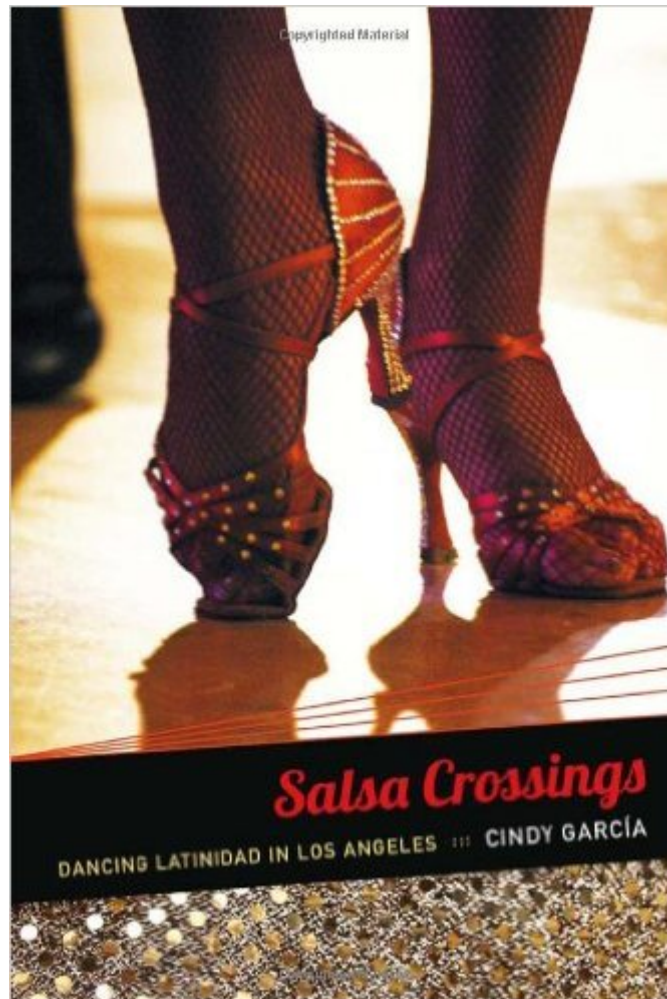


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Salsa Crossings: Dancing Latinidad In Los Angeles (Latin America Otherwise)



Synopsis

In Los Angeles, night after night, the city's salsa clubs become social arenas where hierarchies of gender, race, and class, and of nationality, citizenship, and belonging are enacted on and off the dance floor. In an ethnography filled with dramatic narratives, Cindy Garc a describes how local salseras/os gain social status by performing an exoticized L.A. "style salsa that distances them from club practices associated with Mexicanness. Many Latinos in Los Angeles try to avoid "dancing like a Mexican," attempting to rid their dancing of techniques that might suggest that they are migrants, poor, working-class, Mexican, or undocumented. In L.A. salsa clubs, social belonging and mobility depend on subtleties of technique and movement. With a well-timed dance-floor exit or the lift of a properly tweezed eyebrow, a dancer signals affiliation not only with a distinctive salsa style but also with a particular conceptualization of latinidad.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is in my view outstanding! Admitted I read it both as a Salsa dancer and a social scientist. As a social dancer I think this book is unique in describing and interpreting the style issue, and continuous discussions of style in the social dancing. As a social dancing it is seriously illuminating how the analysis debunk all claims to the universal right way of dancing and originality. This discussion speaks directly into the divide there are many places between on1 and on2 dancers the later often claiming "real, original and universal" salsa is danced on 2 and with a specific style.

The divide is brilliantly shown to be a matter of "social scenes and arenas" and what kind of identity you want to display. As a social scientist - the book is both for social science, organizational studies and HRM very very important, because it in my view is one of the best empirically based approaches to studying the body and its significance in our social and work life, that most social scientists and organizational studies scholars are trying to conceptualize. Cindy Garcia is in a very positive sense a true scholar in this work as she does not overgeneralize her findings and studies, but she for sure opens this general field of study for a very broad field of social and organizational studies. Researching and living in a culture where "the body posture" is a key factor in determining people's personality, ability to lead and manage in the workplace is the biggest inspiration for opening up the study of embodied people living in the real physical world, with real jobs and sorrows. Finally, the book is for an academic work very easy to read - and you can't really stop when you have started anyway.

a good study of so-called "LA salsa", really a corruption of the old Cuban guaracha and a rather sad commentary about a people made to feel ashamed of their own heritage. Mexican culture is vibrant and full of life; its music, dance, food, etc. but to a lot of Mexican-Americans in the cultural wasteland called LA, being Mexican is something to be ashamed of. Truly sad. And having to try and adopt a foreign music and dance form and not to embrace their own heritage is an attempt to escape what they REALLY are: Mexican, and a Mexican can never become a Cuban.

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