case in that even after leaving the Orquesta Original de Manzanillo in 1993 to form his own band, he never relocated to Havana, preferring instead to maintain his home base in Oriente.

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

My husband Lázaro Moncada, a Santiago native, told me that the regionalist battle on wax constituted by "La Habana no aguanta más" and its response song, "Soy Cubano y soy de Oriente," stirred up quite a popular controversy in the mid-1980s, and that many Orientales felt vindicated by Fabré's passionate defense of his region. However, unlike the Los Van Van song, Fabré's composition seems to have been largely forgotten in Cuban dance-music historiography, a lacuna that is perhaps not surprising given the nature of Cuba's regional politics and the hegemony of Havana's cultural production vis-à-vis the rest of the island.[67]

Whereas these two songs suggest that overcrowding in the capital and hostilities between Habaneros and Orientales were significant concerns in the mid-1980s—during a period of relative economic and social stability—regionalist sentiment has become increasingly hostile since the economic crisis of the Special Period. A recent timba song that addresses regionalism and eastern migration to Havana is Adalberto Álvarez's "Un pariente en el campo" (A relative in the countryside), which appears on his latest album *Mi linda habanera*, recorded in 2005.

Álvarez is from the city of Camagüey, in the large province of the same name that until the Revolution constituted part of Oriente.[68] However, he was born "by accident" in Havana while his mother was visiting the capital.[69] During the early years of his career, he helped form the dance band Son 14 in Santiago, a fact that adds Álvarez to the list of pioneering musicians who acquired their musical formation with eastern Cuban dance bands. Álvarez left for Havana in 1984 to form his current group, Adalberto Álvarez y Su Son, which has come to be one of the most successful and durable dance bands in the past quarter century.[70] "Un pariente en el campo," a major hit from Álvarez's recent album, provides a fascinating commentary on the manifestations of regionalist sentiment in twenty-first-century Havana:[71]

Verse 1	
Mira que linda es La Habana,	Look how lovely Havana is,
Como La Habana no hay.	Like Havana there is no other.
Verdad que se ve bonita,	It's true that it's pretty,
Por donde quiera que vas.	No matter where you go.
Y según cuenta la histora	According to history
Hace ya más de 100 años	More than 100 years ago
En La Habana no había tanta gente	There weren't so many people in Havana
Pero de pronto se empezó a llenar.	But suddenly it began to fill up.
Vinieron de todas partes	They came from all parts of the country
Porque La Habana es la capital.	Because Havana is the capital.
Verse 2	
Y así se fueron uniendo el campo y la capital.	This is how the countryside and the capital began to come together.
Y se formaron familias,	And families were formed,
Los de aquí con los de allá.	Those from here with those from there.
Por eso cuando te veo,	That's why when I see you,
Inocente y especulando, te digo	Innocent and "speculating,"[72] I tell you
Que aquí el que más, el que menos	That here everyone, more or less,
Tiene un pariente en el campo, Ay Dios!	Has a relative in the countryside, Oh God!
Montuno section	
(Coro) Como se goza en La Habana,	How fun Havana is,
Por eso me gusta tanto.	That's why I like it so much.
Aquí el que más, el que menos,	Here everyone, more or less,
Tiene un pariente en el campo.	Has a relative in the countryside.
(Solista) Que linda luce la capital	How pretty the capital
De toditos los cubanos.	Of each and every Cuban looks.

