Salsation: Affective Encounters and the Right to the City

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The first thing I notice as I climb the old wooden stairs toward the faint sound of trumpets, congas, and clave growing steadily louder is the heat—it emanates from the warm glow of the restaurant's entrance and gently caresses my face, then envelops my body like a warm embrace. As I turn the corner and enter the restaurant, the vibrations of base and of rhythmic footsteps reverberate up from the wooden dance floor, entering my body through my heels, traveling up my legs to settle in my gut. I move through the gauntlet of warm smiles, damp hugs, superficial pecks on the cheek, and begin to navigate the precarious dance space of high heel shoes and flailing elbows in search of my first dance partner of the evening. I notice a woman strolling gracefully through the front doors wearing a spicy red dress that might be overdramatic on any other night but seems perfectly appropriate for this setting. A smartly-dressed guy in designer jeans and a black t-shirt, smooth and confident, enters the venue. His eyes find the girl with the magical shoes and he winks at her, approaches, and extends his hand. She gracefully accepts his request by taking his arm and leading him onto the dance floor. They sway together in a close embrace before he leads her to effortlessly execute triple spins, travelling turns, direction changes, and dramatic dips all with confidence, style, and a slight smile. I watch them briefly, engaged in a flawless performance that seems sensual and intimate, yet tinged with a hint of self-importance.

From a cozy chair in one corner of the restaurant, a casual observer can watch sweaty bodies twist and twirl to an Afro-Caribbean beat. At first glance, this observer might believe that the intensity of this zone of contact in one of Cape Town's hottest salsa clubs holds all of the promise of uninhibited social interaction and movement on the dance floor. In fact, many dancers describe the sense of

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freedom that salsa offers. Others say it is the joyous and sensual nature of the dance and the self-expression possible that inspires them. Mostly, however, people claim to seek a community with their same passion for movement, expression, and feeling. Movements, communications, and interactions on the dance floor are driven by emotional responses to other participants and to the dance. Also, many participants in the Cape Town salsa scene are pleased with the multicultural or cosmopolitan nature of the scene and are attracted to the idea that salsa, for them, seems to transcend race. However, this sense of community is cultivated through passion and desire but is not unmarred by *schadenfreude*, jealousy, and the need for recognition. Investigating Cape Town's salsa scene reveals emotive processes of space-making in the city—creating networks, flows, and territories. These micro-political maneuverings and embodied negotiations are central to the struggle for and articulation of rights to the city. In this chapter, I argue that dance is a medium through which urban territories are negotiated. I discuss the dancing body as a lens for understanding the role of affective and emotional geographies in the active creation and contestation of spaces of exclusion and belonging.

Much like other forms of media (i.e. newspapers, advertising images, music, film), examining the dancing body can elucidate the complex intermingling of social and spatial interactions and the exchange of ideas, meaning, and emotion. According to geographer Paul Adams (2010), communications are "exchanges," or "arrangements that connect one to one, one to many, many to one, and many to many" (p. 39). Media, he argues, can "indicate any communication arrangement," whether in the form of material texts or expressed through social markers like language or code (p.39). I have argued previously that dance is a language of the body (Johnson 2011). The dancing body is often analyzed as a representation: the production of Irish heritage and identity (Leonard 2005), as a performance or an appropriation of black American culture (Johnson 2003; Laidlaw 2011) or as a way of memorializing events (Nelson 2008). The dancing body is also an affective entity; it is the vessel through which affections are transmitted and spaces are transformed through affective rendering. In this chapter, I examine the ways that dancing bodies and the spaces they create through affective rendering are defining territories, and providing avenues of urban participation for salsa dancers.

