

Open Business Models (Latin America) - Phase II
Argentina Cumbia Villera Research
Final Report

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I. Synthesis

There are some relevant facts about the Cumbia Villera cultural, social, and economic phenomenon:

- Cumbia Villera has been historically, from its onset, a part of a wider musical and economical phenomenon known as “Movida Tropical” that encompasses most of tropical music genres popular in Argentina. The “Movida” is undergoing a difficult economical phase, which is reducing the size of the market visibly.
- Cumbia and Cuarteto are the main genres part of Movida Tropical, but they have different influential geographic areas in the country: while Cuarteto leads the Movida in Córdoba, a state located in the center of the country where it was originated; Cumbia with its different sub-genres and styles, does it in the Greater Buenos Aires area and northern and southern parts of the country.
- Cumbia Villera represents 25/30% of Movida Tropical Market.
- Cumbia Villera was born within the Movida Tropical, and besides its novelty value regarding topics reflected in its lyrics, which explains its popularity, introduced changes in the way that business were done: less involved musical and on-stage productions, hiring of non-professional musicians, and an increasing trend among artists to produce their shows and records themselves. It is one of the more dynamic genres in the Movida tropical world.
- Movida Tropical in general and Cumbia Villera in particular, have two sources of revenue: the main one is the live shows held at the “bailes” (specialized dance clubs) which holds between the 85% and the 95% of the regular business, and the recording industry.
- Groups consider shows as their principal source of income, and regard records – both CDs and single songs – as diffusion means, and not as an activity itself.
- Bailes (specialized dance clubs) are the key player in this business, especially for Cumbia Villera. The bailes’s resident DJs, and “programadores” in charge of the shows offer at the bailes, are the actors that dynamize the scene.

- Economic relationships feature a main role in this industry, with a high level of visibility, particularly labor relationships: artists are hired as employees in most cases.
- Movida Tropical is definitely a volume business, which implies: recycling and reuse of ideas and musical motives, large quantities of live shows in short time periods among other features. In this sense, Cumbia Villera presents itself as a particularly cheap product in terms of: costumes, equipment, less professionalized performers.
- Author rights (copyright) are a relevant feature in this business, and have three types of royalties involved. Authors rely on author rights royalties coming from live shows as a regular source of income, and they are not willing to resign them.
- Industry coexists with informal recording, distribution and sales of recorded music, and while it constitutes a predicament for the formal and traditional recording industry; it is naturalized among Cumbia Villera artists.
- Some features proper of open business formats are being applied ipso facto: in-home recording studios producing discs that go directly to the informal markets without intervention of the traditional industry, exchange of music among consumers, between musicians and consumers.
- Movida Tropical in general and Cumbia Villera in particular are clearly a popular class phenomenon. This is a significant feature and expresses wider social relationships, including family networks actively participating in groups businesses.
- Poor attention to the genre paid by entities and the State, despite the fact that it represents a large and dynamic market. Most institutions (CAPIF/SADAIC/AADI)¹ label and account the genre under an umbrella as undefined as “popular music” or “local music”.
- Access to technology allows dissemination of artwork and facilitates creation of new independent actors, mainly DJ’s, and composers.
- Cumbia Villera opened an external market for Argentinean Cumbia products.

¹ CAPIF: Cámara Argentina de Productores de Fonogramas y Videogramas – producers chamber
SADAIC: Sociedad Argentina de Autores y Compositores – authors chamber
AADI: Asociación Argentina de Intérpretes – performers chamber

II. Research Problem and General Objectives

The main purpose of this research project is to understand and appraise the underlying economics of the Argentinean musical phenomenon known as Cumbia Villera. This project is inscribed in the Open Business Project – Phase II conducted over several Latin-American countries by Fundação Getulio Vargas.

The research general objectives are:

- To describe formal and informal economic relationships established by the Cumbia Villera phenomenon, identifying and characterizing the circulation processes involved.
- To identify and profile significant economic actors, assessing their relative importance, impact, and ability to generate, and modify economic relationships.
- To estimate the economic value of the significant stages and processes described.
- To inquire about the feasibility of generating and developing formal formats of economic participation among key economic agents without current formal involvement. To understand the appreciation that these agents make of the different instances of the formalization, and evaluate the permeability to the concept.
- To evaluate the openness and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in its business models, either to provide open access or to divulge the Cumbia Villera works.

III. General Research design and methodology applied

According to the complexity of this research object and purpose, we have designed a methodological approach to approximate the Cumbia Villera micro-world comprehensively, describing in the first place the fundamentals of the network of economic relations, and identifying key actors, to move on successively to understanding and appraising significant exchanges in the process.

We have conducted two research phases:

Phase A: Economic frame information gathering and analysis

In this phase two different methodologies have been applied:

1. Desk-research: academic papers and secondary information sources gathering.
2. Key informants interviews

1. Desk-research: we have gathered secondary information available leading to build up an appropriate interpretative and economical estimation frame for the entire project.

Three different sources were examined:

a. Secondary information sources consulted

Institution	Information available	Result
SADAIC - Sociedad Argentina de Autores y Compositores. (Argentinean Society of Authors and Composers)	Quantity of songs registered by author. General classification that encompasses tropical genres, including Cumbia and Cumbia Villera under the umbrella of “popular music”.	Unorganized information difficult to handle. Understanding of general frame for author rights management.
CAPIF Cámara Argentina de Productores de Fonogramas y Videogramas.(1)	Quantity of records, market share (units and revenue), pricing, piracy estimations.	Information obtained and analyzed. Understanding of recorded music management general frame.
AADI/ CAPIF- Intérpretes y Productores Fonográficos. (Phonographic Performers and Producers Association)	No relevant information registered.	Not a useful source in terms of secondary data.

Institution	Information available	Result
SADEM - Sindicato Argentino de Músicos. (Argentinean Musicians Union)	No relevant information registered.	Not a useful source in terms of secondary data.
Censo Nacional Económico – INDEC. (National Economic Census by the National Institute of Statistics and Census)	Figures of productive units related to publishing industries (including prints and music records)	Last wave was conducted in 2005, but results remain uninformed. We have obtained a preliminary report informing an unopened category of publishing industries. General Information, not specific.
Cámara Argentina de Comercio (Argentinean Commerce Chamber)	No relevant information registered	Not a useful source in terms of secondary data.
Sistema Nacional de Consumos Culturales (National System of Cultural Consumptions) by Secretaría de Medios de la Nación – Presidencia de la Nación (National Media Office/Presidency)	They have conducted a 2974 cases poll sampling main cities in the country on 2004 gathering a wide scope of cultural consumptions among population including music. Information published encompasses Cumbia Villera under the item: tropical/cumbia.	Figures obtained to the level of general consumption of tropical music, consumers general profile, and media consumption related. Findings of this survey confirm trends and profiles found in this research fieldwork.
Observatorio de Industrias Creativas – Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires (Creative Industries Observatory – Buenos Aires Government)	General musical industry information	General information. Not specific.
Informe de Diagnóstico del Laboratorio de Industrias Culturales de la Secretaría de Cultura de la Nación. 2006 (Report on cultural industries by National Culture Office)	Cultural industries information	This report proved very useful, because they list whether information is available or not. Not available information: Complete listing of music publishers, distribution companies, and points of sales, industry labor statistics, import and export figures, quantity of production; genre classification.

b. Industry-related and general public contents. Revision of on-line resources, related specialized publications: magazines, musicians, clubs, TV shows websites, and forums; radio and TV shows; mobile-phones contents, and other available contents.

Source	Type of source	Information available	Result
Música de mi tierra www.musicademitierra.com.ar	Magazine Magazine on-line	Updated names of relevant economic actors (artists, producers, music companies)	Preliminary lists of potential interviewees
La Radio Tropical www.laradiotropical.com.ar	Website Movida Tropical contents	Names of relevant economic actors	Preliminary lists of potential interviewees
www.losdeltablon.com	Website Movida Tropical contents	Names of relevant economic actors	Preliminary lists of potential interviewees
www.muevamueva.com	Website Movida Tropical contents	Updated names and information about relevant facts of the industry and key economic actors	Preliminary list of potential interviewees. General information
www.nitromovil.com	Website Movida Tropical mobile contents	Digital merchandising and songs downloads	List of mobile goods and products commercialized. Lists of names of key economic actors
Pasión de sábado	Live TV Show	Fieldwork team went to the show to get a first description of contents, groups and bands performing, sponsors, and audience.	Updated names Sponsors Audience description
www.ciudadtropical.com.ar	Movida Tropical contents	Updated names and information about relevant facts of the industry and key economic actors	Preliminary list of potential interviewees. General information
www.cumbiamovil.com	Cumbia music and fans material share website	Up to date music sharing	Current trends about internet sharing and Cumbia on-line communities.

Source	Type of source	Information available	Result
Fantástico bailable www.fantasticodeonce.com	Club/shows venue website	Fieldwork team visited the premises and made first observations	Updated names Audience description
Teatro Colonial de Lanús	Shows venue	Fieldwork team went to a Damas Gratis (main Cumbia Villera group) show and made first observations	Audience description General description of activities involved
Clayton, Jace. SLOW BURN Buenos Aires to the Bay, 2008 is experiencing the explosion of cumbia - a bomb with a century-long fuse. Article. The Fader. July 30 th 2009. http://www.thefader.com/features/2008/7/30/fader-55-cumbia-feature	Article International Magazine	Review of article.	International critical views about Cumbia Villera developments and trends.
Articles related to Cumbia Villera and Movida Tropical published by magazines and newspapers, and digital interviews available in YouTube.com. Newspapers: Clarín, Página 12, Crítica. Magazines: Música de mi tierra	Newspapers Magazines Websites	Review of articles.	General overview of the state of the art. Understanding of underlying economic working relationships.
Álvaro Á. Ricciardelli. Downloads aren't so bad for musical industry (Las descargas no son tan malas para la industria musical). Article. El País. April 21 st 2009. http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internet/descargas/malas/industria/musical/elpepuntec/20090421elpepuntec_2/Tes	Newspapers Magazines Websites	Review of articles.	On line music consumption trends.

c. Academic research papers on Cumbia Villera published by Social Sciences journals, university bulletins and other scientific publishing networks.

Works consulted	Learnings
Justo von Lurzer, Carolina, Carolina Spataro & Mauro Vazquez. (2008) ¿Qué ves cuando me ves? Imágenes de mujeres y modos de ver hegemónicos. Revista Question. UNLP. www.perio.unlp.edu.ar/question/nivel2/articulos/ensayos/justovonlurzeryotros_1_ensayos_18otono2008.htm	Representations of women bodies in cultural industries, including Cumbia Villera
Alabarces, Pablo (2006) Fútbol, violencia y política en la Argentina: ética, estética y retórica del aguante. Esporte e Sociedade, número 2, Mar2006/Jun2006 www.lazer.eefd.ufrj.br/espsoc	Representations of football fans. Relation with Cumbia Villera lyrics.
Miceli, Jorge E. (2005) Análisis Lingüístico de los procesos identitarios: el caso de la argentina. Revista de los Alumnos de Maestría en Análisis del Discurso – ISSN 1669-886X FFy FFL – UBA – Nº 1 – Diciembre 2005 www.lsdrevista.net	Discursive representations of lyrics
Cragolini, Alejandra (2006) Articulaciones entre violencia social, significante sonoro y subjetividad: la cumbia “villera” en Buenos Aires. Revista Transcultural de Música. Transcultural Music Review. 10 ISSN:1697-0101	The author contextualizes the musical phenomenon in an economic context.
Pérez, Diego Martín (2004) La cumbia en Argentina: su estado actual. Publicado el 01/11/04 en: Revista: Huellas : búsquedas en artes y diseño Número: Nº 4	Author explores characteristics and interests of some key economic actors.
Barría, María Soledad (2005) Cumbia villera ¿el ruido de los olvidados? Papeles de Nombre Falso, Verano 2004/2005. www.nombrefalso.com.ar	Author explores audiences as consumers and identification processes involved.
Vila, Pablo & Pablo Seman (2007) Cumbia villera: una narrativa de mujeres activadas. Colección Monografías, Nº 44. Caracas: Programa Cultura, Comunicación y Transformaciones Sociales, CIPOST, FaCES, Universidad Central de Venezuela. 73 págs. Disponible en: www.globalcult.org.ve/monografias.htm	Authors offer an interpretation about representations of women in Cumbia Villera lyrics and reception by audiences.
Barragán Sandi, Fernando (2004) La Cumbia Villera, testimonio del joven urbano marginal. (Censura y premiación). Anais do V Congresso Latinoamericano da Associação Internacional para o Estudo da Música Popular. www.hist.puc.cl/historia/iaspmla.html	Author offers a description of the evolution of Cumbia Villera
Lobril, Gabriela & Ormaechea, Maria Fernanda (2002) Del Tango a la Cumbia Villera. La Historia en Círculo. Congreso RedCom Cordoba 2002. www.redcom.org.ar/ponencias2002/mesa7/07	Authors explore Cumbia Villera as a testimony of Argentinean social situation.
De Lucia, Daniel Omar (2006) Culturas villeras. Una aproximación a la mirada de la villa miseria en la literatura argentina. www.jornadajvg2006.com.ar/content/2/ponenciadelucia.pdf	Author explores representation of villa and villeros in cultural artifacts including Cumbia Villera.
De Gori, Esteban (2005) Notas sociológicas sobre la Cumbia Villera. Lectura del drama social urbano. Convergencia, mayo-agosto, año/vol.12, número 038.Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México. Toluca, México. Pp 353-372.	Author analyses Cumbia Villera as a cultural phenomenon related to the social and economic transformations occurred during the 90's.
Míguez, D. & Semán, P. (editores) (2006) Entre santos, cumbias y piquetes. Las culturas populares en la Argentina reciente. Capítulo 1. Daniel Míguez. Estilos musicales y estamentos sociales. Cumbia, villa y transgresión en la periferia de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, Biblos, 230 páginas.	Author explores cultural phenomenon and relates it to the social structure.

Works consulted	Learnings
Miceli, Jorge Eduardo (2005) “La Cumbia Villera argentina: hacia un análisis discursivo de los procesos de construcción identitaria”. Tesis de maestría en Análisis del Discurso. http://carlosreynoso.com.ar/archivos/jmiceli_la-cumbia-villera-2005.pdf	Extensive work about the cultural phenomenon and identity.
Spataro, Carolina (2007) “La Cumbia Villera se zarpa”. Estigma, rechazo y negociación en torno a un consumo musical. VI Biental Iberoamericana de Comunicación, Córdoba, septiembre 2007	Author explores gender representations of Cumbia Villera.
Martín, Eloísa (2008) La Cumbia Villera y el fin de la cultura del trabajo en la Argentina de los 90. www.sibetrans.com/trans/trans12/art05.htm	Author explores representation of youth, work, and social exclusion in Cumbia Villera lyrics.
Muniz, María Gabriela. Villas de emergencia: lugares generadores de utopías urbanas. www.lehman.cuny.edu/ciberletras/v20/muniz.html	Author explores cultural and social expressions of social crisis, villas miseria, including Cumbia Villera
COMFER (2001) Pautas de evaluación para los contenidos de Cumbia Villera. COMFER – Evaluación de Emisiones – Julio de 2001. Publicaciones Digitales - COMFER	Public regulations on Cumbia Villera contents
Autores varios (2006) La Cumbia Villera en Argentina. Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios del Discurso VOLUMEN 6 NÚMERO 2 2006 NÚMERO MONOGRÁFICO.	Authors explore mainly cultural and discursive phenomenon of Cumbia Villera.