Cuando los veo caminar de la mano, mi compay	When I see them walking hand in hand, My friend,
De su pariente del campo.	With their relative from the countryside.
(Whole 4-line Coro)	
(Solista) Lo importante es la familia,	The important thing is family,
El cariño y el amor.	Affection and love.
Jardín que no se cultiva	[Proverb] A garden that isn't cultivated
Jamás te brinda una flor.	Will never provide a flower.
(Whole 4-line coro)	
(Solista) No, no! No importa de donde vengas,	No, no! It doesn't matter where you're from,
Siempre te daré mi mano.	I'll always shake your hand.
Y sacando bien la cuenta, caballero	After all, man
Toditos somos cubanos.	We're all Cubans.
(Instrumental interlude, then Coro)	
(Shortened Coro, 2x) Tiene un pariente en el campo	Has a relative in the countryside
(Solista) El caballo en Santa Fe hace poco se hizo santo, tú ves	The guy in Santa Fe [Havana neighborhood] just made santo,[73] you see
(Coro, same until otherwise noted)	
Tiene un pariente en el campo	Has a relative in the countryside
(Solista) Y la chica de la esquina que me gusta tanto	And the girl who lives on the corner who I like so much
- Michila de Centro Habana,	Michila, of Central Havana,
la que siempre está bailando	The one who's always dancing
- La mayoría de la gente que ahora a mí me está escuchando	The majority of the people listening to me right now
(Coro)	
Solista (spoken):	
Bueno caballeros, voy a mencionar a todo El que tiene un pariente en el campo.	**OK, guys, I'm gonna mention Everyone who has a relative in the countryside.**
Voy pa'llá! Mira:	Here I go! Listen:
David Calzado, Manolito Simonet,	David Calzado, Manolito Simonet,
José Luis Cortés,	José Luis Cortés,
Elito Revé, Pachito Alonso,	Elito Revé, Pachito Alonso,
Juan Formell, Isaac Delgado, y	Juan Formell, Isaac Delgado, and
Eduardo Pérez	Eduardo Pérez
Que ahora me está grabando. Ahí!	Who is recording me right now. Right there!
Vaya, Andrea de Baracoa.	Hell, Andrea from Baracoa.[74]
Por la forma en que me hablas	Because of the way you're speaking to me
Ahora yo decirte quiero,	I want to tell you right now

(New Coro) Como te gusta hacerte el habanero!	**How you like pretending you're a Habanero!**
(Solista) Tu le vas a Los Industriales, pero eres guantanamero.	You root for the Industriales [Havana's baseball team], but you're from Guantánamo.
(Coro, same until otherwise noted)	
Como te gusta hacerte el habanero!	How you like pretending you're a Habanero!
(Solista) Deja las boberías y ve a ponerte tu sombrero	**Stop being stupid and go put on your [country] hat**
- Verdad que La Habana es linda,	**Havana really is beautiful,**
Pero lo tuyo primero.	**But your own [city] comes first.**
(Coro, 3x)	
(Alternating coros/refrains) Pero hay, lo hay.	But they exist, they exist.
Como te gusta hacerte el habanero.	How you like pretending you're a Habanero!
(Solista) Mi gente de Camagüey!	My people from Camagüey!
Tu vives en Centro Habana pero eres de Niquero	You live in Central Havana but you're from Niquero.[75]
(Coro) Como te gusta hacerte el habanero!	How you like pretending you're a Habanero!
(Solista) Viniste de vista y ahora, como te llevo?	You came to visit and now, how can I make you go back home?
(Coro)	
(Solista, spoken) Oye, La Habana, Santiago, Camagüey, Pinar del Río, Cuba!	Listen, Havana, Santiago, Camagüey, Pinar del Río, Cuba!
Que linda es Cuba!	How lovely Cuba is!

Upon initial analysis of the song, it could be viewed as making similar declarations to those in "La Habana no aguanta más": the lyrics are peppered with odes to Havana's beauty and its many possibilities for entertainment; there is a recognition of the increase in migration from other provinces to the capital. There is an explicit perpetuation of the notion that there are no more "pure" Habaneros left in Havana; there is lamenting about relatives coming to visit and never leaving; and finally there is a pointed critique of Cubans who affect certain styles of dress, comportment, and beliefs associated with Havana natives, while denigrating or denying their own eastern Cuban and/or rural customs. Furthermore, despite his own identity as a *Camagüeyano* (Camagüey native) from el campo, Álvarez does not proudly defend his region like Fabré does; Instead he critiques non-Havana natives who do not display regional pride. However, a closer analysis of the song, paired with

information concerning Adalberto Álvarez's intentions in writing it, illustrate a different and somewhat conflicting perspective as compared with that of the Los Van Van song.

In an article reproduced on Álvarez's homepage, journalist Jorge Smith Mesa quotes the bandleader as stating that one of his main objectives with the release of the recent album *Mi linda habanera* was a "crusade against provincialism."[76] Álvarez stated that although he was born in a Havana hospital, he considers himself to be a native of Camagüey and continued, "It's funny . . . in my concerts [in Havana], when I ask how many Habaneros there are here, many people raise their hand, and when I investigate further, asking how many come from the countryside, no one speaks, they even get irritated" (my translation). Álvarez lamented the "shame" that many feel in not being "pure Habaneros" and the fact that they deny their homeland, stating, "True national pride begins with a love and pride for the place where one is born." The call in the montuno section asserting that "Havana really is beautiful, but your own [city] comes first" correspondingly highlights the importance of the "spatiality of identity." In the montuno section, Álvarez effectively "outs" the most important bandleaders in timba as either being born in or having roots in the campo, including those mentioned earlier—Calzado, Revé, and Formell—and four others, Manolito Simonet, José Luis Cortés, Isaac Delgado, and Pachito Alonso.[77]