Dance holds social and political power in South Africa where crucial constructed categories of identity were visible on the body, and segregated landscapes were built and legislated according to State-ascribed racial and ethnic categories. In South African urban spaces, dance has a long legacy as a medium for defining geographies of exclusion. Apartheid-era restrictions prohibiting interracial dancing in public and private indicate that social dance practices have often been treated with suspicion, as sites of inappropriate social encounter (Johnson 2013). These restrictions highlight the significance that law- makers and gate-keepers of high society placed on social dancing as a dangerously intimate practice that could lead to devious social behavior and, most dangerously, to racial mixing. Social interaction, particularly sexual interaction, was a challenge to the delicate balance of minority rule premised on racial superiority (white supremacy) in order to establish and protect white political and economic power and social capital (Elder 1998, p. 156). One way

to examine the intricacies of social contact and encounter in a post-apartheid city undertaking radical restructuring is to examine carefully the not-so-obvious spaces that bring together many different kinds of people into a relatively safe but unstable environment where rules evolve, roles change, and movement is not only expected but required. Social dancing can allow for the embodied expression of intense joy and communities form around a shared enthusiasm for the music and the desire to belong. However, social dance scenes are also landscapes through which struggles over control, legitimacy, and social and cultural capital are waged (see Johnson 2011). Studying dance and spaces of social dancing allows for an investigation of new avenues of participation, engagement, and movement, not only of and between bodies on the dance floor, but also within cities. In Cape Town, where difference and division were deliberately legislated and social (specifically sexual) interaction between racial groups explicitly forbidden, new social relationships are navigated, and urban spaces are negotiated and re-mapped through affective participation in dance scenes.

In this chapter, I use an ethnographic exploration of the salsa dancing scene in Cape Town, South Africa to explore affective movements as they shape interactions and stimulate the creation of urban spaces. Desires, hostilities, intentions are expressed through dance and communicated among dancers; affect is transmitted through the body, and translated to designate and define territory. I interrogate tension between dancers that are indicative of emotional struggles over territory and the power to create. Dance, as a medium, constitutes these social interactions in spaces. Urban spaces are written by everyday encounters with different ideas, backgrounds, values, and ways of living. Inherent in the processes of encounter are struggles over the rights to the city—the right to create spaces of belonging. I combine Henri Lefebvre's conceptualization of the 'right to the city' with literature on emotive and affective responses to urban space in order to engage with alternative understandings of urban participation.

Affective-Emotive Geographies, Dance, and the City

Geographers have recently emphasized the importance of affect and emotion when studying embodied negotiations of space. Nigel Thrift describes affect as "a form of thinking, often indirect and non-reflective true, but thinking all the same. And, similarly, all manner of the spaces which they generate must be thought of in the same way, as means of thinking and as thought in action. Affect is a different kind of intelligence about the world, but it is intelligence nonetheless" (2008, p. 187). Borrowing from Brian Massumi's work, Alan Latham and Derek McCormack describe affect as a "felt but impersonal, visceral but not neatly corporeal, force of intensive relationality" (2004, p. 706).

The body is the site of affective transmission, "emotional experience," and expression (Davidson and Milligan 2004, p. 523). Attempting to understand the transpersonal flow of affect or emotions as embodied practices has pushed research beyond the visual and textual into areas such as performance as non-representational

geographies. Geographic studies dealing with affect, emotion and dance in particular, have emerged, in part, in response to Nigel Thrift's work on non-representational theory (Thrift 2008). The embodied and affective quality of dance contributes to what Thrift calls the "sixth kinesthetic proprioceptive sense," which is difficult to articulate (p. 139). In his explorations of vibrations and Jamaican dancehall scenes, Julian Henriques (2010) writes that movement and affect are embodied together, thus "to feel . . . is to feel moved" (p. 57). His article focuses on the ways in which affect is transmitted like vibrations between bodies on the dance floor. Dancers in Cape Town's salsa scene often described the "vibe" of a particular club. In these exchanges, vibe describes a feeling or energy transmitted between and among people and through space. The vibe is the energy generated by the sound and light attitudes as well as by the movement of dancing bodies. This description of vibe is reminiscent of the "sense of place" conceptualizations that emerged in the 1970s with the rise of humanist geography that put the human experience of place at the center of geographic inquiry. Influential human geographers examined the intimate, emotional relationships between place and the individual, including examinations of the pre-cognitive movements of people through place (Seamon 1979) the authenticity of place (Relph 1976), or the self as being-in-the-world (Tuan 1977). Drawing from this tradition, I describe vibe here as the dynamic, difficult to articulate, almost palpable affective rendering that attaches multiple sentiments to place and influences the dancing experience.