Desk-working dates: From March 8th to April 20th

2. Key-Informants Interviews: conducted interviews with personalities deeply involved in the music industry business that would be able to provide insider knowledge about the topic.

Key-Informant	Results/Learnings
Specialized Journalist. Radio show “Cumbia de la pura,” broadcasted by FM La Tribu. Contributes about cumbia for several newspapers and magazines.	General overview about state of the art of cumbia as a cultural and economic phenomenon. Insider information about key economic actors. Contributed to get access to several key figures.
Director of Instituto de Derechos de Autor, part of SADAIC	Understanding about how SADAIC tabulates musical genres: Cumbia Villera is considered along with tropical music under the item “popular music”, which includes: tropical, merengue, cuarteto, románticos, gaita and some other Latin genres. They would not open the item because it would reveal authors’ individual revenue and that information are considered classified/private.

Key-Informant	Results/Learnings
Artistic producer of Parulo Producciones, cumbia specialized publisher, and creator of Música de mi tierra, specialized magazine.	General overview about state of the art of cumbia as a cultural and economic phenomenon. General evaluation about current state and development of Cumbia Villera. Insider information about key economic actors.
Informal interview to be resumed in phase B, with owner of DBN Distribuidora Belgrano Norte, distribution company specialized in popular music (including tropical and Cumbia Villera)	General overview about data availability, and informal estimations about piracy. Contributes to get access to several key figures.

Fieldwork dates: From March 20th to April 6th

Phase B: Cumbia Villera economics. Exchange circuits and key economic agents profiling, and formalization formats feasibility in Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area

Two methodological tools have been applied:

1. Ethnographic field interventions

Fieldworking structure:

- Key representatives of Cumbia Villera consumers were identified, and invited to participate in the project allowing the researchers to enter the field together with them as facilitators and informers about usages, customs, behaviors, as well as to enhance our fieldwork decoding capability. A monetary reward was arranged.
- Proceeded to enter the fieldwork during 70 days period to observe and understand the different moments, situations, and places involved. After identification of Cumbia Villera live shows in “bailes” (specialized dance clubs) as the most dynamic part of the economics of the genre, several shows were witnessed and informal interviews with artists, DJs and members of the audience were conducted.

Field venues visited during fieldworking:

- Tropical music clubs where Cumbia Villera is performed: Tropitango (Tigre), Rescate (San Martín), Fantástico (Buenos Aires City). All located in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires.
- Visitations to entrance queues and audience stalls to Tropical Music TV show – Pasión de Sábado – where Cumbia Villera groups make presentations.
- Shows in theatres: Teatro Colonial (Avellaneda) and Teatro Español (Lomas de Zamora) both located in Greater Buenos Aires Area.
- Major Informal market fair where Cumbia Villera music and related goods are traded (La Salada).
- Visitation and interviews in trains connecting Buenos Aires city with Gran Buenos Aires area where commercial informal exchanges are being held.

Researchers dedicated: the fieldwork research has been conducted by experienced researchers trained in anthropology and familiar with ethnographic tools and techniques, and informed about other experiences of ethnographic methodologies applied to the understanding and appraisal of economic relationships.

Fieldwork dates: from April 10th to June 19th

2. In-depth interviews to key economic agents

27 in-depth interviews (average length 120 minutes) were conducted to cover and approach the different key economic actors with some degree of participation in the Cumbia Villera business. Most of them were digitally recorded with the authorization of the interviewees.

As we expected, we have found several levels of involvement in the business among them. We have also expected that two or more of the proposed occupations to be interviewed would be found in a single person. This hypothesis proved correct. Most of them fill several roles or have filled them in the past.

Most interviews were conducted in the venues: bailes, radio stations, Record Companies and agents offices. Some other meeting occurred in bars and coffee shops or homes according to the interviewees' convenience.

These 27 in-depth interviews have covered 17 different roles in the business:

In-Depth Interviews distribution	
Roles/Actors	n
Record Company	4
Digital Music Manager - Record Company	1
DJ residents (Bailes)	4
DJ Informal market	3
Baile Radio Station Musical Director	4
Baile Programador/Manager/Owner	3
Executive Producer	10
Musical Producer	9
Group Owner	10
Author	7
Agent	6
Music employee	2
Sound System and Equipment	1
Difusor	1
Web owner/designer	1
Specialized Magazine	1
Radio Show host	1

These interviews were complemented with 11 shorter interviews conducted in the field by both the ethnographic fieldworking team, and the in-depth interviews researchers:

Informal Interviews	
Roles/Actors	n
Radio Shows Hosts	2
Baile owner	1
Agent	1
Informal market vendors	5
Baile Radio Station Musical Director	1
DJ and web administrator	1

Fieldwork dates: from April 10th to June 19th

Note about currencies: all figures are expressed in Argentinean Pesos (AR\$) and translated to USD to a given exchange rate of USD 1 = AR\$ 3.45

IV. Argentinean Musical Consumptions and CDs sales: General Frame Information

CAPIF - Cámara Argentina de Productores de Fonogramas y Videogramas (Argentinean Chamber of Phonograms and Videograms Producers) classifies information in 5 repertory categories: Local, Spanish, English and others, Compilations, and Classic. Movida Tropical music, when it is considered, is classified under “Local” repertory which also includes genres as Argentinean Rock and Roll, Folclore (traditional Folk genre), romantic, and tango. “Local” repertory and total country sales information of the last six years is as follows:

“Local “ repertory sales 2003/2008					
Local	Units	Average price per unit		Total value	
Exchange Rate 1 USD = AR\$ 3.45		AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD
2003	4,707,217	\$ 14.63	\$4.24	\$ 68,883,465.18	\$19,966,221.79
2004	5,935,812	\$ 15.91	\$4.61	\$ 94,442,604.18	\$27,374,667.88
2005	7,221,678	\$ 15.69	\$4.55	\$ 113,343,701.26	\$32,853,246.74
2006	7,843,028	\$ 16.77	\$4.86	\$ 131,532,606.10	\$38,125,393.07
2007	7,724,322	\$ 17.56	\$5.09	\$ 135,667,793.88	\$39,323,998.23
2008	6,800,148	\$ 19.52	\$5.66	\$ 132,737,221.76	\$38,474,557.03

Total sales 2003/2008					
Total	Units	Average price per unit		Total value	
Exchange Rate 1 USD = AR\$ 3.45		AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD
2003	10,834,934	\$ 16.11	\$4.67	\$ 174,519,258.03	\$50,585,292.18
2004	13,056,714	\$ 18.23	\$5.28	\$ 238,078,379.56	\$69,008,225.96
2005	15,695,794	\$ 19.46	\$5.64	\$ 305,496,448.19	\$88,549,695.13
2006	16,423,540	\$ 20.49	\$5.94	\$ 336,593,863.81	\$97,563,438.79
2007	17,256,699	\$ 20.74	\$6.01	\$ 357,836,050.82	\$103,720,594.44
2008	15,186,401	\$ 22.82	\$6.61	\$ 346,595,347.19	\$100,462,419.48

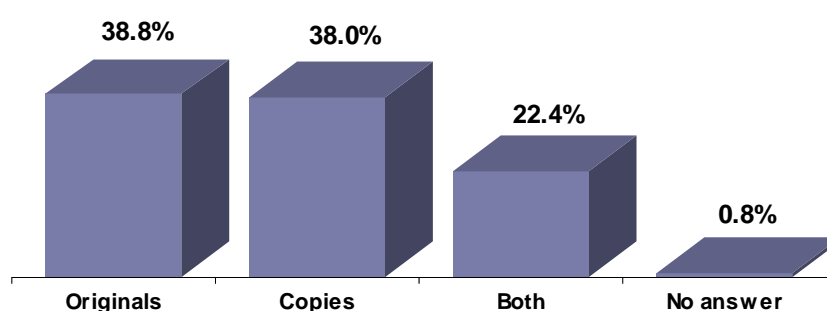
As it can be observed both total and local music original CD sales are experiencing a fall between 2007 and 2008, after an steady increasing from 2003 to 2007. This increasing tendency in the years prior to 2007 is probably due to the recovery of the whole economy after 2001-2002 crisis. Local music’s accumulated fall from 2006 to 2008 is almost twice as high that the fall of the whole industry: -13.5% vs. - 6.9%.

There is no information available about incidence of Movida Tropical in these data.

It is important to consider that major Movida Tropical Record Companies are not members of CAPIF, therefore they don’t report their sales to this institution.

Sistema Nacional de Consumos Culturales (National System of Cultural Consumptions) is a national reach study that has been conducted twice by Mass Media Secretary of the Presidency of the country². Information about CDs purchase was asked about among the issues gathered by this total country 2974 cases sample of the 2005 wave.

As it is showed in the graphic below purchasing of copies equals that of originals': 6 out of 10 Argentineans regularly purchase copied CD and 6 purchase originals, with an overlapping of 2 persons out of 10:



Purchase of copies is significantly higher among lower socioeconomic levels, increases as younger are buyers, and among women:

CDs purchases	Sex		Socioeconomic level/class			Age				Region					
	Male	Female	Top middle class	Middle class	Lower class	12-17	18-34	35-49	+ 50	AMBA	PAMP.	NOA	CUYO	NEA	PAT.
Originals	41.0%	36.3%	59.5%	41.2%	31.1%	27.9%	34.4%	47.1%	55.1%	43.6%	37.3%	29.1%	45.8%	41.4%	43.3%
Copies	32.7%	44.0%	18.3%	34.1%	46.3%	50.0%	40.3%	30.0%	25.5%	34.2%	40.2%	44.3%	39.8%	34.7%	28.7%
Both	25.7%	18.7%	22.2%	24.0%	21.5%	21.6%	24.6%	22.9%	16.3%	21.1%	21.6%	25.9%	14.4%	23.9%	27.2%
No answer	0.6%	1.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.1%	0.5%	0.7%	0.0%	3.1%	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%

Region references:

AMBA: City of Buenos Aires and Greater Buenos Aires Area

PAMPEAN REGION: center region of the country

NOA: Argentinean north west

NEA: Argentinean north east

² Secretaría de Medios de Comunicación de la Jefatura de Gabinete de Ministros de la Presidencia de la Nación. See Page 7 for reference.

Cuyo: Eastern region (Mendoza, San Juan and San Luis provinces)

Patagonia: southern region of the country

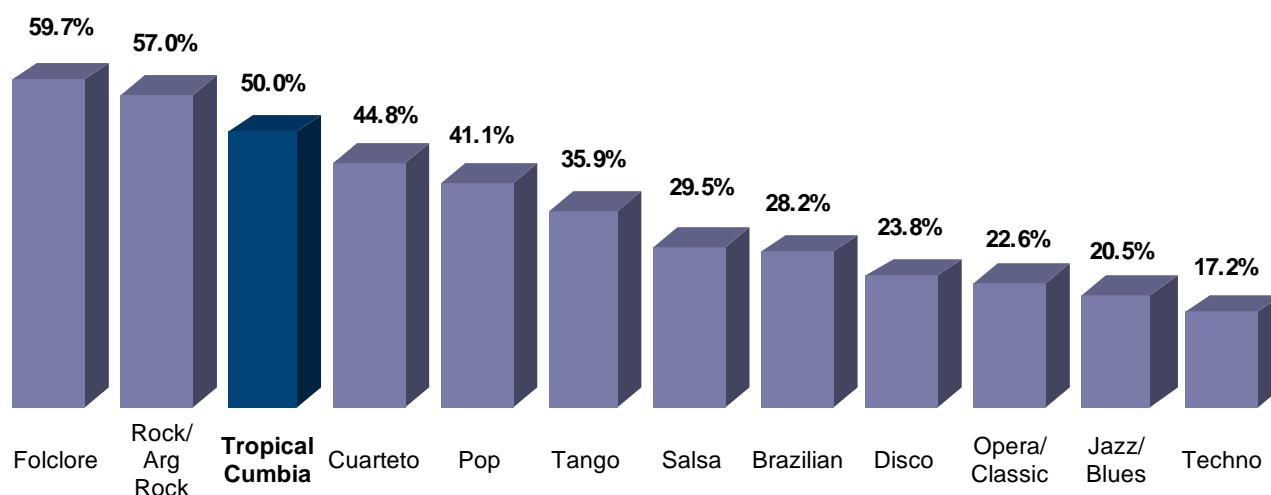
In 2005, people declared to buy about 4/5 CDs including both copies and originals in three months previous to the survey. That would imply a average CD purchase between 12/20 per year.

Today in 2009, four years later, this trend can be expected to have changed: probably people is still purchasing as many copied CDs as originals or even more, but availability of mobile technology and a wide spread internet access in urban areas (mainly through LAN houses) enourmously facilitate music downloads and exchange, provided that internet downloads and bluetooth exchanges don't feel illegal, fakes, as copied CDs can do.

When Argentineans' musical consumption are considered, as National System of Cultural Consumptions gathered, most people declare that they regularly listen to music: 93.6%. Young people tends to have higher answering rates (97% for the 12 to 17 bracket vs. 90% for 50 and more) but figures are consistently high across age, sex, socioeconomic level and coutry's regions. But when asked about through what mean and where they listen music, some trends start to show that can help to situate Movida Tropical scenario. Despite the fact that some middle classes segments can enjoy and consume Movida Tropical and its main genres, Cumbia and Cuarteto, these are mainly lower classes genres. The following chart shows that incidence of CDs as medium through which listen to music is dramatically lower for lower classes than for top middle and middle classes:

Medium	Sex		Socioeconomic level/class			Age				Region					
	Male	Female	Top middle class	Middle class	Lower class	12-17	18-34	35-49	+ 50	AMBA	PAMP.	NOA	CUYO	NEA	PAT.
RADIO	85.8%	89.9%	81.0%	82.4%	90.9%	80.8%	87.1%	89.0%	92.1%	83.6%	87.8%	88.6%	87.1%	92.0%	90.2%
CD	56.5%	57.9%	80.7%	75.0%	47.0%	71.2%	69.4%	57.4%	34.9%	62.4%	57.8%	55.3%	49.9%	61.9%	55.5%
TV	24.6%	28.9%	28.4%	28.2%	25.9%	34.6%	28.0%	22.7%	24.0%	21.5%	22.8%	30.4%	24.3%	39.3%	30.6%
Cassettes	20.8%	21.3%	18.0%	20.3%	21.8%	21.4%	19.2%	23.1%	21.3%	17.8%	22.6%	19.6%	17.7%	23.9%	25.1%
Dance clubs	7.2%	7.7%	11.0%	10.6%	5.7%	12.6%	13.6%	2.6%	1.2%	4.6%	7.4%	10.3%	5.8%	11.4%	5.5%

Regarding genre, half of the Argentinean population likes Tropical musical:



There are also several characteristics of Tropical and Cumbia genres regarding their audiences. Lower socioeconomic levels have a higher incidence of consumption of these genres: almost 20% more than among middle classes; their popularity increases significantly among younger people and conversely decreases as people get older; and they are twice as much popular in northern regions of the country than they are in the Buenos Aires Area, and almost 20% more in the rest of the areas than in Buenos Aires as well. We'll see later on this report, that shows in other Argentinean cities other than Buenos Aires have an important role in the business.