Although the song condemns non-Havana natives for denying their regional roots, it also advocates cross-regional relationships and "miscegenations" within the capital. This stance is evidenced in the song's second verse and in the conclusion, which "shouts out" different provinces of the country and implies that their diversity is what constitutes the beauty of Cuba. These portions of the song utilize one of the narrative strategies used by Cándido Fabré, who also invokes the beauty of Cuba, which suggests that both songs—despite their respective critiques of various people—imagine and project an authentic national unity that can overcome regionalist tensions. However, while encouraging Orientales and Cubans from other provinces to assume their regional identity proudly, Álvarez does not address the underlying issues that result in this self-denigration, i.e., the pervasive prejudice Orientales and other Cubans encounter in the capital. Far from "talking back" to Habaneros as Fabré does, Álvarez fully exempts *capitalinos* (natives of the capital) from charges of regionalist transgressions in "Un pariente en el campo," as his principal targets of critique are non-natives who, ashamed of their heritage, try to pass as Habaneros. Further evidence of Álvarez's oblique alliance with Habaneros and their perspectives in this matter can be found on the title track of the album,

"Mi linda habanera." This song is a homage to the capital's beauty, symbolized by the figure of a Habanera (a woman from Havana), who functions as the narrator's creative muse and who he never stops thinking about when traveling and performing far from home.

According to my husband Lázaro, "Un pariente en el campo" was extremely well received in Oriente, as it seemed to speak a truth that many Orientales felt deeply and had experienced in very personal ways, i.e., the shame of being labeled a Palestino in Havana and the consequent obligation to suppress or at least downplay their regional identity.[78] However, he also emphasized that it was an extremely popular song all over Cuba, and that Habaneros loved it for a different reason: the song seemed to "prove" their superiority within the country by publicly addressing the attempts by other Cubans to imitate their customs and styles of dress. Furthermore, he claimed that the song gave "real" Habaneros an outlet to police the boundaries of local identity: Álvarez's technique of calling out the timba stars who had either been born or whose parents had come from el campo provided them with a model by which to differentiate themselves, as native-born second or third-generation Habaneros, from their neighbors who perhaps moved to Havana from el campo ten years ago or whose parents were from el campo and were now identifying as capitalinos.

A casual conversation I had with a young man in Camagüey in May 2008 provided another interesting perspective concerning Álvarez's assertions, both in his song and in his statements, regarding the importance of regional identity. In speaking about Álvarez, I was surprised to hear the young man express feelings of disillusionment toward his fellow Camagüeyano. He stated that Álvarez rarely returns to his hometown to perform, and when he does, the concert never lasts for more than an hour. He asserted that many Camagüeyanos view Álvarez as a traitor to his province. Thus, ironically, much like his own singling out of non-Havana natives for critique in "Un pariente en el campo," some of Álvarez's fellow Camagüeyanos accuse him of abandoning his roots. Even more fascinating was the young man's subsequent statement that in Camagüey people love Cándido Fabré for his legendary propensity to perform long concerts that last into the early hours of the morning. In fact, there is a popular saying about Fabré among Orientales: *la gente amanece con Cándido* (people "wake up," or party until dawn, with Cándido). I believe the admiration and respect displayed for Fabré by this young man also has partly to do with the singer's brazen displays of regional pride, and his reputation as someone who discursively "stood up" to Havana. Finally, it is not irrelevant that Camagüey was part of

Oriente until the Revolution, and older generations of Camagüeyanos may still consider themselves to be Orientales.

Conclusion

The articulations of regionalist sentiment I have examined in this article, whether expressed through musical performance or in everyday vernacular discourse, present a challenge to the official nationalist discourse asserted by the Cuban state. The revolutionary government has always projected a picture of absolute national unity to the world, largely in order to combat the tremendous ongoing political threat to the island's sovereignty represented by the United States and Western capitalism in general. This unifying discourse is represented by a prominent billboard one encounters when driving from the Havana airport toward the city center; it asserts, "Welcome to Havana, capital of *all* Cubans!" Fidel Castro has consistently utilized this discourse of national unity to shore up support for the state's political system, arguing that socialism's principles better address and conform to the needs and desires of the majority of the Cuban population. While serving as a declaration to the international community, this unifying rhetoric could also be viewed as one example of Foucault's "disciplinary technologies" directed at Cuban citizens that functions to establish and maintain consent for the government's ideologies and policies.