Affect and the Right to the City

Recently, prominent urban scholars have stressed the importance of examining affect to better understand the city (Thrift 2008; Morris 2004; Lantham and McCormack 2004). Edgar Pieterse recognizes the attention to affect as a promising epistemological contribution to African urban studies. He suggests the importance of examining affect/emotion and the related judgments, actions, responses, and intentions "because it is only through the redeployment of such registers that one can begin to fathom what is going on in the real city" (p. 14).

If affect is an important part of the ways in which cities in South Africa come to be understood, what exactly do empirical examinations of affect allow us to understand about lived urban experiences and the right to create urban space? Cities are sites where belonging is expressed, rights to space are negotiated, and identities are constructed and contested, all of which are everyday processes and practices (Secor 2004). In post-apartheid South Africa, many have embraced the language of rights in a continued struggle to create an equal and open society. However, in pondering the question of how to rebuild South African cities, prominent scholar Abdoumaliq Simone (2004) thinks that we have to go beyond viewing the right to the city as a right to basic services. For Simone, the right to the city indicates a right to pursue one's aspirations, a right which fundamentally relies upon the residents' abilities to create connections between the "infrastructures, spaces, populations, institutions, and economic activities of the city" (p. 323). In this interpretation, the

right to the city cannot be legislated entirely by government and urban policy; urban residents must play an active role in the pursuit and realization of their aspirations.

Henri Lefebvre's idea of "right to the city" refers not only to the right to urban services but also the right to inhabit and transform urban space and thus to become a creator of the city. For Lefebvre, the city should be explored as a work of art constantly created and recreated in the everyday rituals and interactions of urban residents (Fenster 2005). The right to participation ensures that city dwellers become involved in decision-making processes that regulate, create, and maintain urban space (Lefebvre 1968 in Kofman and Lebas 1996, p. 174). According to Lefebrve, "the right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit" (1996, p. 173; quoted in Amin and Thrift 2002, p. 143). The right to the city "is not simply a right to consume, since human beings also have a need for creative activity, for the oeuvre . . . " (Parker 2004). According to Purcell (2002), producing space in the city requires planning, not only material spaces (roads, parks, buildings), but also constructing social relationships, attachments, sentiments, and an urban imaginary; it involves "producing and reproducing all aspects of urban life" (p.102). For Lefebvre, it is our legacy as human beings to create our own spaces; the freedom with which we are able to create this space is the crucial measurement of the quality of social life (Shields 1999). Likewise, Zayd Minty, Co-founder of Creative Cape Town, uses Lefebvre's right to the city to outline the role of culture and cultural expression in the cultivation of inclusivity in Cape Town. He argues that inhabitants often articulate an imagination of the city through the medium of performance and visual arts, forms of expression that can facilitate understanding and unity across socioeconomic and cultural boundaries (2008).

Methods

I conducted ethnographic research in Cape Town from August to January 2006, and from April 2009 to May 2011 that included 42 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the city's dance club owners, dance instructors, dancers, musicians, and disk jockeys. I was also a semi-professional salsa dancer, performer, and salsa event organizer. I performed with most of the salsa dance companies in Cape Town as well as several of the local salsa musicians, taught workshops and private lessons, directed an all-female salsa dance company and have choreographed routines with prominent dancers in the scene. Through these collaborations, I experienced what salsa participants describe as "politics" among salsa stakeholders. During my fieldwork, I was accused of "messing" in other instructors' territory, stealing another dancer's choreography, and another dancer's dance partner. I made some missteps during the course of my research. Some I made knowing that by pleasing some parties, I would irritate others. It became almost impossible to become involved in the scene yet remain neutral in the world of salsa politics. This level of active participation allowed me not only to observe the emotional aspects of people and events but also to participate fully in them. People expressed feelings about actions