	Sex		Socioeconomic level			Age				REGION					
	MASC.	FEM.	ABC1	C2	DE	12-17	18-34	35-49	+ 50	AMBA	PAMP.	NOA	CUYO	NEA	PATAG.
FOLCLORE	62.9%	56.5%	54.9%	53.6%	62.7%	29.8%	52.1%	68.9%	78.9%	42.3%	58.2%	75.1%	57.2%	69.1%	57.4%
ROCK/ARG ROCK	59.5%	54.6%	73.8%	67.5%	50.5%	71.9%	73.0%	56.8%	30.2%	61.0%	54.5%	56.4%	53.4%	59.2%	61.1%
TROPICAL/CUMBIA	49.0%	51.1%	34.3%	38.6%	56.7%	64.5%	51.2%	47.1%	42.4%	32.3%	47.2%	63.7%	47.5%	65.4%	49.9%
CUARTETO	44.3%	45.3%	24.9%	35.4%	51.4%	51.9%	50.2%	42.2%	36.4%	27.2%	45.2%	59.1%	46.9%	47.4%	40.5%
POP	37.1%	45.2%	58.6%	53.4%	33.8%	59.3%	54.1%	37.2%	18.6%	47.0%	38.9%	44.1%	36.6%	41.3%	38.7%
TANGO	38.1%	33.7%	37.2%	32.5%	37.0%	11.3%	22.2%	37.2%	65.3%	38.3%	36.0%	35.4%	34.6%	38.4%	32.9%

V. Cumbia Villera: history, genre scope and evolution, current trends

Cumbia Villera is currently – as it has been from its beginnings – part of a wider musical and economical phenomenon known as “Movida Tropical”, in which inscribes itself. Movida Tropical encompasses two major genres: Cuarteto and cumbia. Cumbia Villera is a subsidiary genre of cumbia with its own particularities and features.

The origins of Cumbia Villera trace back to the late 90's and early 2000's. Most academics consider Cumbia Villera as a “cultural manifestation of the marginal and impoverished sectors of the Buenos Aires Great Metropolitan Area”³. The adjective “villera” remits to Villas Miseria. Villas Miseria was the euphemistic appellative given to very poor, marginal neighborhoods, shantytowns, located mainly in urban and suburban areas, and it can be traced to the 1930's years. It was euphemistic because “villas” were great mansions, manor houses of the upper class located in very expensive and exclusive areas, and the term was used to refer to extremely poor urban areas. Over the years the appellative shortened, and derived in “villas” to designate shantytowns, especially in the Greater Buenos Aires Area. Then, “villero” became the given name for people living in those neighborhoods. But it not only has a geographical meaning. “Villero” evolved to be a derogatory and discriminative term, which increased its violent meaning when it is preceded by the call “negro”⁴. “Negro villero” was for many years – and still is – an insulting appellative for most Argentines.

The onset of Cumbia Villera can be situated in the late 90's, when some artists, that have been working in the cumbia business, and were living in villas or in nearby neighborhoods located specifically in the northern area of Buenos Aires, began to write about hard living conditions (extreme poverty, marginality, delinquency as a regular fact of daily life, and a particularly crude way to refer to women) in their lyrics of cumbia songs.

Pablo Lescano, who by that time was a young cumbiero, is identified as the creator of Cumbia Villera. While playing keyboards in “Amar Azul”, a cumbia group which has already built up a solid name, Pablo started to write for “Flor de Piedra”⁵ bringing to its lyrics the hard life experiences of poor young people, without metaphors or euphemisms, plainly reflecting what was happening in the neighborhoods, what lower class youths were living through. Along with Daniel Lescano – who

³ “La Cumbia Villera es una manifestación cultural de los sectores marginales y empobrecidos de la provincia de Buenos Aires (más precisamente del cordón que bordea a la ciudad Capital de Buenos Aires, llamado ‘conurbano’)” in Pardo, María Laura and María Eugenia Massone (Eds.) Editorial. Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios del Discurso Volumen 6 Número 2 2006 Número monográfico. Venezuela, 1996. pp.3

⁴ “Negro” is not always related to race for most Argentines, although a dark skin color is undoubtedly part of it, it refers mainly to lower classes, and poor people, and has a pejorative meaning.

⁵ “Flor de Piedra” literally means “stone flower”. But it also merges a local idiom used to express that something is big, great, outstanding: “Flor de....!” with “piedra” a slang related to drugs, but at the same time an awkward and not easy to treat person.

was the singer and leader of “Flor de Piedra”, started the new style, the “villeros style”, which grew to be a genre in itself.

This represented an innovative change in the contents of cumbia and tropical music that up to that date had mainly romantic topics as well as some picaresque lyrics. The idea spread, and other groups like “Yerba Brava”, and “Guachín” adopted the same line, following the trend.

Cumbia Villera not only introduced new topics and an everyday language usage in its lyrics and even in the naming of groups, but a new way to perform a show and do business. In Pablo Lescano words: *“They told me that I was mad, that I couldn’t get on stage dressed like this, that the lyrics weren’t right, that I couldn’t scream against the police, but I made an underground record and I made a hit”*⁶. Traditionally, many Movida Tropical groups, including cumbia, featured elaborated costumes. During the years immediately before the beginnings of Cumbia Villera, the industry produced groups formed by long hair handsome guys casted because of their looks rather than their ability to play music. As in an answer to that, Cumbia Villera artists got on stage dressed like they did every day – sports clothes, sneakers –, allowing audiences to identify with performers, to see every artist as one of them, while defying the industry statu-quo. This remains being a major feature of Cumbia Villera groups and it is a component that newer and younger artists care about: *“In the video, we are all dressed like “negros”. That’s the way we dress”* (Cumbia Villera artist).

Cumbia Villera was not only innovative about its contents and dress code but it was also innovative in the relationship that artists established with their audiences, introducing a class identification component: artists direct appellations as “negros villeros” or “negros cumbieros” during shows, acknowledging the popular class condition of both artists and public and changing a stigmatized appellation into an empowering call.

The industry quickly adopted the new genre and started producing groups. “Cumbia Villera” was an industry introduced name that quickly spread out and was adopted by the Argentinean society in general (media, authorities, general public, academic community), and Cumbia Villera performers started to accept and use the name as well, although they referred to themselves as “cumbieros” or “negros cumbieros”.

In 2000, Pablo Lescano, created a new group, “Damas Gratis”, still regarded as the more representative expression of Cumbia Villera. Other groups like “Pibes Chorros”, emerged at the time, and the contents deepened in its topics, openly telling marginal stories, speaking about drugs, sex, and delinquency.

⁶ Pablo Lescano cited by Marta Dillon in “Lona, cartón y chapa”. Article. “Las 12”. Página 12. May 1st, 2001. <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/2001/suple/Las12/01-05/01-05-18/NOTA1.HTM>

Cumbia Villera also represented an economic innovation in terms of production costs for companies and producers. We can identify at least three characteristics⁷:

- i. Traditionally cumbia and tropical music depicted elaborated costumes. Cumbia Villera changed these to everyday clothes, decreasing considerably the production costs.
- ii. Digital technology use, especially ProTools, a digital audio workstation that allowed the substitution of musicians; and Nuendo, for editing and post-production software.
- iii. Hiring of young, everyday-guys as artists, paid less than professionals. Hiring of musicians by a wage paid on shows basis, is a usual practice in the Movida Tropical business. Cumbia Villera requires simpler musical skills to perform it, hence allowed introducing musicians who were not professionals or without formal music studies.

Cumbia Villera was considered the cheapest genre to produce at the time.

Eventually, lyrics were brought to the authorities' attention, and in 2001 the COMFER⁸ (broadcasting public bureau) issued a guideline to evaluate contents of Cumbia Villera⁹ and banned it from radio and TV shows. This forced groups to replace some contents while performing on TV, or not to appear at TV at all, and prevented radio stations to broadcast some Cumbia Villera songs, but kept the lyrics intact in live shows. Some groups had to drop their name, as in the case of "Flor de Piedra": *"we couldn't use "Flor de Piedra" and things got complicated"* (Daniel Lescano), or resign themselves to not appearing on TV like "Pala Ancha": *"doing crime apology, that is what COMFER accuses us of doing... COMFER forbade us from TV"* (Pedro, Pala Ancha leader).

Despite this prohibition, Cumbia Villera groups continued striving, performing in bailes, recording their work, and evolving as a genre.

Another important characteristic that Cumbia Villera groups as most Movida Tropical bands, had from the beginning is that they have an owner, which accentuates its industry like character. A group is considered and commercialized as a product, and the owner decides whom he hires as a musician, as a singer and the name of the group. Owners introduce changes according to need, and it is very common that a group changes its name due to changes in its formation or new contract opportunities.

⁷ "Historia de la Cumbia Villera". <http://www.muevamueva.com/mimusica/histo-cumbiaargentina.htm>

⁸ COMFER: Comité Federal de Radiodifusión.

⁹ COMFER. "Pautas de evaluación para los contenidos de la Cumbia Villera". July, 2001

Cumbia Villera also attracted new audiences to the Movida Tropical bailes (dance club). Young people especially men started to go massively to the clubs where Cumbia Villera groups performed. Bailes welcomed them, but soon discovered that they had less money available to expend in drinks and that show programming should avoid mixing Cumbia Villera groups with other genres and styles. Audiences simply don't agree. Cuarteto and traditional cumbia summon an older audience than Cumbia Villera, and they would not go to a Cumbia Villera show. Likewise, kids who like Cumbia Villera tend not to like these other genres and will not go either.

This fact, combined with the attitudes of some more experienced and professional cumbia and tropical groups against sharing scenarios with Cumbia Villera bands, arguing that they wouldn't play real music and willing to protect their audiences, helped to build a separate scene for Cumbia Villera, splitting Movida Tropical.

1. Cumbia Villera musical identity: lyrics and sound. Genre features

Cumbia Villera expresses a genre behavior. It acts as an institution, generates predictability, and demarcates a field of regular practices. These regularities allow to be "looked for" into the places of emission, namely songs, groups, themes in its lyrics. The predictability (features and behaviors) can be observed in both the instances of production (singular lyrics over a particular musical style) and reception (audiences that unmistakably identify groups and songs in particular as such).

Its features, formerly deviant and innovative, have been stabilized and it is this stabilization what allows identifying its products. It is the way in which a community classifies it among its cultural objects what allows this identification, not the decision or classifying will of single individuals.

Cumbia Villera inherits its musical rhetoric from cumbia, but adds a particular way of staging, where there seems not to be any limit or separation between artists and audiences.

Regarding its subjects, issues addressing what is marginal or punished burst into the lyrics. The above characteristics build, from the enunciative point of view, an issuer-receptor pact of complicity. Both poles of performance are leveled, in a symmetric way, understanding each other.

The main characteristic that distinguishes clearly Cumbia Villera from other cumbia sub-genres and styles is the content of its lyrics. There is no doubt among Movida Tropical actors that this is the feature that gives it its particularity and identity, and definitively what made it strong from the beginning: *"(it happened)... that kids started to identify with a lot of things (told by Cumbia Villera) and that is what made possible that something this strong could burst in 'la Movida' "* (Baile Manager)

Even though the contents evolved during the decade passed since its first appearance, introducing some romantic topics and softening the tone, the testimonial, hard-conditions urban life themes

and topics that characterize it remain present. Cumbia Villera group's records blend these topics with more picaresque and fun lyrics, adding variety to their work, and adjusting to the times.

Cumbia Villera lyrics can be defined as “testimoniales”, “tumberas” (slang word referring to the life in prison), “callejeras” (from the streets). These designations also work as names for styles alternative to Cumbia Villera.

Cumbia Villera groups include in their formation an “animador” (entertainer), a performer that encourages audience to sing along, to dance, and to participate. Although this is not an exclusive feature – most bailes have their own resident animador – his presence lends rhythm to the performance and keeps audience attention into the show.

It is necessary to make it clear that in the tropical movement, both performers and audiences agree that it is lyrics what differentiates it from other cumbia expressions. It is clear that Cumbia Villera stands out due to its subject matters and wording, but its identity does not appear so clear when trying to define it by the sound of a band.

Typical cumbia band formations have a rhythmic base, played by a bass guitar and percussion that can be more or less extensive according to the occasion, electronic drums, kettledrums and a güiro¹⁰. Formation is completed by a guitar that also has a rhythmical function and keyboards playing a leading role. In regards to keyboards, there are generally more than one, even three or four, and they play different roles. One of them is the solo keyboard, playing the melodies of songs. Another keyboard accompanies the development of the song, and a third one plays the Brass Section. These functions may be distributed among keyboard players or it may be only one musician at different moments during the song.

The sound of Cumbia Villera has incorporated different influences since it was created - from cumbia, rock and roll, reggaeton and electronic music lately, using computers and prerecorded rhythmic bases. Each band has achieved its own mix which shows its musical character and has mutated over time. However, there is an agreement about some basic points and we will refer to those now.

A point of agreement is the predominant influence of Colombian cumbia over other popular cumbias in Argentina. By simplifying the cumbia scene in Buenos Aires to the appearance of Cumbia Villera, we can talk about three different elements that have marked the sound of cumbia

¹⁰ Güiro: Small percussion instrument used in Latin music

bands. One of them is “cumbia santafesina”¹¹. In this cumbia the guitar plays an important role and the style is well known by their skillful guitar players. Another one is the “cumbia norteña”, distinguished by the importance of brasses and certain rhythmic moments resembling huayno, a popular Andean rhythm of Pre-Columbian roots. The third one is the Colombian cumbia which arrived to Argentina with Cuarteto Imperial in the mid 60’s. As from that moment, Colombian cumbia has had great influence over Argentinean cumbia. The role of the accordion is an element that distinguishes it clearly.