Expressions of regionalist sentiment betray the cracks in the wall of Cuban national unity and socialist egalitarianism, illuminating how regional provenance is an influential axis of identity formation that can foster divisiveness. While the recent unstable economic conditions and constantly shifting state solutions to these problems have certainly deepened regionalist hostilities, as the songs by Los Van Van and Orquesta Original de Manzanillo exemplify, these tensions existed at the height of Cuban socialism's success and are not the exclusive result of economic crisis. Many scholars have productively examined the contradictions contained in the gap between the Cuban nationalist hybridity discourse, sometimes referred to as the "myth of racial equality,"[79] and the realities of inequality faced by Cubans of African descent since independence in 1898.[80] I argue that expressions of regionalist sentiment further contest the notion of a unified nation proclaimed by all Cuban governments during the twentieth century, but particularly by the Castro regime. Moreover, as detailed above, the state's own policies that restrict and criminalize internal migration to Havana belie this unifying rhetoric.

In the absence of an official recognition of the divisiveness that regionalist sentiment can incite, dance bands have taken it upon

themselves to address this thorny issue through their lyrics. In *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis* (2005), Vincenzo Perna details the crafty textual strategies used by Cuban timba musicians to comment upon and stimulate popular debate about topics in post-Soviet Cuba that are considered to be subversive by the government, such as state censorship, increasing racialized class inequalities, and sex tourism. In a similar manner, the songs discussed in this article unearth a popular debate about regionalism that simmers just beneath the surface of the capital. These narratives can be interpreted as implicitly challenging the unifying nationalist discourse that remains silent on the matter.

Notes

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

2. Don Mitchell, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 62.

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

4. Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 18–21.

5. Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 18–21.

6. Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 17.

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

8. The Grito de Yara is considered to be the beginning of emancipation, and is still remembered with great respect and admiration in Cuba, both in political and public discourse. October 10 is a national holiday.

9. Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 17–23.

10. Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 26.

11. Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 32.

12. Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 51.

13. Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 52.

14. Spain has a centuries-long history of inter-regional/ethnic conflict that is still very pervasive today, as evidenced by the hostile relations between Madrid and independence-minded regions such as the Basque country and Cataluña.

15. Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 74.

16. Mark Sawyer, *Racial Politics in Post-Revolutionary Cuba* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 57.

17. See Yvonne Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), Vincenzo Perna, *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), Sawyer, *Racial Politics in Post-Revolutionary Cuba*.

18. Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change*, 46.

19. The following discussion of the contemporary manifestations and underlying causes of regionalist antagonisms in Havana is based upon my own ethnographic observations since 2004 and personal communication with many Cubans from both Havana and the outer provinces. I would like to specifically acknowledge my husband Lázaro Moncada Merencio, whose experiences as a *Santiaguero* (Santiago native) in Havana have deeply informed my observations and knowledge about the subject, and who has provided me with a unique lens through which to view this issue.

20. The "Special Period" was a term coined by Fidel Castro to refer to the period of severe rationing and shortages in food, gas/electricity, medicine, and other products in the early 1990s, after the fall of the Soviet Bloc, when Cuba's economy contracted by 35–40 percent.

21. Historian Alejandro de la Fuente reports that an estimated 50,000 Cubans migrated to Havana in 1996, and that 92,000 people attempted to legalize their residential status in the city in early 1997, thus prompting the government to ban migration to the capital in spring 1997. See Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 328.

22. Yvonne Daniel states, "Habaneros refer to any place outside of Havana as 'the interior,' as if it were a jungle" (Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change*, 175–76, n18).

23. It should be made clear that this term does not refer to any actual history of Palestinian presence or ancestry in eastern Cuba, but rather constitutes some sort of imagined parallel with the political conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. I am unsure as to exactly how long this term has been in existence with this specific meaning. One informant approximated that it came to have this connotation during the Special Period in the early–mid 1990s, when there was a surge of eastern Cuban migration to Havana. The only published mentions of the term I have come across are

in de la Fuente's book and in an article published in the 2006 issue of *Catauro*, the biannual journal published by the Cuban anthropological research institution the Fondación Fernando Ortiz. See Pablo Rodríguez Ruiz and Claudio Estévez Mezquía, "Familia, uniones matrimoniales y sexualidad en la pobreza y la marginalidad. El 'llega y pon', un estudio de caso," *Catauro* 8 (2006): 5–31.