or events to me in casual conversation on the dance floor that they would not repeat in a recorded interview. In addition to being expressed verbally, emotions such as frustration, excitement, and disappointment can be read through the body and are often subtly expressed through gestures, eye contact, posture, and in the lead and follow of social dancing.

Salsa and the Cape Town Context

In order to explore the context of social dancing in Cape Town, it is important to mention the legacy of apartheid in the city. Apartheid not only produced geographies of exclusion in the city, it cultivated a climate of distrust among urban residents (Nahnsen 2003). Apartheid was a carefully orchestrated system of racialized economic, social, and political domination in which a white minority controlled the mobility of non-white bodies as well as access to land, labor, and resources. Residential, institutional, and social spaces were legislatively and architecturally engineered to ensure racial separation (reflected in legislation such as the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Separate Amenities Act of 1953), and one's existence within the Union of South Africa was determined by bodily appearance (reflected in the codification of race under the Population Registration Act of 1950). For scholar and philosopher, Achille Mbembe (2004), the end of apartheid raises the urgent question of how to inhabit the city because, for most South Africans, the city has been the dominant site of their exclusion from modernity. Exploring salsa dancing in Cape Town as an affective practice reveals new ways of understanding the urban habitation: interaction, participation, and creation.

Salsa's development and diffusion cannot be separated from a history of migration, first of Cuban and Puerto Rican music and musicians to New York City in the mid-twentieth century, entwining music and dance styles with African-American performance culture that was the product of a South-North migration of its own; and finally of the global circulation of the music that became known as salsa. As part of this global migration of music and dance, Cape Town's salsa scene developed relatively recently, beginning in 2001. During my preliminary research in the fall 2006, most of the salsa venues were located in the city center with occasional parties located in Camps Bay, Tygervalley, or Observatory. By 2011, many of the venues for salsa in the city center had closed, some had reopened, and new locations experimented with creating a salsa vibe. Although a few salsa instructors and venues have ventured out of the city center in order to host salsa events and classes, the city center is considered the home for salsa. A couple of the salsa instructors mention that salsa as an art form originated abroad, yet the scene in Cape Town was created primarily by South Africans. Salsa is therefore considered to "belong to everybody;" it is a "fresh platform" with a cosmopolitan vibe. Other instructors have mentioned salsa's global appeal, which connects dancers in Cape Town with people who practice salsa in other parts of the world, particularly when business or leisure travel brings salsa dancers to Cape Town. Dance can unite people despite language differences. As one dancer explains, economic sanctions and the

cultural embargo implemented internationally to protest South Africa's apartheid policies left many South Africans of her generation (she is 55 years old) feeling isolated and cut off from the rest of the world. Participating in salsa has enabled her to feel part of an international phenomenon. For many salsa participants who have never left Cape Town, participating in a global art form is an engagement with a cosmopolitan sensibility that is not often accessible for many South Africans who have not yet had the opportunity to travel abroad.