Cumbia villera adopts the accordion sound and turns it into one of its main characteristics. The accordion is played by electronic keyboards in a particular way, with slow melodies and a richer sound, intensified by using the pitch knob on the keyboard, which allows the extension of notes and gives a kind of mesmerizing effect at the beginning of each song. This is a distinctive characteristic of Pablo Lescano’s sound and it is also used by Pibes Chorros, A Geder or Yerba Brava.

Behind the keyboard’s leading role, the band plays rhythms that are not cumbia only. The guitar’s rhythms have definite cumbia characteristics, but also reggae’s and ska’s – a sequence of simple chords and syncopated rhythms. The guitar is a background sound and never steps to the front. It does not play melodies or solos. The percussion stays around cumbia, reggae and ska rhythmic patterns, but with a certain more popular and stray sound. In the words of Daniel Lescano: *“For the song to be Cumbia Villera, it needs to sound like tins. The outside part of the kettledrums needs to be heard as out of tune, as they are heard at a soccer match”*.

When playing live, a Cumbia Villera band recreates the spirit Lescano describes, characterized by percussion and keyboards standing out. Out of tune chords are heard, and they are somehow part of its stray identity. Lyrics are difficult to understand because the sound does not favor the singer. However, this does not seem to affect the ability of the audience to sing along, since lyrics are well known and sang during the whole show while dancing to a rhythm they never lose.

Whenever there is a live show, what seems to be important for both musicians and audiences is that the band be a means for a party celebrating not only the taste for the same musical style, but the emotion and identification aroused by the subject matters Cumbia Villera puts into music.

¹¹ Cumbia santafesina was created by a great guitar player, Juan Carlos Denis, founder of one of the first bands of cumbia santafesina, Los del Bohio. Today, a reference band of this style, La Nueva Luna, features one of the best guitar players of the tropical scene, El Mago (the magician) who gained his nickname due to his skills on the guitar.

2. Cumbia Villera groups today: current trends

Cumbia Villera reached its peak of popularity under that original form in 2001-2003, and started to evolve following the rules of the wider tropical music business.

Over the years, Cumbia Villera artists evolved toward two other main topics different from the original subjects:

- i. First, incorporating alcohol and drugs abuse as part to the everyday life of youths.
- ii. Later on, they resumed the typical topics of cumbia, mainly romantic love.

There are different opinions about the current state of Cumbia Villera among Movida Tropical. The evolution of the genre gave place to changes in its topics, deepening the use of a coarse language, and abandoning the social contents to replace them with less involved lyrics, no longer showing what happens in the streets, but just the way youths talk among themselves. That supports some opinions that consider that Cumbia Villera cannot be found outside the classics of the genre that are still in business, like Damas Gratis, because of a loss of identity and lessened quality of the lyrics: *“Cumbia Villera... or Pablo Lescano’s cumbia has subtlety, the lyrics are subtle. Not that rough, not that cheap... that coarse, that gross... There are groups that have awful lyrics.”* (Baile Manager)

Some others, especially young musicians who are in their beginnings claim that they sing about what’s happening today, that their present is their subject.

There are other lines of evolution of the Cumbia Villera original style: some songs are being more diverse in terms of musical styles, fusing hip hop, reggae, reggaeton, ska, rap, rock and pop. Pablo Lescano specifically began collaborating with rock, pop, and hip-hop artists, and some bailes’ DJ residents made some experiences performing at avant-garde dance club parties.

Artists are also compiling different kinds of cumbias in a single record, including traditional Colombian cumbia. In other cases, the musical style gets more simple and basic.

Some independent, yet to be musicians are starting to look for alternative ways of producing their work, mainly because of the great difficulties they find trying to get access to the major producers, band owners and companies, and the unfavorable and very restrictive contracting deals they are offered. They are associating with independent executive producers which offer better working conditions.

We have found that artists consider becoming owners/producers themselves—not only of their own bands but of others’—as a way to make their activity economically sustainable. It is very important to understand that artistic activity is a job for most artists, a way to make a living and to create jobs for families and friends. Young artists with some success have learned from the experience of others, and now they put apart the extra money they can make, saving to invest in the creation of new groups. For that they count on the network of independent executive producers that are actively working in the Movida Tropical.

They are also well aware that it takes a great amount of effort to remain a success, that groups keep changing singers, musicians, and names and that no significant money is to be made while working as employees.

DJs are other very important actors in the Movida Tropical and Cumbia Villera business. As in most musical scenes, they feature a decisive part in clubs, and play a multiplicity of roles in the business, all of them related with shaping musical trends: besides their performances at bailes, they also act as bailes’ radio stations musical directors, create and release remixes and compilations stressing the “danceable” condition of these works.

During the last few years, performing in other Argentinean cities other than the Greater Buenos Aires area, bordering countries and even touring in USA, Mexico and some European countries where large Latino communities dwell, became a common practice for most Cumbia Villera groups. This represents an alternative and important source of income. Although most of the times groups don’t make a really significant money difference but they get paid equivalently or slightly more than what they get when they play locally.

Other Argentinean cities became an important market for these groups, and they usually schedule several shows for the weekend they travel, usually more than what they are able to make in Buenos Aires, and that have the same characteristics and costs structure. The main difference stands in the sound system: while in Buenos Aires, they hired their own sound equipments to perform at bailes, when they go to other cities, they perform with the sound provided by venues. Transportation cost of sound systems makes it prohibitive to bring equipments to distant locations. Some bands, even Cumbia Villera classics like “Pibes Chorros” that rarely play in Buenos Aires anymore are intensively working in other cities and outside the country.

Cumbia Villera is also a men activity and business. Groups’ singers, “animadores”, musicians, agents and producers are men. Only two classic Cumbia Villera groups had women in its

formation: Damas Gratis, where Pablo Lescano's sister Romina acted as a support singer and Guachín where Mariana Cabrera participated¹². Only Lescano remains performing.

There is an open issue regarding some offensive contents of Cumbia Villera when talking about women. Most authors of academic papers on gender contents describe the explicit sexual attitudes and genital depiction of women, and analyze the violence against women that it represents. Other authors (see Vila, Pablo & Pablo Seman (2007) *Cumbia villera: una narrativa de mujeres activadas*. Colección Monografías, N° 44. Caracas: Programa Cultura, Comunicación y Transformaciones Sociales, CIPOST, FaCES, Universidad Central de Venezuela. 73 pp. Available at: <http://www.globalcult.org.ve/monografias.htm>) offer a different interpretation where the limits of women representation (roughly put: mainly represented either as a honest motherly type suitable for marriage or as a dishonest promiscuous woman not suitable for marriage) started to fade as a direct consequence of economic crisis by which the ability of men to provide economic support is threatened by the greater ability of women to do so. This situation empowered women to take charge of their own sexuality along with the economic support. Lyrics would be a reflection of the ways men are dealing with this new scenario.

¹² Dillon, Marta. "Lona, cartón y chapa". Article. "Las 12". Página 12. May 1st, 2001. <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/2001/suple/Las12/01-05/01-05-18/NOTA1.HTM>

VI. Cumbia Villera audience profile and experience

1. Who are the consumers?

Today, mainly adolescents from low-middle and low social classes listen to “Cumbia Villera”. They follow current bands but also listen to the classics. They like songs with lyrics about “present times”, about what they live on a daily basis, about the police checking them up on the streets with no apparent reason, about drinking beer at a corner of their neighborhood, about “faggot” floggers (a middle social class urban tribe). However, they share their taste for “Cumbia Villera” among other cumbia styles and even other genres. On their cell phones, there are tracks by El Perro, La Liga, El Empuje, 18 Kilates (most current Cumbia Villera), by Néstor en Bloque and El Polaco (romantic cumbia sharing some codes with Cumbia Villera), by Mario Luis (a singer of cumbia santafesina composed by Don Omar, Wisin and Yandel) and Daddy Yankee (fashion reggaeton).

When youngsters are under 18, they try to find the way to enter balls, especially if one of their favorite bands is playing. They look for dance clubs that are less strict about the city regulations, the ones around their neighborhood where there might be some contact to let them in. This is how a group of kids from San Miguel have become regular goers of Sombro, a classic ball at a northern area neighboring theirs. For this group of friends, going out at night also depends on the available money. Most of them work assisting some relative with construction work and their income is irregular. Some youngsters need to obtain their parents’ approval, since not all parents want their 14 or 15 year old to be “into bailes” at such a young age. However, many times approval is overlooked.

These friends are real fans of cumbia and not only do they listen and dance to cumbia but they are also starting to play and compose. One of them owns a keyboard, another one owns some trash cans they use as drums and a third one has asked his uncle to teach him how to play the guitar. They have already recorded his first two songs on their cell phones. One song is about how miserable one of them felt when a girlfriend abandoned him. The band's name is not clear yet, but it might be “Alto Bondi”, which means something like “big mess” or “big party”. They would love to become famous. They know many of their idols come from similar backgrounds, neighborhoods and lifestyles.

Youngsters between 23 and 25 years old, who were followers of the original Cumbia Villera when they were adolescents, usually do not like current Cumbia Villera. They even argue about the new bands really representing this subgenre. After the appearance of cumbia base, new Cumbia Villera bands adopted the same musical base. Many find that this sound is too basic and it is difficult to

distinguish one band from another. For many of these youngsters, Cumbia Villera is still only the one played by the first bands. They do not listen to it as frequently as when they were adolescents, but they do enjoy it if played at a ball or party. They have acquired musical knowledge and today they appreciate other genres as well. It is not so common to find tracks by new Cumbia Villera bands on this generation's cell phones, but cumbia santafesina - such as La Nueva Luna, Miguel Ángel and Mario Luis - and reggaeton songs are common. In some cases they may even coexist with national rock and roll bands, especially if they play "rock chabón", a kind of rock and roll from the neighborhoods.

These cumbia youngsters, former Cumbia Villera fans at their adolescence, attend balls today. But they may actually attend "bailes" (night clubs) playing other genres if their musical tastes have expanded in the last few years. This usually occurs to middle-low class youngsters who not only like rock and roll or electronic music but they can also afford a night at clubs playing those genres, especially electronic parties which entrance fee, alcohol and associated drugs prices are much higher than those in the tropical scene.

However, cumbia youngsters and adolescents agree that what is "in" today is reggaeton – like it was Cumbia Villera some years ago. Although there are no balls exclusively playing this genre, it has gradually become part of the play list of DJ's, radio programs, informal CD's vendors' offer, cell phones, list of shows at balls of the tropical movement, stadiums and theaters such as Luna Park. Even some cumbia bands have incorporated part of this style into their repertoire, as well as its interpreting style. Although reggaeton lyrics do not clearly refer to social matters of daily life, and their topics tend to be more sexually or romantically focused, they know how to call the attention of kids who like Cumbia Villera. Girls specially like this dance. They make an effort to learn its erotic movements. Thus, when reggaeton is played at balls, kids "bitch around" and a few girls dare to pole dance.

Another point of coincidence for both generations of Cumbia Villera fans is their appreciation for celebrities such as Pablo Lescano, due both to his charisma and the fact that he was one of the creators of the style. He is also admired for having succeeded as a musician and a producer. Pablo was able to produce and support projects and has gone beyond the limits of the tropical movement, becoming a recognized figure in other musical scenes.

When adolescents who like current Cumbia Villera, or youngsters who prefer the originals refer to themselves as "cumbieros" (despite the fact that they may like other cumbia styles or other genres) they are referring to a social class identity. Being cumbiero is not only being a fan of a type of music or a part of a "juvenile tribe" with a certain view of the world and lifestyle. Being a "cumbiero"

implies a social belonging, a way of life where cumbia is an artistic expression as well as a business and work model.

Cumbia in general and Cumbia Villera in particular, are expressions of the low social classes in Argentina. As such, cumbia is rejected by other social classes. Not only is it considered as a minor genre, but it is not even recognized as an artistic expression. Cumbia has no aesthetic value for somebody from the middle or high social classes who does not enjoy it. Thus, being a cumbiero not only implies a musical preference but also means belonging to a social class that others reject, discriminate, fear, or look compassionately at, if they do look at it at all. The slogan “100% negro cumbiero” refers to this concept, since “negro” in Argentina has historically been a synonym of poor. Today, given the positive appropriation of the term, due to the success of Cumbia Villera at the beginning of the century, being a cumbiero or a negro cumbiero can be experienced with pride and be warmly celebrated when an artist motivates the audience from stage: “All negros cumbieros’ hands up!”

2. Purchase, consumption, and circulation of cumbia

The purchase of an original record has ceased to be a habit in the music industry in general. Today, music is downloaded, burned or transferred by Bluetooth. When music is purchased, this is mainly informal: non original burned CDs, songs compilations or complete discographies on Mp3. This phenomenon occurs with tropical music as well.

Cumbia in general and Cumbia Villera in particular is usually obtained freely - songs are downloaded from the web, transferred by cell phones, copied from CDs purchased by other people. People also listen to tropical music radio stations and watch thematic TV shows.

Downloading of music tracks

In order to download music tracks it is not necessary to own a computer or have Internet access. It is very common among cumbia youngsters, who have no access to these, to turn to a friend or family member who owns a computer with Internet access or to visit cybercafés or Lan Houses, where they pay an average of AR\$ 1 (USD \$0,29) to access a number of music downloading platforms:

- P2P nets, such as Ares.
- Social networks, such as Taringa.

- Specific websites of the tropical movement, such as www.muevamueva.com, www.metacumbiero.net, www.losdeltablon.com, <http://tropicalisima.com>, <http://www.ciudadtropical.com/>, <http://www.mundocumbiero.com.ar>
- DJ's forums and websites, such as www.changosdjs.com.ar

All these music download platforms are valued in terms of download speed. Information about bands and show schedules make a difference on these websites.

Youngsters download material originating in different sources:

- Marketing material that bands upload.
- Music tracks shared by users.
- Remixes by several DJs.

Purchase of music

The purchase of an informal CD is incidental. Prices are around AR\$ 4 and 6 (USD 1.15 and 1.75 approx.). In general, purchases are motivated by the release of a band's new recording, or, when having some extra money, the person gives way to temptation. Many times, the purchase is a good bargain and it is barely planned. Frequency of purchase is highly variable - it may be once a month, none in many months or, taking advantage of a bargain, 3 CDs for AR\$ 15 (USD 4.35 approx.) at one time.

Fake CDs are purchased at casual spots - marketplaces (commonly known as "bolishopings¹³"), street vendors, stands at supermarkets and commercial centers, street vendors walking around shops or public means of transport (trains in particular). These distribution channels also offer DVDs and PC games sometimes. Available CDs are not limited to cumbia, but they may include a variety of musical genres - tropical music (cumbia santafesina, Cumbia Villera, cuarteto, etc.), reggaeton, national and international rock and roll, Latin pop, romantic ballads, folklore, etc. In most shops, CDs are organized by genre and subgenre in order to facilitate the search. Street vendors carry CD holders, and may also carry a CD player to play the music for sale and try out the CDs in case the buyer requests it.