24. De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 327.

25. De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 327–28. The misconception that Oriente is "blacker" than western Cuba in terms of the racial origins of the population has been consistently reified in both academic and popular discourse. It is a notion that relies on the racial demographics of Cuba's early colonial history—specifically, the fact that there has been a high concentration of Afro-Cubans on the eastern end of the island since Spain began importing slaves to Cuba in the early sixteenth century. However, I believe this notion must be challenged and revisited given the fact that the nineteenth century saw a much higher concentration of African-born and African-descended slaves in western Cuba due to the location of the largest sugar plantations in the provinces of Matanzas, Havana, and Santa Clara. Furthermore, there are provinces in Oriente, such as Holguín, that historically boast high proportions of white Cubans. Cuban musicologist Nancy Grasso González cites a census conducted by the US government in 1899, during the post-independence American occupation of Cuba, stating that the population of color (including blacks and mulattos) was 45 percent in Santiago and 40 percent in Matanzas. It seems that in these reified notions blackness is a signifier for criminality, and that discursively blackening Oriente simultaneously functions to "whiten" western Cuba and signal its civility and modernity. N. Grasso González, "Folklore y profesionalismo en la rumba matancera (Folklore and Professionalism in Matanzas-Style Rumba)" (BA thesis, Instituto Superior de Arte, Cuba, 1989).

26. De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 327–28.

27. These neighborhoods also boast disproportionately high numbers of black and mulatto residents and consequently are targets of heavy policing (De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 313–14).

28. This view is substantiated in de la Fuente's book and in an article written by Genevieve Howe in *Z Magazine*. Howe interviewed one Cuban academic who asserted that even Fidel Castro characterized Old Havana as full of delinquents from Oriente. See Genevieve Howe, "Cuba: Regulating Revolution," *Z Magazine* 11 (1998): 37.

29. Sawyer, *Racial Politics in Post-Revolutionary Cuba*, 120.

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

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

32. Racial profiling is also in effect, suggested by the larger proportion of black Cubans routinely stopped by police.

33. Howe asserts that government officials have denied rumors of mass deportations of Orientales back to their provinces of origin in the 1990s, but she also reproduces statements contradicting this assertion (Howe, "Cuba: Regulating Revolution," 37).

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

35. In this article I use the term "Cuban dance music" to refer to Cuban-style salsa, following the trend of scholars who differentiate Cuban salsa from the genre of music that emerged from New York in the 1960s that has been associated primarily with Puerto Rico. Although there have been musical exchanges between the two styles, there are many features that differentiate them. I use the commonly accepted term *timba* to speak about Cuban dance music since the early 1990s, as it refers to specific stylistic and thematic differences from earlier styles of Cuban dance music. For details on the development of timba and its principal musical features, see Vincenzo Perna, *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis* and Robin Moore, *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

36. Perna, *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis*, 2005.

37. The career trajectory, musical innovations and overall significance of Los Van Van to Cuban dance music have been chronicled extensively in literature from both Cuba and the United States, including Perna, *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis*, Moore, *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba*, articles in the Cuban popular music journals *Clave* and *Salsa Cubana*, and many Internet sources.

38. Mauleon and Faro note in a Los Van Van compilation CD that these songs included "El negro no tiene na'" (The black guy doesn't have anything, 1984), responding to the rumors that Los Van Van's lead singer Pedro Calvo had contracted AIDS; "La resolución" (The resolution, 1985), which critiqued the ungrateful behavior and gossip-mongering of Cuban party-goers who are never satisfied with the generosity of their hosts; "La titimanía" (Young girl fever, 1987), exposing the trend of older men taking up with younger women; and "No soy de La Gran Escena" (I'm not from the "Big Scene", 1989), an explicit critique of a well-known Cuban television program of the same name that features performances only of "high art" such as opera and ballet, while shunning Cuban popular and folkloric music and dance. See Rachel Faro and Rebecca Mauleon, liner notes for *The Legendary Los Van Van: 30 Years of Cuba's Greatest Dance Band* (Ashé Records, 1999).

39. Although "La Habana no aguanta más" has been mentioned often in publications discussing the social relevance of Los Van Van's lyrics, it is usually interpreted in a more literal way as addressing housing shortages in the capital (Perna, *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis*; Moore, *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba*), and has not been examined through the lens of the politics of place in Cuba.