Most salsa practitioners credit Buena Vista Social Café in Greenpoint with being the first venue to create and sustain a salsa vibe. As they climb the stairs, patrons were greeted with a Cuban flag, followed by a large photo of Fidel Castro, and a floor-to-ceiling mural depicting the cover of the Buena Vista Social Club documentary. The brick walls of the restaurant were peppered with framed and faded photographs of Havana street scenes. The atmosphere was one of revolutionary nostalgia. Mismatched furniture and old wooden floors created a cozy ambiance, yet a precarious dance floor. The lighting mimicked the soft warm glow of candlelight. A corner of the restaurant near the bar was cleared and dedicated to dancers after 9 pm; however after about 10 pm, the small space could no longer contain enthusiastic dancing bodies, and dancing couples began to spill out into the restaurant space, occupying the crevices in between tables. The best dancers muscled it out for dance space on the periphery, often inspired by the attention of spectators sitting at the tables or on the balcony, as well as for the room to attempt more intricate turn patterns on the dangerous dance floor. "Serious" salsa dancers refused to dance near the bar area in order to avoid careless cigarettes or the spilled beer that can ruin expensive suede-bottomed salsa shoes. To dance at Buena Vista, one was always aware of the eminent possibility of bodily harm caused by an ill-placed high heel or elbow. Waiters and waitresses carrying trays of nachos and drink specials were constantly dodging high-speed arms and hips in motion. But what drew both salsa dancers and non-dancers alike to Buena Vista week after week for 8 years was the energy of the place—this combination of body heat, rivers of sweat trickling shamelessly down the back, pervasive smell of cigar(ette) smoke and nacho cheese, infectious clave and conga beat, and non-stop movement that created a desirable "vibe." This affection was transmitted among Buena Vista patrons, fueling and being fueled by embodied responses to Latin beats. It was an affective circulation of exuberance, tension, sexual energy, anticipation, and reckless inhibition. It was this energy, this sexy vibe, some patrons say, that defines salsa dancing for them. For many salsa participants, the sensual social interactions that often occur on the dance floor would not have been possible under apartheid's legislated spatial and social segregation experienced in their lifetimes.

Emotional Politics and Territoriality in Cape Town's Salsa Scene

The salsa dancing scene is a window into the ways that people navigate, create, and territorialize spaces and networks, driven by feelings such as passion, desire, envy, and pride, as well as the need for recognition and belonging. Such collective dance

practices necessitate the creation of venues to host dance classes and events. For some participants in Cape Town, the primary value of these spaces is economic: salsa venues provide opportunities for salsa instructors, event organizers, and venue owners to market themselves and earn money. For others, these venues provide opportunities for people to establish communities of like-minded individuals, to develop new dance skills or demonstrate mastery of dance steps. Salsa dancers discuss the sense of family they feel with other dedicated members of the salsa scene. For many, social dance venues offer escape from the stresses of everyday life. Therefore, creating venues to host social dance events is also about creating spaces of belonging in cities. Participation is not merely economic, but is also a social and micro-political activity. The ways that dancers negotiate, contest, collaborate in the creation of such spaces describes *participatory* actions.

In many casual conversations, members of the salsa community lament a sinister political element surrounding contestations over space and students on the part of salsa instructors that undermines a sense of community. On the surface, economic motivations drive territorial practices among salsa stakeholders in Cape Town. Dancers, DJs, and instructors often allude to market "saturation" and a "culture of scarcity" when describing many of the problems between members the salsa community: there are simply too many salsa instructors competing to profit from too few dancers willing to pay to attend salsa classes and parties. However, economic explanations do not fully explain these practices. Some instructors admit that collaboration among teachers is difficult yet economically necessary because all salsa instructors must encourage their students to attend salsa events, thereby simultaneously raising the profile and the profits of salsa in Cape Town.

As salsa promoters strive to recreate a Buena Vista vibe of their own in other venues, many of these endeavors failed: not enough members of the salsa crowd showed up and of those who attended the parties, not enough people spent money at the bar. Increasingly, there are few establishments interested in supporting salsa parties because venue managers do not feel as though they will make enough money from salsa. Many salsa dancers do not spend enough money on food and alcohol for the venue to recover the costs of hiring a salsa DJ and sound equipment. According to a salsa instructor operating in Cape Town's southern suburbs, venues do not support salsa parties because "salsa is not supporting the venue." As the venues willing to host salsa parties dwindle, scrambles for club venues for parties ensue among competing salsa instructors and schools, leading to territorial practices deriving from a "culture of scarcity." Salsa dancers claim the perception that there is not enough space or not enough students for each instructor to make a satisfactory profit results in highly competitive behavior. Dancers conjecture that, because the community of salsa dancers is relatively small numerically, instructors are pulling and tugging over the existing paying clients. Instructors are constantly bickering over party venues, class schedules, and students.