¹³ Contraction of Bolivian shopping center

Music consumption

Among youngsters, the most popular medium for storing, playing and sharing music tracks is the cell phone. Many times, songs are downloaded from the web to a cell phone, then transferred to another cell phone, and yet another, and so on. For personal listening, headphones are used, but music is also played through a speaker if the cell phone includes this feature. In this way, it is possible to listen to cumbia while driving a motorbike or a car. It is also shared at public spaces (squares, neighborhood corners, etc.) or private spaces (homes, hired rooms). Ringtones are a different way of playing music. Youngsters make these by cutting a part of their favorite song.

Radio stations and TV are two media through which youngsters not only consume music from their favorite artists, but they also get music news from - new artists, new productions by their favorite artists. Among radio stations, there is only one massive FM station, reaching Capital Federal and Gran Buenos Aires (FM Pasión). However, there are a great number of communal radio stations and other radio stations promoting local balls that are widely listened to by neighbors despite their limited reach.

In regards to TV, there are only two shows promoting cumbia and Cumbia Villera. One of them is Fantástico TV, belonging to Fantástico ball. But the most popular one is Pasión de Sábado (Saturday Passion), which airs every Saturday, during seven hours from 12:00 PM and 7:00 PM. It is aired by América, a private TV channel, one of the five Argentinean national air TV stations broadcasting for the whole country. Audiences who like tropical music, especially youngsters, attend the show holding banners, flags and memorabilia showing the names of their favorite bands. This show is usually background music at homes during Saturday afternoons. It is a company for house chores, lunch, studies, friends' gatherings, etc.

3. Cumbia nights

As mentioned before, the purchase of CDs does not represent a major investment for cumbia youngsters. Attending balls does. There, a youngster can spend between AR\$ 25 to 50 getting up to 200 (USD 7 to 15 up to 58 approx.) depending on age, spending power, and financial commitments. Out of this amount of money, entrance fees represent the smallest part of the investment. Alcohol consumption outside and, mainly, inside the club is the largest part of the investment of going out at night.

Since alcohol prices are much higher at balls than in other distribution channels (supermarkets, drugstores, grocery stores, etc.), youngsters usually consume alcohol during earlier hours.

Usually, they go out in groups (males and females or separated) starting the reunion at a member of the group's house or at a corner of the neighborhood. They drink alcohol while waiting for the time when most people attend the clubs (2:30 and 3:00 am approx.). This habit, however, does not differ much from non cumbia youngsters attending clubs playing other music styles, since it allows saving money, getting in the mood for dancing and waiting for the ideal moment to access the clubs.

City regulations prohibit the entrance of minors (under 18) to clubs where alcohol is sold. Due to this reason, a young audience mainly between the ages of 18 and 25 attend clubs. However, many clubs allow the entrance of underage youngsters, especially if they are known around the neighborhood or if their friends are regular goers.

Entrance fees to clubs are around AR\$ 10 and 30 (USD 3 and 6 approx.) depending on:

- The kind of club: If they are large, traditional (have been popular for a time), are well designed and decorated (several dance floors, giant screens, more than one bar, hi-fi sound, etc.) they usually charge more.
- The day of the week: Fees on Fridays are less expensive, since they are less frequented than Saturdays. If open on Sundays, entrance fees are less expensive as well.
- The time of entrance: At the beginning of the night the fee is lower (until 1:00 am approximately).
- The bands playing: Entrance fees are higher if bands playing are popular, famous, or at their highest peak of popularity.
- The sex: Females usually pay AR\$ 5 (USD 1.5 approx.) less than males. Furthermore, some clubs allow free entrance to women on Fridays or when they have just opened. This is known as "ladies free" (Damas Gratis).

Prices for drinks at club bars are between AR\$ 12 and 80 (USD 3.5 and 23 approx.) and they vary according to club, quality of beverage, and the way it is served:

- Although the less expensive drink is a glass of soda, costing between AR\$ 6 and 10 (USD 2 and 3 approx.), another popular drink is a litre glass of beer costing around AR\$ 12 (USD 3.5 approx.).
- A glass holding one and a half liter of a beverage can cost up to AR\$ 50 (USD 14.5 approx.).
- Promotions at more convenient prices are offered, such as champagne and two cans of energizing drinks for AR\$ 70 (USD 20 approx.)
- Half liter jugs of special drinks with fantasy names are priced from AR\$ 30 (USD 8.7 approx.)

- Champagne can cost between AR\$ 40 and 80 (USD 12 and 23 approx.) depending on the brand.

Possible extra expenses when going out to dance is payment to the “car watcher” - around AR\$ 5 (USD 1.5) - and eating outside the club, food such as hot dogs or pastries, priced at AR\$ 1 and 4 (USD 0.30 and 1.15 approx.).

4. Los “Bailes”: Dance clubs

Bailes open on Friday, Saturday and, exceptionally, Sunday. Regular opening hours are between 12:00-1:00 am and 6:00-7:00 am. The highest audience attendance occurs between 2:30 and 3:00 am. Dance floors alternate music played by DJs with shows by a number of bands. Although in the past the average performance was four bands a night, today the number has decreased to one to three shows on Saturdays (the most frequented day) and one on Fridays and Sundays on the occasions when Bailes are opened and offer live shows.

The choice of ball may be motivated by the presence of one of the bands playing, by the popularity and reputation of the ball itself, by its musical identity, by the “atmosphere” created by the attending audience, or by the nearness to the neighborhood.

It is considered that there are around 60 established balls. Most of them are located outside the limits of the city of Buenos Aires and there are only a few ones within its boundaries. The first ones are usually located along highways or freeways easily accessed. The second ones are mainly on highly transited areas, associated to middle-low social classes (train or bus terminal stations).

Among balls, there are some that due to their attendance capacity, layout and technological display, as well as their background, are very popular and have built a reputation.

Musical identity is another feature that can make a ball stand out. Although all of them are identified as tropical music balls, where cumbia is played and danced, Colombian cumbia is predominant at some of them. A mix of cumbia and reggaeton is played in others, and a segment of Cumbia Villera can be heard or there is no clear distinction in yet other clubs. Although Cumbia Villera is usually included on the playlist of DJs, it does not constitute the main musical identity of any ball. However, a classic track of Cumbia Villera can be one of the most celebrated and enthusiastically danced at any of the balls. The DJs of the most famous balls are usually well known by cumbia youngsters and some of them are behind the production of compilation CDs and remixes of music played at the balls. Thus, some balls release CDs with the tracks that identify them.

The musical identity of each ball is marked mainly by the DJ's play list and not by the bands playing. Usually, balls schedule shows with all kinds of bands and singers from any of the sub genres of the tropical movement, so Cumbia Villera bands circulate around all available balls sharing the stage with cumbia santafesina or Colombian cumbia bands, etc. Among bands summoning the largest and most diverse audience there is Damas Gratis (Ladies free) - it summons those people who like Cumbia Villera today, but also those who do not listen to it on a daily basis any longer and do not like the new bands, but still admire Pablo Lescano and its pioneer group. Probably, if a ball schedules Damas Gratis for a night, the attendance will be highly motivated by their show.

Balls can also be distinguished according to the type of audience attending and the "atmosphere" generated in the inside space. Some balls within the city are mainly attended by foreign collectivities, thus, there are balls "for Bolivians", "for Paraguayans" and "for Peruvians", where the attendance of Argentinean cumbia youngsters is uncommon. Balls can also be distinguished by the level of violence and aggression in their "atmosphere". Thus, youngsters can refer to each other as more or less "pesado", depending on the frequency of fights among the audience, or how "pesado" the attendees are (if it is associated to a near shantytown or the crime scene, etc.). Other bailes may be famous for summoning "the best looking women". Some are well known for the image awareness of the visiting audience.

On the other hand, bailes also hold an identity given by their location. Thus, some balls are not only associated to the musical preferences of the inhabitants of an area (northern areas preferably listen to Colombian cumbia, while southern areas prefer cumbia santafesina) but also to soccer teams originated in the neighborhoods where they are located. This identification can even generate antagonism between bailes - the audience attending Tropitango follows Tigre team and is an adversary to the one attending Sombro, which follows San Miguel team. This rivalry may be expressed at the stadium by holding flags and pieces of cloth making reference to the relation team-ball.

5. The ball, the dancing party

Entering any baile on the tropical movement involves going through a security check with different levels of strictness depending on the baile. The largest venues may have several security check posts - metal detectors for shoes, general metal detectors, and a detailed check up where people are frisked, pockets are emptied and wallets are checked up. Security checks are aimed at preventing the entrance of weapons and illegal drugs, possession of which is penalized by law.

Usually, males are more closely checked up than females. It is common to see managers or even the owners of the bailes supervising security controls, non allowance of minors, etc., at some of the bailes.

Inside de bailes security is in charge of keeping order and watching adherence to rules. They would expel those who fight, do illegal drugs or cause any type of trouble. At some balls security guards use a laser pointer to point at these scenes. In this way, even though drug consumption does happen, it is not so common inside bailes. However, fights among youngsters do occur, mainly outside bailes.

Fights usually occur among fans of rival soccer teams, youngsters from different neighborhoods, or boys fighting over a girl. Some fights may occur only as a fun ritual among youngsters and there are several reasons to initiate it. Most of the times fights occur due to some kind of offense and they involve alcohol consumption. Fights usually occur among males, but they can also occur among females. As a way to prevent fights, some balls prohibit wearing soccer team t-shirts. Another security measure is selling alcohol on plastic glasses to avoid bottles, which could be used as improvised weapons. It is also common to have a police car outside the baile as a way of controlling conflicts.

The atmosphere at balls is that of a fun party. Groups of males, females or a mix of them usually stay together and dance in a round. Also friends, couples, and people who have just met dance together. Many times, interaction between males and females occur when a group of boys approaches a group of girls to dance. Sometimes, female groups dance synchronized dance steps. At dance clubs providing a dance pole, girls play around performing “pole dancing”. Some balls have elevated platforms where female or male dancers dance during the whole night. Some bailes have giant screens and/or TV sets where videos are played – MTV, shows of bands that may not be cumbia bands, or images of the attending audience in real time.

A common way of expressing preference for a song (played by the DJ or a live band) is raising alcohol jugs. Empty jugs can be piled up and raising them is a sign of celebration that also shows the spending power of a youngster or group of youngsters who can afford such amount of alcohol. Thus, whenever there is a high pile of jugs (20 at least) it can be assumed that it was bought by a youngster who has a lot of money and may be a “real criminal”, someone with a reputation on the crime scene.

Attending a ball implies building an image. Youngsters pay special attention to their outfit, hairstyles and accessories, and very few do not respect a particular style. Brand names are

showed off. They are part of the design and look of the outfit. Both males and females wear mostly sports wear. Cheap or expensive models of Nike or Adidas sneakers are the most distinctive elements. Males predominantly wear jeans (wide leg and comfortable reggaeton style) or sports pants and Adidas, Nike, Billabong and Kevington t-shirts. Youngsters often wear soccer team t-shirts but, as mentioned before, this is not permitted at some dance clubs. Among male hair styles there are at least three different short ones: done with hair gel (hair sticking up), haircuts with a design on the head (like a tattoo), and blonde dye (especially at hair tips). Women usually wear jeans and tight tops, but unlike males, showing off a particular brand name is not part of their image. Popular hairstyles are pony tails and long bangs (very fashionable among Argentinean teenagers). Piercings on the face are also distinctive elements for boys and girls, but not exclusive of cumbia trends.

It is interesting that both the audience attending balls and Cumbia Villera musicians usually share the same look, reflecting each other. Originally, Cumbia Villera bands adopted clothes worn by the inhabitants of shantytowns and poor neighborhoods. i.e. sport wear and sneakers. This turned into the ultimate Cumbia Villera look and today it has been adapted to new fashion trends (some influence from reggaeton is acknowledged), but the style worn by the audience and musicians keep reflecting each other. Thus, blond hair and a particular haircut of a very popular musician is very appreciated and adopted by male youngsters, and female singers dress like any of the girls dancing at bailes.

6. The shows

The time when the bands play is a special moment, even more if they are popular and renowned. Shows are advertised on the dance club news board and promoted by the entertainers or DJ during the night. When roadies start setting up the equipment on stage, musicians are soon to arrive. The audience knows that the band is probably coming from a previous gig and their arrival depends on their not having any trouble on their way from one baile to the next. If the layout of the dance club allows it, the band's fans stay near the stage and the door they enter through. They wait there to request an autograph, a picture or just say hello. Musicians usually welcome them warmly and in a laid back way. We observed a sense of closeness among cumbia audience and band members. The distance between them – even with the most famous ones – is not an insurmountable gap but a fuzzy, unclear limit. These idols are their equals, sharing a social background, culture and social codes.

If the band is offering more than one show per night, then they own two equipment sets, their respective means of transport and roadie teams in order to save time setting up and picking up the

equipment. Thus, they can fulfill their tight schedule for the night. While they are playing at a ball, a truck with another set of equipment heads to the next baile, where they will be playing later, to set up the stage.

Arriving at the dance club is fast. Trucks and vans bringing the musicians arrive, they get out, greet their fans, come up to the stage where they are presented by the DJ or manager and then the show starts. The audience screams and claps their hands during the first compasses, some of the girls climb on the boys' shoulders to get a better look of the artists. They move their hands to the rhythm of music. Up on the stage, to one side or at the back, there is the band's manager, roadies, fans going along on their night tour, the baile manager and a few members of the audience that have managed to come up and stay.

Cumbia youngsters follow the show dancing, singing and shaking their hands in a fashion resembling soccer fans singing at stadiums. A number of cell phones and digital cameras film the show. Youngsters raise their piles of jugs to accompany the most popular songs. If the audience does not like the band, they may throw ice cubes at the musicians. During the show, some youngsters throw flags and pieces of cloth so that band members can touch them and throw them back. Singers and, sometimes, entertainers are the ones catching most of the audience's attention.

The show unravels with a series of cued tracks, with no gaps or presentation between them. It becomes a kind of medley where not the whole song but only some verses and choruses are played. Comments are expressed by the "animador" (entertainer) who motivates the audience during the whole show. The "animador" (entertainer) addresses the audience as "cumbieros" or "negros cumbieros" and motivates them to hop, clap their hands, scream, raise their jugs and take a position in regards to antagonist social classes, soccer teams, sexual preferences, marital status or habits – "Raise your hands you cumbieros!", "Hands, hands, hands!", "Raise your hands all you negros!", "If you don't hop you are a 'cheto'¹⁴!" (referring to youngsters of middle-high social classes), "If you don't hop you came by police car" (referring to the police), "Let's see how single girls scream", "Let's see the jugs of the heavy drinkers!", "If you don't jump you are a faggot!" Other rousing speeches are a characteristic chant where the singer or entertainer asks a question and the audience answers by completing the sentence: "What are we gonna do?" "Gonna make noise"; "Damas Gratis".