40. This song can be found on the Los Van Van compilation album *The Legendary Los Van Van: 30 Years of Cuba's Greatest Dance Band*. Lyrics and translations of the verse section of the song are taken from the liner notes from the album, although I

have made changes where I felt a better translation was warranted. The translation of the *montuno* section lyrics are my own.

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

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

43. *Doce plantas*, literally "twelve-story building," refers to the drab, Soviet-style apartment buildings built by the Cuban government to fill housing needs in the 1970s and 1980s.

44. Faro and Mauleon, *The Legendary Los Van Van*, 20. Pedrito left Los Van Van in 2000 and currently has his own dance band, Pedro Calvo y La Justicia. He still makes occasional guest appearances with Los Van Van for televised performances.

45. Faro and Mauleon, *The Legendary Los Van Van*, 22.

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

47. *Changüí*, believed to be one of the rural eastern Cuban antecedents of *son*, is almost universally associated with the province of Guantánamo. For more on changüí, see Benjamin Lapidus, "The *Changüí* Genre of Guantánamo, Cuba," *Ethnomusicology* 49 (2005): 49–74.

48. Perna, *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis*, 36.

49. Faro and Mauleon, *The Legendary Los Van Van*, 8.

50. Faro and Mauleon, *The Legendary Los Van Van*, 9. Pedroso's rhythmic innovations on the piano have been essential to the development of timba. He left Los Van Van in 2001 in order to form his own band, Pupy y Los Que Son Son, which has had tremendous success and is currently one of Cuba's most popular dance bands.

51. Perna, *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis*, 42.

52. See Perna, *Timba: The Sound of Cuban Crisis* and Moore, *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba*. The website http://www.timba.com (accessed January 2008) has been an invaluable source of information on timba genealogy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

64. Majaguabo is a small town in the rural part of the Santiago province.

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

66. Ethnomusicologist Robin Moore elaborates a similar argument, although he focuses on the racial politics of the nationalist appropriation of *son* rather than the regional politics. See Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920–1940* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 1997).

67. A Google search conducted on "Soy cubano y soy de Oriente" in March 2008 resulted in only four hits, three of which were track listings for the song on compilation

albums, and the fourth of which was a brief encyclopedia entry on Cándido Fabré listing his most famous compositions.

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

69. Biographical and professional information about Adalberto Álvarez is drawn from his homepage, http://www.adalbertoalvarez.cult.cu (accessed January 2008).

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

71. This song can be found on the album *Mi linda habanera* (Bis Music, 2005). Translation of all lyrics are my own.

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

73. To "make santo" means to be initiated into Santería.

74. Baracoa is a city located on the easternmost tip of Cuba, in the province of Guantánamo.

75. Niquero is a town on the southeastern coast of Cuba in the province of Granma.

76. All quotes in this paragraph are taken from a reproduction of an article on Alvarez's homepage http://www.adalbertoalvarez.cult.cu (accessed January 2008).

77. Pianist/composer Manolito Simonet, from Camagüey, currently leads one of the most popular timba bands since the mid-1990s, Manolito y Su Trabuco. Flautist José Luis Cortés, known as "El Tosco" (the coarse guy), is the bandleader of the aforementioned pioneering timba band NG La Banda and is from the central province of Santa Clara. Before starting his own band, Cortés played with both Los Van Van and legendary jazz/fusion group Irakere. Singer Isaac Delgado, born in Havana but presumably with parents from el campo, was an original member of NG La Banda who launched his own group in 1992. Beloved in Cuba and abroad for his smooth, lyrical vocal timbre, Delgado shocked the timba world in late 2006 by defecting with his family to Miami. Pachito Alonso is the current director of Pachito Alonso y Sus Kini Kini, a dance band begun by his father Pacho Alonso, a Santiago native and bandleader who began his career during the "golden era" of Cuban popular music, the 1940s and 1950s.

78. Lázaro Moncada Merencio, conversation with author, February 2008.

79. Helg, *Our Rightful Share*.

80. For discussions and critiques of the Cuban nationalist hybridity discourse at various historical moments, see Carlos Moore, *Castro, the Blacks, and Africa* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California Los Angeles, 1988); Pedro Perez Sarduy and Jean Stubbs, eds., *Afrocuba: An Anthology of Cuban Writing on Race, Politics and Culture* (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 1993); Helg, *Our Rightful Share*; Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana*; De la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba*; Shalini Puri, *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and Sawyer, *Racial Politics in Post-Revolutionary Cuba*.