Despite the general perception among instructors of the economic benefits of collaboration, salsa events are approached with cold cooperation at best and deliberate sabotage at worst, resulting in poorly attended, lack-luster events. One dancer suggests that salsa schools do not collaborate to sponsor larger salsa events

because of a suspicion that one school will make more money than the others. Therefore instructors withhold support or sabotage the events of other schools. Likewise, salsa studios territorialize salsa students, often treating them as objects without agency—as means to fulfill economic ends. Many salsa instructors accuse their colleagues of cajoling students away to join classes elsewhere. A language of possession and protection is so candid and pervasive among instructors that the notion of 'poaching' students, staff, and performers is explicitly written into and warned against in the Salsa South Africa code of conduct, a document that outlines appropriate behavior for members of the Salsa South Africa alliance. Cape Town salsa instructors formed the Salsa South Africa alliance to "bring scattered efforts together" to benefit all salsa schools. This alliance of existing salsa instructors, however, is also a product of territorial processes designed to exclude new initiatives and to protect existing instructors as the salsa elite. Salsa South Africa instructors insist that the organization of 'outsider' events threaten the economic viability of salsa schools, and competitive behavior is often justified as "just business" as schools protect their economic interests. The Salsa South Africa Alliance was intended to create spaces of inclusion and collaboration among salsa schools and participants; however, in its eventual corrupted form, members of Salsa South Africa created suspicion among instructors and zones of exclusion. This alliance was one element in a process of delineating and protecting territory. Even within the alliance, there is a general mistrust of intentions among instructors that makes collaboration disingenuous at best. One prominent instructor describes his distrust of the other instructors: "I'd like to say that salsa will come together . . . , but it's based around the teachers and every teacher has got . . . agendas, and agendas are never transparent as much as you might want them to be."

Instructors mention that the behavior behind accusations of stealing venues and poaching students can be excused as healthy competition. While economic arguments are often made to explain and justify territorial behavior, I argue that there is a deeper emotional motivation behind such maneuvering, particularly because instructors often act in ways that are counter to their economic interests to hinder the success of other schools. Instructors discuss the behavior of other salsa schools in terms of "betrayal" and "back-stabbing"—loaded words reserved for emotional sentiments. More than people's economic livelihoods are at stake—pride, prestige, status, respect, and recognition are entangled with salsa. What is at stake in these interactions is beyond economics; it is the power to create, influence and control space. The processes of territory-making in the salsa scene are not only about control of a social sphere and networks, it is also about the control of bodily movement, both on the dance floor and through the spaces and networks of the larger salsa scene. It is also about control of creativity—the right to make and remake space. Intense emotional involvement manifests itself in the politics of salsa dance scenes as instructors and dancers struggle for recognition and status. Therefore, emotional involvement influences behavior, shapes attachments, and inspires navigations and uses of urban space. Emotional involvement and bodily movement shape territory.

Shaping Space of Belonging Through Affective Rendering

As explained in the previous section, territorial maneuvers within the salsa scene challenge notions of community and shape spaces of exclusion and belonging. These practices of territorialization often generate frustration and general disgust among salsa participants, affecting the ways that people relate to a sense of community. The salsa community in Cape Town, as participants use the term, describes a core group of dancers and participants who are at most of the salsa events, take (or used to take) salsa courses, and communicate about salsa events and issues via blogs and Facebook. A sense of belonging, in contrast, describes an emotional connection, a feeling of comfort, home, or family within the salsa scene. For many salsa dancers, this sense of belonging is elusive because some dancers feel as though their contributions to the salsa community over time are not appreciated outside of an economic context. The economic policies, processes of venue selection, and the territorial maneuverings of instructors and event organizers also work to ensure that the salsa community is not as inclusive as it is narrated. Likewise, the seemingly petty conflicts and contestations over territory among the salsa elite disrupt the possibility of cosmopolitanism that the practice of salsa proposes. Often, hostility is made apparent in the salsa space, either communicated through the dancing body, or expressed in the noticeable absence of dance. This hostility creates a vibe that dancers describe as "cold," "competitive," or "uncomfortable."