Shows usually last 15 to 20 minutes and no extra songs are played, although many times bands repeat the most popular song of those played. While the band plays the last song of the show,

¹⁴ Cheto is a Buenos Aires' slang word used to designate top-middle class and high class people.

roadies start to pick up the pieces of equipment and instruments, pressured by the short time. The stage is emptied in less than five minutes, musicians sign their last autographs, they get into their vans and trucks and the audience continues dancing to the DJ's music.

7. Some cases

Tropitango

Known as the “cumbia cathedral”, Tropitango is a ball located in the northern part of Buenos Aires city suburbs. It has been open for 28 years. It can hold 5.000 people, has two stories, a backyard, hi-fi sound, several bars, dance floors, TV sets and giant screens, digital sign boards in the center of the main dance floor announcing the schedule for the following days, a facade that stands out due to its height and two neon signs framing the entrance gate. It is one of the most reputed and famous balls due to its background, service and infrastructure. The entrance fee is AR\$ 20 to 30 (USD 5.8 to 8.7), one of the most expensive in the tropical movement. Youngsters attending Tropitango usually take special care of their outfit and hair style – haircuts, brand name sneakers and fashionable t-shirts stand out. Likewise, there is a variety of expensive, new model cars at the spacious parking lot.

“Tropi” is regarded as a ball with a “pesado” atmosphere. It is understood, that part of the audience belongs to the crime scene of surrounding villas, which have a reputation on the northern area. The kind of cars at the parking lot and the large number of alcohol jugs piled up during the night support this statement. The atmosphere at Tropitango is usually described as “pesado” due to the attitude of the youngsters who assertively safeguard their own space – contact with other people (members of other groups of friends) is defensive, cold and aggressive. Thus, it is difficult to observe any interaction among groups. On the other hand, Tropitango's reputation is emphasized by the high security at the club's entrance.

As mentioned before, wearing brand names appreciated by young cumbieros is part of the image building of youngsters attending balls. Kevington is one of the most treasured brand names of male shirts, and most of the young males were wearing them at Tropitango. This brand name was strongly associated to young upper classes, due to its rugby style polo shirts. Today it has been adopted by the cumbia fashion such as other “cheto” codes of behavior. One of them is the habit of wearing sweaters or sweat shirts on one's shoulders, a habit attributed to higher classes in Argentina. Today, especially at Tropitango, this code is absolutely adhered to (with some variations, such as wearing a piece of clothing across one's torso), so wearing a piece of clothing

in a different way is a sign of not belonging to the cumbia scene or being a “pancho” (an idiot, silly person) who is unaware of fashion trends.

This is one of the “bailes”, night clubs in the tropical movement that has a clear musical identity – predominantly Colombian cumbia, cumbia sonidera (Colombian cumbia from Mexico), since that is what the northern area audiences like, but it also devotes segments to Cumbia Villera by original bands (especially Damas Gratis), as it could be expected from an emblematic ball located in the area where Cumbia Villera was born. This identity is also shown at Tropitango’s show schedule, since they hire Mexican bands playing cumbia sonidera. Usually, Tropitango schedules only one show per night which lasts around 25 minutes (one of the longest ones in the tropical movement).

Another feature is the starring role of the attending audience at the club’s giant screens. At some point during the night, when there is no band playing, the screens show the youngsters attending the ball. They try to figure out when they appear on the giant screen in front of the rest of the people. TV sets located mainly at the bar areas, air MTV channel.

Los Gedes’ show

On Saturday, May 23rd, 2009, Tropitango offered a show by Los Gedes, whose name is derived from a longer one – Los Gedientos del Rock. In the cumbia slang “geder” means to disturb, and to be “gediento” means to feel like partying, disturbing, making noise, to be excited, even willing to fight. Los Gedes were born thanks to Pablo Lescano, who encouraged Pepo, the original singer, to write songs like those he used to write for the fans of Tigre, a soccer team from the northern area. They were highly popular between 2002 and 2004, but after their singer was sent to prison for robbing a gas station and their producer – Pablo Lescano - left, the band ceased producing music and playing at balls. Today, once more with Pablo Lescano but with a new singer (their former guitar player) they are back to the stages and to producing songs.

Like many cumbia bands, Los Gedes is made up by family members and assisted by a family network. Matías Lescano – who shares the last name of the leader of Damas Gratis but is not related to him – is the band’s entertainer and also composes their songs; his uncle “El chino” Lescano, is their manager; his father Daniel Lescano (once singer of the legendary Cumbia Villera band produced by Pablo Lescano, Flor de Piedra) drives one of the trucks used by the band and eventually sings at shows. Father and uncle not only assist in the band’s production and logistics, but they also advise Matías about building his own house at the family’s lot. Matías recognizes that during their highest peak of popularity, when they offered over ten shows a night, he earned a lot

of money that soon vanished: “I earned a lot and spent even more”. This is why today he is trying to be back as one of the cumbia scene favorite bands, to earn money and invest it wisely.

Performing at Tropitango does not only imply playing at one of the most popular massive balls, but also performing in their own neighborhood, playing as locals. The band is from Tigre, a neighborhood in the northern area. Most of their members were born and live there. A few hours before the show, they gather at Matías’ house. He gets off work at a sushi restaurant at 1:30 am, so their rehearsal cannot start before 2:00 am. The show is scheduled at 4:00 am. Matías lives in a small one-room house, located at the family’s lot where his father lives with the rest of the family. The small bedroom-living-room-kitchen becomes a rehearsal room for the 8-member band. His manager-uncle, his father and a group of fans and friends attend the rehearsal as well and they will accompany Los Gedes during their show at the “Tropi”. The band rehearses without the singer, who has not been able to arrive yet due to trouble at a distant area. Daniel Lescano drives his truck to pick him up.

Once the rehearsal is finished and we keep waiting for the singer, Matías and “El chino” tell us about the band’s origins, their background, expectations, the way they compose songs and their relationship with Pablo Lescano. “I’m writing songs all the time”, says Matías. According to him, small pieces of paper where he writes possible songs are scattered throughout the house. They want to compose for a new record and they want to attract the cumbia audience back with it. They do not lack life experiences or background, or the necessary contacts either. Pablo Lescano is close to the band, supporting them. He used Los Gedes as support band to some of their shows and is going to produce their record. “Everything Pablito touches turns to gold”, says Matías. So being close to him is approaching success.

When time comes, the band heads towards the dance club. They travel on a minivan taking most of their members. The singer joins them at Tropitango. Entrance to the venue is through the back door, where musicians’ cars get in. The members of the band rush out of the car and meet with their fans, who request autographs and pictures, especially from the singer but also from Daniel Lescano because they know who he is. His fame has persisted despite of the fact that Flor de Piedra does not exist any longer. After arriving only a few minutes pass until the show starts. On stage, there are fans, friends, Tropitango’s manager, the band’s manager and Daniel, who gives constant indications to the musicians, and assist when necessary.

At 4:30 am, the first song starts and Tropitango explodes. The audience celebrates, boys raise their piles of jugs, and girls climb up to their boyfriends’ shoulders. Matías and the singer communicate fluently with the audience. During the first song the audience helps an

achondroplastic boy get on stage. He is warmly welcomed by the band and his dance turns into an improvised part of the show. The audience sings along and takes pictures with their cell phones. Los Gedes' old songs are well known. The entertainer and the singer motivate the audience – “What are we gonna do? Gonna geder!” The singer moves wildly, he hops and dances on a murga style display of energy.

At a given moment, the entertainer announces an acclaimed artist who was around at the beginnings of Cumbia Villera – the legendary Daniel Lescano, who sings a Flor de Piedra's song.

After 25 minutes of frenzied show giving their best and receiving great audience approval, “El chino” considers that this is enough. The roadies quickly pick up the equipment and the musicians leave the stage, after getting in touch with a female fan. The band goes celebrating their successful night at the “cumbia cathedral”.

Rescate

Located in the west part of Buenos Aires city suburbs, and with a lower investment on technology and construction work than the “cumbia cathedral”, Rescate is another traditional ball. Entrance fee is between AR\$ 15 and 20 (USD 4.3 to 5.8 approx.). It can hold 2.500 people, has two stories, a main dance floor, several bars, a fast food eatery, a giant screen and some poles scattered around for girls to dance.

Pirata, Rescate's DJ, is a renowned character at the venue. An entertainer works by his side motivating the audience and addressing DJ Pirata over the songs. His cabin stands out. It is located at a dance floor and surrounded by two platforms where dancers perform a kind of erotic dance. Two black flags with a skull are displayed to the sides of his turntable. A giant screen on top on the cabin projects images of people dancing at electronic parties.

Pirata is one of the ball's DJs who produces records with the music played when working. On his website, Rescate has a special section where he uploads tracks that have been released on CDs, some tracks highlighted by him and pictures of visitors to his cabin. He also conducts surveys about musical preferences among his audience. Like in Tropitango, since cumbia has been fashionable in recent years, Rescate's musical identity is provided by Colombian cumbia and cumbia sonidera, but also offers a long segment of reggaeton which is highly acclaimed by the audience. The local agenda is a good sign of its identity. Several Mexican bands play on its stage.

Rescate's atmosphere is less "pesado" than Tropitango's, youngsters are less ostentatious, wear less expensive brand names, there are less expensive cars and less attention to clothing and hair styles. However, the general style of the cumbia fashion is shared. The concept of a quieter venue is supported by less strict security measures. Outside the baile, there are flowerbeds where youngsters hang out and relax, eating hot dogs or pastries offered by the stands located around the exit area.

Damas Gratis' show

Damas Gratis was announced to appear on a Friday night in May. Around 5:00 am Pablo Lescano has not arrived. Roadies have set up the equipment on stage; fans are standing at the entrance doors. A reggaeton segment has put girls to dance on the poles of Rescate... But it is necessary to continue waiting. Suddenly, the arrival of a minivan and a four wheeler is the sign that Damas Gratis has arrived. Musicians move from the minivan to the stage to prepare their instruments. Meanwhile, Pablo Lescano waits to be called to enter through a small door away from the main entrance. While waiting, he signs autographs and is filmed on his fans' cell phones. Lescano looks tired but he grants all requests. He is a warm, quiet and accessible celebrity. Security staff comes for him and they climb up a narrow stairway leading to the stage with a few fans. In a small backstage, a girl on a wheelchair waits for him to request an autograph. Pablo already knows about her. He grants her wish quickly and climbs up to the stage.

With no presentation, Damas Gratis plays the first chords of one of the songs in their last album, and the cumbieros at Rescate crowd the foot of the stage. "El Tigre", the baile's manager, is sitting at a step of the stage. Security staff stands at several points around the venue and the audience sings along the whole song. As usual, some girls climb up boys' shoulders. Lescano says "Hands up, Buenos Aires", and everybody raises their hands. Then, they continue playing question-answer: "If you don't hop you came by police car", says Lescano and the whole audience joins the motion. In order to show off the piles of jugs he says, "Let's see the jugs of all heavy drinkers!" and then the boys raise the proof of what they consumed. The audience gives Romina (Pablo's sister and chorus girl for the band) a t-shirt she kindly takes and gives back. One of the female fans close to the stage tries to reach Lescano, but security staff removes her. The young cumbieros have no rest; the cued songs are hits from their last records. The audience knows them, sings them and dances to them. When Pablo Lescano starts saying goodbye, "El Tigre" grabs the microphone and asks the audience: "Shall we ask Pablito for another song for Rescate?" The audience celebrates the manager's idea. "El Tigre" addresses Lescano: "One more, Pablito?" The band repeats one of the hits of the night. At the end of this song and as a farewell, Lescano delivers the audience to the DJ: "All yours, Pirata!"

Fantástico

Fantástico is a well known baile in Capital Federal, located at the commercial, central area of Once. It can hold 2.500 people, entrance fee is between AR\$ 5 and 20 (USD 1.5 and 5.8). It has one dance floor, two bars, but no giant screens or TV sets. Fantástico opened for the first time in 1987 as the first tropical music ball within the city and today it stands out due to its background and location, but not due to the investment on technology and infrastructure or a particular musical identity. The DJ's play list includes several genres of the tropical movement – quarteto, merengue, reggaeton, cumbia santafesina, Colombian cumbia, Cumbia Villera, etc. A special feature is that adult couples can be found among a predominant young audience.

At Fantástico, we were able to observe the difference between a night without a show and another one when the popular band Damas Gratis played. In the first case, the audience was not only groups of young people, but adult couples as well. Their attitude was more relaxed and they did not follow fashion trends so strictly. In the second case, the venue was crowded, and most of the audience was youngsters displaying cumbia fashion with a “harsher” attitude than on regular nights.

8. Concerts at theatres

Concerts at theatres are very rare among bands of the tropical movement. In general, only truly acclaimed bands and singers perform at these venues. Luna Park is one emblematic stage in the Argentinean local scene (for every music genre, not just for cumbia). The most popular local and international artists play there. Performing at Luna Park (it can hold 8.000 people) is a sign of having achieved a massive audience and great success. An artist's success is measured by the number of performances at the Luna Park in one season. Rodrigo, a quarteto singer whose popularity surpassed the tropical scene, managed to perform the same show 13 times at the Luna Park. In 2008, Damas Gratis celebrated their first 10 years with a show at “the Luna”. Several musicians from the tropical movement as well as from the rock and roll scene were invited.

Owned by the producers of Pasión de Sábado TV show and FM Pasión, the Teatro Colonial is one of the places where cumbia bands usually perform in Buenos Aires. Its stage features acclaimed artists of this genre and shows are broadly promoted on the TV show and radio.

In April 2009, Damas Gratis, supported by A Geder, played at Teatro Español in Lomas de Zamora (a southern area of Gran Buenos Aires). The band's followers arrived there bringing t-

shirts, headbands and backpacks with the name of the band and its leader. A great number of these products had been produced for the concert at Luna Park. The left over products were now being sold by street vendors outside the theatre. Although these products are not massively consumed, those who own them usually wear them at shows or live presentations in Pasi3n de Sábado. However, the sale and way of wearing these products is not exclusive to the tropical movement or cumbia scene. At shows of different genres (rock and roll specially) it is already a tradition for a part of the audience to show off their fanaticism. Street vendors line up on nearby streets offering products with the name of the artists playing at the time. These are rarely official merchandising products, but products independently manufactured by the street vendors themselves. At Damas Gratis' show, vendors not only offer products with the name of this band, but also other bands' that do not play Cumbia Villera. Key holders, autographed pictures, posters, cups and caps are offered to the audience while they line up.