In her essay on the science of territory, Andrea Mubi Brighenti defines territory as a practice rather than a physical space; it defines spaces through patterns of relationships of power among people (2010). Brighenti argues that it is the imagined nature of territory that enables distinction and recognition, and the act of boundary-drawing is implicated in the creation of ordered social relations. Importantly, territories are affective; they facilitate the spread of "moods, attitudes, desires, [and] beliefs" (p. 58). Respect plays an important role in territorial relationships because its expressive-affective nature organizes social structures internally while maintaining distance between those who are welcome inside territorial boundaries and outsiders. This desire for respect and recognition drives territorial practices and processes in Cape Town's salsa scene.

The establishment of networks and territory are all part of the transformation of mundane urban spaces through emotion into spaces of belonging and attachment. Cameron Duff (2010) explores the relationship between affect, belonging, and territory in youth social spaces in Vancouver. She explains the ways in which youth in Vancouver territorialize public spaces like parks, malls, beaches, and cafés in order to carve out spaces of belonging for themselves. Using Edward Casey's concept of "thick" and "thin" places, Duff seeks to explore the ways in which "thin" places are transformed through affective rendering into "thick" places imbued with memory, identity, and attachment. 'Thick' spaces are rich, meaningful, and provide for the individual a sense of belonging and an affective experience (Duff 2010). Duff suggests that "thin" places, in comparison, are unmemorable and indistinctive; they "offer nothing to hold the self in place" (p. 882). She explains how youth engage in "processes of navigation and memorialization" of places to construct a sense of belonging in the city (p. 888).

Borrowing from Duff, I argue that it is through affective rendering that Cape Town salsa dancers seek to create "thick" spaces of belonging on the dance floor. Years of affective labor—memories forged, conflicts mitigated, relationships formed and broken—have attached meaning and emotion to Buena Vista, transforming it into a "thick" space for many of Cape Town's salsa dancers. Importantly, the transformation of other salsa venues into "thick" spaces of meaning and belonging for dancers is disrupted by the constant opening and closing of salsa party venues. Salsa instructors and promoters, lured by the potential of recreating Buena Vista's energetic vibe and lucrative enterprise, attempt to launch regular salsa events at different bars and restaurants in Cape Town's city center. The success of these new venues is often thwarted by the territorial tactics of other salsa instructors often to the economic detriment of all salsa stakeholders. Therefore, many venues are not open long enough for dancers to develop an emotional attachment or to create spaces of belonging. In this case, an important relationship thus exists between emotional attachment to salsa spaces and economic commitment to salsa venues. Without economic commitment, instructors and club owners are unable to keep salsa venues open long enough for dancers to form emotional attachments to the new venues. Without emotional attachment to the venues, dancers are unwilling to support venues economically, wither through cover charges, dance lessons, or buying drinks at the bar. Furthermore, the culture of scarcity created when instructors feel economically pressured, fosters a negative vibe and fractures relationships, contributing to difficulty in forming emotional attachments to particular salsa spaces.

Of course, emotive and territorial maneuverings are not only about economics, but are often also about recognition, belonging, and the power to create and control space and interactions. Examining the role of dance and affect transmission allows us to see beyond the economic; if we examine the economic motivations behind conflicts among salsa stakeholders, we risk misunderstanding or underestimating the emotional and communicative power of dance to *move* people and, in doing so, reshape urban spaces. Urban spaces are created through feelings and actions driven by jealousy and *shadenfreude,* just as spaces of belonging are created through the transmission of energy, emotion and shared movement. It is in this way that dance inspires participation in the creation and contestation of urban space.