Entrance to Teatro Espa3ol does not have the same security controls than balls. Only the ticket is necessary. These are usually more expensive than the dance clubs'. A ticket to Damas Gratis' show cost between AR\$ 30 and 50 (USD 8.7 and 14.5). However, the duration of the show compensates the investment, since it includes the presentation of two live bands if there is a supporting band. Shows last at least one hour and may last over three hours (such as Damas Gratis' concert at Luna Park).

While the audience is taking their seats at the theatre and waiting for the show to start, some groups of fans take pictures at the foot of the stage showing the pieces of cloth made in honor to their idols. One of them is a greeting with a caricature of the leader surrounded by marihuana leaves and the header "cumbia". Another one is dedicated to Romina, the chorus girl, and it is also a caricature titled "Goddess, we love you".

Among the attending audience there are not only youngsters, but also kids with one of their parents or whole families even carrying babies. Theatre presentations are quieter and more adequate for families. Youngsters do not build an image as when attending balls. Some of them wear original villa fashion: sport pants, sweatshirts, sneakers, long t-shirts and caps.

The band "A Geder" starts playing when the audience is still entering the theatre. Some lights are on to allow assistants taking their positions. The sound is adjusted during the show. The band performs without Matías, its leader and entertainer. The keyboard player is in charge of motivating the audience. They do reply but stay seated throughout the show, singing along only the better known songs. During 15 minutes, Los Gedes play songs composed by them and other Cumbia Villera bands.

Damas Gratis appears at the stage and the audience, having filled up the theatre, rises from their seats and will not sit down until the show finishes. It is difficult to dance among seats, but people follow the music singing, clapping their hands and filming with their cell phones. Damas Gratis plays songs from their last album, but also some of their classic hits, which are the most celebrated by their assistants. During the one hour show, they played cued songs, as they do at balls. Lescano kept constantly looking at his watch during the show. He motivated the audience with a kind of threat: “Do you want me to leave? I’m leaving already!” At around 11:00 pm, the band played their last song; they rapidly got on their trucks and headed towards the first ball of the night.

9. Consumers' expenditures information summary

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	AR\$ 3.45	Consumers' expenses		
		Scale	AR\$	USD
Music acquiring	Internet access at Lan houses	Average	1	0.29
	Informal CD (unit)	Bottom	4	1.16
		Average	5	1.45
		Top	6	1.74
	Informal CD (price for 3)	Average	15	4.35

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	AR\$ 3.45	Consumers' expenses		
		Scale	AR\$	USD
Expenditures at bailes	Consumers declared expenditures at bailes	Bottom average	25	7.25
		Top average	50	14.49
		Top mentioned	200	57.97
	Bailes' entrance fees declared by consumers - Men	Bottom	10	2.90
		Top	20	5.80
	Bailes' entrance fees declared by consumers - Women	Average	5	1.45
	Top end baile's entrance fee	Bottom	20	5.80
		Top	30	8.70
	Major baile's entrance fee (Greater Buenos Aires)	Bottom	15	4.35
		Top	20	5.80
	Major baile's entrance fee (Buenos Aires City)	Bottom	5	1.45
		Top	20	5.80
	Bailes' drinks prices	Bottom Average	12	3.48
		Top average	80	23.19
	Bailes' soda glass	Bottom	6	1.74
		Top	10	2.90
	A liter beer glass	Average	12	3.48
	A liter and a half glass	Average	50	14.49
	Champagne plus energizing drink	Average	70	20.29
	Half liter fantasy drinks	Average	30	8.70
	Champagne	Bottom	40	11.59
		Top	80	23.19
	Car watcher	Average	5	1.45
	Eating outside clubs	Bottom	1	0.29
		Top average	4	1.16
Theatres	Theatre shows' entrance for top Cumbia Villera Group show	Bottom	30	8.70
		Top	50	14.49

VII. “Movida Tropical” economics, specific characteristics and peculiarities of Cumbia Villera¹⁵

Movida Tropical economics have two main sources of income: shows and records. This economy heavily relies on the live shows performed at “Bailes”. Most interviewees agree that it represents about the 85% to 90% of the revenue of the whole business. The 10% to 15% remaining is contributed by industrial records:

“Eighty/ninety percent is the show. It is what makes money. The musician has to go and get paid. If not, he doesn’t work.” (Record Company Owner)

“I estimate that the shows have the ninety percent” (Record Company Owner)

“Show sales are the 95% of the total revenue” (Agent)

“... but we make the money with shows. That’s why you can make the great difference by doing ten shows in a weekend... I have another job, if I hadn’t I couldn’t make a living.” (Musician. Group owner)

Shows are the core of this business. This is true for all the genres encompassed in the Movida tropical, and becomes critical for Cumbia Villera.

Groups strive to make as many shows as possible during the weekends in order to make a living. Shows that make most of the revenue of Cumbia Villera groups take place at “bailes” (dance clubs) of the Movida Tropical. Bailes constitute the most important economical actor in this market since their presence guarantee the continuity of the industry.

In the last few years this industry has been undergoing a crisis independently of the record industry’s. Most interviewees identify the beginning of this crisis with the Cromañón (Show’s venue) fire tragedy occurred on December 30th, 2004 in which 197 people got killed mainly due to the lack of safety devices to allow people to get out of the place. Since then, authorities all over the country increased safety measurements and close down those places which hadn’t met the new regulations. Almost five years later, the amount of authorized bailes has reduced to a third only in the Greater Buenos Aires Area, and they have serious restrictions about the quantity of people allowed to be inside the clubs.

But this is not the crisis only reason. The new economical global crisis is affecting the expenditure capability of people as well, and audiences are not going as often as usual to the bailes, and they watch much closer how much money they expend as well. On the other hand, as fewer bailes are opened for business, distance to get to the clubs gets longer, and this also constitutes an obstacle.

¹⁵ Economic activity information gathered exclusively for Buenos Aires and its Metropolitan Area (AMBA) constituted by Buenos Aires city (CABA) and Greater Buenos Aires (GBA).

Alternatives are also available: pubs and restaurants that at a time of the night offer music to dance. They don't have live shows but they are an available choice.

Regarding records, there is an important difference between the way artists and industry representatives see them. Musicians understand a record as a release of new material, new songs that they want to offer to their audiences, that they need to be known, and afterwards testing audience's acceptance at the shows. It is a way to keep working. They need the record to be out and known, to reach their audience. More than a source of revenue, it's a tool to make their work known, to catch attention, to get people to continue listening to it, and eventually, attract people to the shows. They consider the record - the legal one, well recorded, with a good quality sound and a neat production - as a sort of business card as well, a mean to introduce themselves to key actors in the business: *bailes'* programadores, *bailes'* DJs and radio hosts for instance. A "diffusion" version, a cut of 4 or 5 songs distributed in *bailes* and radio stations by the *difusores* (a key actor in the economic circuit that acts as a bridge between groups and radio stations) is also released. This is a very serious issue for most of them: if DJs and radio hosts like their work, the songs will be played at the *bailes*, and will be broadcasted by the local and *bailes'* radio stations. And that is the crucial point, the moment of truth. If the songs are liked, chances to sell shows increase. Likewise, if they got a contract to perform in a *baile*, they want their songs to keep being played at the ball. For that circuit to work, they need a disc.

But they don't really care if the record is illegally copied and distributed. In some occasions, they would produce and record their own discs at home-studios, with their computers and would bring them to radio stations or even informal markets. For the Cumbia Villera artists, the disc and its songs need to reach as many people as possible.

For the industry, the record is a good with a market, and that market is collapsing. As we have already said, Movida Tropical audience, especially Cumbia Villera public, has lost the habit of purchasing industrial records in part because of the availability of technology (ICTs) and the type of consumption that technology implies (especially cell phones as an universal storing and reproduction device). Technology makes it easy and accessible to get and share any kind of contents: from songs to pictures and ringtones, personal information. Quality of sound is not a major concern among most kids, and a badly recorded or formatted song can be easily replaced giving memory space to a new one.

Industry is exploring opportunities to add value to their products like DVDs, and looking at alternative markets like digital music contents, and but informal exchange and downloading of digital music for mobile devices is already shrinking that market, too. Tropical music legal downloads to cell phones channeled through mobile phones companies' websites, reduced

significantly in a couple of years: “... now we have about 50/60 thousand downloads per month... during the peak we had 250 thousand.” (Digital Music Manager for a Record Company).

This is mainly attributed to the way cell phones equipments are commercialized. They include an USB wire and contents management software bundled in their packages, which makes it easier to download contents from a PC to a mobile phone.

The quality of sound offered doesn't seem to be an issue for mobile contents either. Even when different cell phones manufacturers use different software and reproduction quality in a device that doesn't support a particular format is not good, people keep sharing music through the bluetooth capabilities of their cell phones or through their PCs.

Still, digital music downloads are doing better than records, even when the price of a single song is about AR\$ 5 / USD 1.5 - including taxes, the same price of a fake CD, a copy in the informal market.

Industry recognizes the fact that habits are changing and attributes records piracy not only to the economic advantages it represent for consumers (prices of cumbia legal CD are four times higher than a fake's) but to a change in the habits and practices related to consumption of music: “Some people said: ‘CDs are expensive, that is what is happening, if they were cheaper...’ That's not true. Last year digitals sold well. People were buying thirty seconds ringtones by AR\$ 5. - At the same time, we've been selling the same CD, full, in Musimundo¹⁶ by AR\$ 10. - and we haven't sold much.” (Record Company Owner).

There is another trend underlying the technological impact in the Movida Tropical world, which is also true for Cumbia Villera. People download, store and listen to single songs, not necessary a whole disc. Songs are the goods that circulate. Even when a whole disc work can be purchased in both formal and informal markets, as far as we could gather in the field, remixes and compiled songs CD are the more sold products in many occasions purchased because of a couple of single tracks, and single songs downloads are the more popular among youths. This can be read in the same line that groups' dynamic of composing and generate discs: they try to make a disc per year, and they expect to have only one or two successes in each one.

a. The informality issue

Tropical music economy, including Cumbia Villera, as it happens in all the Argentinean economy has an important informal incidence. This is a widespread issue, to the point that National Government is currently advertising a contest (IVA y vuelta¹⁷) by which people should ask their

¹⁶ Music store chain.

¹⁷ “IVA y vuelta” means VAT and back. It is a sort of words game that references to IDA y vuelta (both ways). See <http://www.afip.gov.ar/ivaYVuelta/>

purchases' tickets and declare them in the AFIP (taxes national collecting agency) web site for the chance to win a new car.

Many economic relationships are informal even employment.

Hired musicians working as part of a group formation most times don't have a formal employment contract, which makes them vulnerable. Some of them are voluntary registered as independent traders through an universal tax category known as Monotributo¹⁸, which pay themselves. This make them entitled to basic social security and health insurance, but does not solve the vulnerability problem: they still can be fired without notice or reason. Social relationships networks function as safety nets as well as connections and business channels.

Record Companies, on the other hand, formalize their relationship to artists through contracts. Those contracts are not always seen as convenient enough by some artists who seek for alternative paths to develop their careers.

Informal exchange of music is also a major feature. As we have already said artists – especially younger ones – take it as natural and use the informal market and internet and mobile downloads as a diffusion platform.

Greater Buenos Aires major informal market fair, La Salada, is also considered by groups, especially those that are following the independent path. They know that their discs have to be there to be distributed all over the country by smaller informal market fairs and street vendors. They even pay to an informal wholeseller to release their discs at that major fair.

Informality shared social representations don't necessarily figure non-formal exchanges as illegal as they are part of everyday life. Two major issues are involved. One of them involves taxes. Although people is aware that unregistered sales and purchases have no means to be taxed, they usually don't think that shopkeepers charge them with the whole taxed price, including VAT, that they don't pay to the State and instead retain, and go normally about their everyday purchases. This issue doesn't seem to affect Movida Tropical and Cumbia Villera business in any way different that it does to the country's economy. The second issue is related to intellectual property licences. A wide variety of copied goods are commercialized in the country. This affect not only recorded music, but also movies, software and licensed clothing and merchandising. Cumbia Villera artists present two attitudes towards these goods: while they accept as natural that their discs and songs circulate freely through the Internet and exchanged between a mobile phone and another, and that copies of their records would be sold in fairs and streets, they use original branded sports clothing. Their ability to pay for originals seems to play a role in the image building of these artists before themselves and before their peers and audiences.

¹⁸ Persons under Monotributo regulations pay a fixed taxes amount monthly according to the previous quarter invoiced revenue. This amount includes basic social security and health insurance coverage.

Open business models could give a formalization alternative for independent productions that today don't hold contracts that prevent them to record outside their limits, as long as that doesn't affect their live shows authors' rights incomes as we will see later on this report.

b. Cumbia Villera economy basics

The basics of the current state of Cumbia Villera economy follow the paths and ways of the Movida Tropical. Estimations are that Cumbia Villera and its related styles represent around 25/35% of the business in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (AMBA), which includes Buenos Aires City (CABA) and Greater Buenos Aires Area (GBA).

In Cumbia Villera business a set of economic actors, which perform key activities can be found:

Actor	Description
Cumbia Villera Groups	A group that performs mainly Cumbia Villera genre and can be identified for other actors as such.
Group owner	A person that holds ownership of a Cumbia Villera group. Most of the times can be either a musician or an executive producer. It is responsible for executing the idea of the group, signing contracts, hiring musicians, making agreements with investors.
Executive producers	Main investor. Many times it is the same persons that owns the group.
Group leader	It is the key musician of the group, the one that gives it its identity. Most times it is the singer but it can also be the "animador". It can be the owner of the group. When the executive producer is independent, it can be associated as a partner.
Hired musicians	Waged musicians hired to form the group. They get paid per show, and per recorded song.
Agent	A position hired by the executive producers, it is responsible for live shows sales. Sometimes producers act as agents themselves.
Manager	Position reporting to the agent, they are in charge of collecting live shows payments and fill out authors' rights forms for songs performed in live shows.
Author	Person who writes lyrics. Most of the times are also music composers.
Musical producer	Person in charge of songs performing aesthetics.
Bailes	Key economic actor. Dance clubs where live shows are performed. They are the main source of revenue for the whole business.
Bailes' "programadores"	Persons in charge of hiring and scheduling live shows at bailes.
Sound system	Companies that owns sound equipment. They are hired by the executive producers for

Actor	Description
companies	live shows.
Transportation	Companies or independent vans owners that are hired to transfer musicians from baile to baile.
Recording musicians	Professional musicians hired to perform for disc recording. They are paid per song recorded. They are different from the group's members.
Recording studios and technicians	Professional studios where discs are recorded and their sound's engineers. They can be independent or mainstream.
Record Companies	Companies dedicated to the original music record industry. In Movida Tropical they tend to have interests in the whole business, including executive producing of bands and live shows.
Distribution companies	Companies that hold agreements with Record Companies to distribute original records to formal points of sales with national range.
Sales force	Individual salesmen hired by executive producers, reporting to agents mainly dedicated to other cities (no Buenos Aires) and abroad show sales.
Other cities/abroad promoters	Other Argentinean cities and other countries impresarios that hire groups for live shows.
Theatres	Venues where live shows are performed on some occasions. They are not very common in Cumbia Villera business. Theatre shows are priced higher than bailes'. They also last longer.
Community centers and clubs	Venues where novel groups perform at the beginning of their careers, given that they have not a way to perform as bailes yet.
Local and bailes' radio stations Radio stations Hosts and musical directors.	Key communication means for diffusion in the Greater Buenos Aires Area. Hosts and musical directors are the main decision-makers about broadcasting.
"Difusores"	Promotion professionals hired by executive producers or agents to distribute diffusion cuts CD to radio stations and arrange for live interviews at radio shows.
TV shows	There is only one open air TV (not cable) specialized Movida Tropical show broadcasted currently. It is a key actor because it represents the major item of initial groups or discs launching investments.
Magazines and papers	Press diffusion, especially "Música de mi Tierra" which is the only specialized printed magazine edited.
Internet websites and communities	Key actor for formal and informal diffusion of songs. There is a wide variety of sites maintained for different key actors: bailes', fans', media's, Record Companies', Mobile

Actor	Description
	Communications Companies'.
Mobile communication companies	Key actor for digital music sales and downloads. They hold agreements with Record Companies.
Formal points of sales	Key sales actors for original CD sales. There are few Greater Buenos Aires Area independent shops that are directly contacted by executive producers when production is independent.
Informal wholeseller.	Wholeseller that introduces original indepent produced discs to the main informal maket fair in the country: La Salada. Groups pay wholesalers to do so.
Informal street vendors and fairs.	Independent salemen that informally sale discs.
Authors' rights association (SADAIC)	Institution responsible for collecting authors' rights fees, and distribute them to authors.