Conclusion: Toward an Understanding of Emotive Creation and the Rights to the City Through Dance

In his discussion of music and media geography, John Finn states that "music . . . comes into existence through movement" (2011, p. 1). The musicscape, he argues, "is the aural embodiment of myriad social and cultural forces, the sonic result of social rhythms resonating through space. The musicscape depends on movement, is defined by movement, come into being through movement" (p. 4). Dance is the body moving, feeling, and responding to rhythmic sounds, frequency, and energy. In this way, the spaces and relations of salsa dancing are mediated through intense emotions like joy, sensuality, jealousy, frustrations, and elation. In

these scenes, music is more than a backdrop, it is the *raison d'être* for gathering. Therefore the mingling and movement of the body to the music is vital. It is the flow of energy and the transmission of affect among bodies that creates a particular vibe in a space. As with Buena Vista, this affective confluence of bodies in motion, energy, emotion, sound, and light creates vibrations, a vibe that attaches sentiment to place. It is the process of attaching sentiments to places that creates spaces of belonging in cities. Salsa dancing requires intimacy (because it involves close, often sensual contact), connection, and creativity. Facilitated by the music, creative, emotive energy is produced, exchanged, and channeled on the dance floor. Because the body facilitates the direct transmission of affect, energy, emotion, and desire through bodily contact, this connection can facilitate the creation of communities and spaces of belonging for people who share experiences. However, because of the intimate relationship between the body and the means of creative expression (dance), spaces and means of creative expression, when attacked or threatened, can also be fiercely defended as a means of self-preservation. Territorial maneuvers and the negotiation of tensions between salsa schools and dancers describe the processes of reclaiming, re-inventing, and re-creating urban space. Conflicts frequently arise, agreements are reached, alliances are formed and broken and new negotiations begin. These interactions are intensified by the embodied, intimate, and creative nature of social dancing, as well as though the affective rendering of spaces through music, movement, relationships.

As evident in the Cape Town salsa scene, encounters in these spaces might not always lead to resolutions, tolerance, mutual respect, or utopia, but these emotive encounters through dance represent a process in creating and imagining city spaces. In this way, the Cape Town salsa scene does not fail as a means to express allowing participants to express the right to the city. While the salsa scene may not live up to its cosmopolitan promise, it does provide a venue and opportunity for diverse people to come together through music and *create*. Individually and collectively, salsa dancers come together to create art, movement, relationships, networks, livelihoods, and spaces of belonging in their city. This speaks to the power of dancing bodies and dance scenes as communicative entities. Dance exemplifies the exchange that Paul Adams describes. Experiences in the establishment and decline of salsa venues are molded through emotional and economic encounters between dancers, instructors, DJs, and club owners. In this way, dance and dancing bodies communicate desire, displeasure, and territory. This process of contestation, collaboration, and negotiation, of space, bodies, and meaning describes acts of participation in the shaping of urban space; the rights to the city.

Dance allows us to examine urban participation beyond conventional notions of governance and civic responsibility such as voting activity, involvement in policy-making, and grassroots community organizing. These conceptualizations of the right to the city imply a *direct* and *intentional* engagement with the state or structures of governance. Examinations of participation that only investigate these activities do not explain the important affective and emotional maneuverings and negotiations that are part and parcel of urban participation. I expand the definition of participation to include the everyday negotiations and contestations inherent in

social dance practices and integral to creation of social space, thereby exploring the notion of participation as shaping spaces for interaction, creativity, and expression in the city. According to David Harvey (2008), "the freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is … one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights" (p. 23). Harvey argues Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city (2008). Therefore, participation in the conflicts and negotiations that I highlight are struggles over the right and the power to create not just spaces of economic empowerment, or even of belonging, but also to explore and ultimately shape the *self*.

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