It is important to keep in mind that these economic actors represent economic roles more than individuals, and that a single person can act as two or more actors according to the economic task or activity that he is developing.

Usually, a group starts as an idea, and the social networking capabilities of its owner play an important role to bring the group to existence.

Social networking is extremely important in this business. Many people is known by its nickname: "El tigre" (the tiger), "El traidor" (the traitor), "El cabezón" (big head guy), "El Pirata" (the pirate), "El Yankee" and they communicate constantly among themselves using a Nextel push to talk mobile communications system. Relationships are cordial, not familiar, and a polite courtesy code is respected although the tone can be taken as informal by outsiders.

1. The idea: several development paths

This initial idea can be an artist's or a producer's. On occasions, it is the same person.

When an artist with no production capabilities available yet is the one who comes up with the idea, the path is harder and depends on his ability to sell the idea, if he has already started working as a musician in a band, or in another supporting tasks (stage and sound aids, web programmer, graphic designer, sales representative, manager, driver), and how well connected he is at that time

through his job, his family or even as a baile's regular customer. If he has no connections whatsoever in either the mainstream or independent production world, the way is harder and in many times unsuccessful.

Most interviewees reported that kids' neighborhood bands bring home-made records to radio stations and bailes, upload their works to websites (on rare occasions they are charged up to AR\$ 200 – USD 60 per song by sites administrators), share them through social interaction networks like MSN or directly through their cell phones. The chance to be actually heard is almost random and, as we have said, depends on the connections they have already built (it is possible that a DJ would hear a sample disc brought by a regular customer for instance).

If they are lucky and work hard, they start performing at informal events, or at community or social neighborhood clubs, without getting paid or if the event is somehow important, for a minimum fee (AR\$ 300/500 / USD 90/150) , that covers basic costs like instruments and basic equipment transportation.

Information about how many struggling groups are, is not available. Most interviewees couldn't precise or estimate a number. Opinions on this matter are not consistent: some think that there are dozens, whereas others believe that there aren't many depending on how they figure a group. For some of them, it is enough if a bunch of kids gets together and start composing and playing no matter quality of lyrics and music; for some others, a group has to have a minimum of musical training just to play decently, a style and somehow good lyrics. Since no many groups can reach the instances where they work is actually listened, there isn't much information about how many they are.

When the artist has a well knitted net of connections or has already started in the business, the path is clearer, but not necessarily easier. In these cases depends on his ability to attract a producer. If the producer is independent, he has good chances to become a business partner and the possibility to make other businesses in the future. If he brings the idea to a traditional executive producer, it is probably that the producer becomes the owner of the group or that he offers him a contract. Many young Cumbia Villera artists prefer the independent producer path, because they don't feel obligated and it allows them to keep their independence.

When the artist with the new idea has built executive producing capabilities (both enough money to invest and a relationships network) he can either associate with another producer to share the investment effort or produce the group by himself.

When the producer is the one with the idea, he immediately begins scouting and recruiting the band members. In Cumbia Villera groups, the leader - usually the singer or the animador – is the critical position to be filled. A producer either associates the singer or signs with him a long term contract (from 3 to 5 years).

When the artist is the sole owner or one of the owners of the group he acts as singer or animador in most cases. Sometimes he just writes the songs and artistically produces the band (as in the case of Pablo Lescano with Flor de Piedra), and hires other artists as members.

2. Forming the group: members and investment. First steps. Basic expenses

Hired members of the band usually bring their own instruments; although in some cases the owner owns them (investment in equipment is around AR\$ 15/20 thousand / USD 4.350/5.800 for the whole band). A group usually has between 6 and 10 members.

The name of the band is registered as a brand (around AR\$ 200 / USD 60) before the authorities¹⁹.

Rehearsals are also a group's activity, but since Cumbia Villera groups don't rehearse systematically but just when it is needed – like when they have new songs to be learned, or they have booked a show in a venue they have recently played in –, it doesn't represent a significant economic activity.

Initial investment in a Cumbia Villera band is in the order of the AR\$ 20 thousand / USD 5800 for the first two months if considering TV show appearances (AR\$ 3.000 / USD 870 per unit that can be negotiated for 4 shows for an average of AR\$ 1.500/2.000 / USD 435/580).

Sometimes the TV producing company that owns the major TV show, *Pasión de Sábado*, participates as a partner for a share of about 25% of the gross revenue. This is a controversial point for most interviewees.

Investments include administrative costs, accountants and legal aid fees, and installed capacity expenses.

Some Record Companies have group production capabilities associated, and also participate in this part of the business through contracts.

As soon as the group is formed and ready to start working, the owner makes an agreement with an agent (in a few cases is the same person) and the show sales process begins.

It has two paths: on one hand, the agent (in very few occasions through sales representatives) contacts relevant *bailes'* programadores and try to negotiate a first trial presentation for a price that only covers expenses that he tries to negotiate to the maximum possible:

¹⁹ Registro Nacional de Marcas y Patentes. www.inpi.gov.ar

The following tables connects trial shows prices paid by Bailes with expenses that are covered by each trial show price. That means that minimal trial show prices usually covers only sound system and transportation expenses and the difference is covered by the executive producer.

Higher trial shows prices allow executive producers to hire better sound systems and prevent him to risk wages money as well. When agents are not able to negotiate trial shows prices high enough to cover up expenses, executive producers take a money risk with the trial show. So, if they are able to charge AR\$ 1200/1500 / USD 350/435 means that they are going to be able to cover sound and transportation expenses and probably the executive producer would have to pay musician and manager wages.

Basic Shows' Expenses	
Sound system	Standard service: AR\$ 500/800 USD 145/230 Basic service: AR\$ 200 / USD 58
Transportation	AR\$ 150/200 USD 45/60
Musicians wages	AR\$ 40/60 each hired musician USD 12/17
Singer/"animador" wages	AR\$ 80/150 USD 23/44 (can reach AR\$175/250 USD 50/73 when they are partners)
Manager wage	AR\$ 50/60 USD 15/17

Minimum trial price
charge to relevant bailes for novel group show. Each mentioned price range covers up to the items indicated in the adjacent expenses boxes.
AR\$ 1.200/1.500 USD 350/435 These prices usually cover only sound and transportation expenses
AR\$ 1.500/2.000 USD 435/580 These prices usually cover sound, transportation and musicians wages
AR\$ 2.000/AR\$ 2.500 USD 580/725 These prices usually cover sound, transportation, musicians, singer, "animador" and manager wages

In smaller bailes, these prices drop to AR \$ 500/1.000 USD 145/290.

On the other hand, a sampling record is released to be used as sales material. Most Cumbia Villera groups record these works at home-studios, and in some occasions at independent studios (studio hour costs around AR\$ 30/40 USD 9/12).

3. Career moment and bailes types: value drivers

Once the group proved successful in a show, the prices start to rise meeting the levels of an already known group. We have found three levels of groups – excluding still aspiring not yet tried groups - depending on moment in their career they are going through:

- **Newer group:** it is a group that still is at its beginnings. It has already been tried at bailes' live shows with some success. They have not been “iced”²⁰ – at least not much –, and people wouldn't leave the place when they get at stage.

If any of the group members has a known career of his own, the group would not stay at this level very long. If this is the case, the group is likely to get a regular fee for its shows right from the start.

- **Middle group:** it is a group that already has achieved some career success, either because of its continuity (A Geder, for instance) or because it has achieved success quickly (La Liga). If this group is still new, success gives it the right to a higher price. However, as it has yet not proved that it can sustain this success over time, it cannot get a very popular group's fees. But this new, highly successful group can make a substantial money difference by the increased quantity of shows they are able to perform in a weekend.

- **Very popular group:** it is a group that has already built a reputation, has remained in business for a considerable time, and as a sure bet for bailes, is able to charge higher prices. The undisputed leader of this tier is Damas Gratis.

There are about 30 groups working in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (AMBA) that are mentioned by the interviewees. Ten of them are mentioned as active with some level of agreement: Damas Gratis, La Liga, El Perro, 18 Kilates, Néstor en Bloque, El Empuje, A Geder, Supermerk-2, La Base, La Repandilla.

We estimate that there are about 10 other groups not very active in AMBA in different stages of their careers. Some of them have a considerable activity in other Argentinean towns and cities. Some interviewees mentioned: Play, Pibes Chorros, Pala Ancha, Noches de Cumbia, Lele, Eh! Guacho, and others.

All of them can be defined as performing Cumbia Villera although styles may differ.

²⁰ Cumbia Villera audiences express their disapproval to a performance by throwing ice cubes to musicians. See page 34 of this report.

We also estimate that there are about 10 other groups have styles that refer to Cumbia Villera or have songs that can be considered Cumbia Villera, but cannot be classified as Cumbia Villera. Interviewees have mentioned: La banda del Lechuga, El Original, Agrupación Marilyn, 2 de abril, Yonas and others.

As groups have an intense activity in other Argentinean cities, we estimate that an average of 20 of them work in AMBA during any given month. Movida Tropical includes many other tropical genres groups.

Shows prices also depends on each baile's capacity:

- **Major Bailes:** they are clubs with a great capacity. They can hold up to 4.000/5.000 people fulfilling government regulations. Besides capacity size, major bailes usually are very popular, have several bars and enjoy audiences' preference. Most have very accessible locations, on major arteries, near train or bus stations. They also have a tight security, and have agreements with police officers to increase order maintenance inside and outside the facility. On Saturdays, average attendance is about 3.500 people, but on Fridays attendance falls down up to 3 times and even more on Sundays.
- **Important bailes:** they are clubs that can hold up to 3.500 people. They Saturdays attendance average is about 2.800, and it also lessens heavily on Fridays and Sundays. They also have accessible locations, but facilities have less variety.
- **Minor bailes:** they are a club sthat can hold up to 1.500/2.000 people with an average attendance of 1.200 on Satudays, and 600 on Fridays. They rarely open on Sundays.

Show prices depend on the combination of these two factors: baile size and group career status:

Show prices	New group trial show "expenses only"	Newer group	Middle group	Very popular group	
Major baile	AR\$ 1.200/ 2.500 USD 350 / 725	AR\$ 3.500 USD 1015	AR\$ 3.500/4.000 USD 1.015/1.160	AR\$ 5.000/8.000 USD 1.450/2.320	Depending on popularity and career moment
Important baile	AR\$ 1.200/ 2.000 USD 350 / 580	AR\$ 2.500/3.000 USD 725/870	AR\$ 3.000/3.500 USD 870/1015	N/A	
Minor baile	AR\$ 500 /1.000 USD 145/ 290	AR\$ 800/1.200 USD 230/350	AR\$ 2.000/2.200 USD 580/640	N/A	

Bailes' investment capacity in shows originated in entrance tickets and bar expenditures.

Executive producers get around 50% of the price. That fee includes agent's (20/30%), and promotion expenses. When the artist is the group owner and produces himself he obtains around 20/30% percent of the show prices. This is the main reason why the preferred career path of young artists involves becoming a producer to acquire economic autonomy and being able to provide jobs for family and close friends.

On occasions, Cumbia Villera groups in their beginnings or already established, offer free shows for "Festivales Solidarios" (Solidarity Festivals). These are activities organized by civil society organizations to raise money or to make known a particular cause they are working on with the neighborhoods' communities. Groups participate mainly because they can and they care, but they are also aware that it constitutes another way to get close to their audiences.

4. Live shows authors' rights: key copyright issue

If the songs' author and composer have associated to SADAIC²¹, the local author's copyright administration institution, they keep records of the songs they perform at the show to declare them. This task is usually performed by the manager of the group. They declare their own and also those of other authors. SADAIC collects a fee from the bailes. SADAIC then pays rights to authors on a four month basis. This is the only copyright instance to which Cumbia Villera authors pay attention and value as a regular source of income. They estimate that an average author a copyright's income is around AR\$ 4.000 / USD 1.160 every four months.

Authors look forward to join SADAIC and register their songs as a way to legally protect authorship of their work in an scenario of hard working conditions. But once they started receiving their earnings on a regular basis.

5. Recording a disc: independent and mainstream paths

Meanwhile, the group starts working on a disc. It can be recorded through mainstream companies or independent. There are several mainstream, traditional way of doing business, Record Companies in the Movida Tropical at the moment: Magenta, Parulo, Procom, Barca Music, Lef. There is another important Record Company, Leader Music that not longer participates in the Movida Tropical Business, but still commercializes older Movida Tropical records, including Cumbia Villera. World major companies hardly participate in the Movida Tropical business. Independent companies, like Genoma Records, which edits Damas Gratis, have more flexible

²¹ SADAIC: Sociedad Argentina de Autores y Compositores

ways for doing business. In all cases, innovation is being sought by most companies, either independent or mainstream style in order to find new paths for their businesses.

Investments on disc recording range from AR\$ 2000 / USD 580 for independent companies to AR\$ 15000 / USD 4350 depending on the type of company and kind of recording they have in mind. Recording one disc can take about 60 hours, and in most cases professional musicians different from the members of the group are hired. A group member musician when participates in the recording is paid by song the same wage that he earns in a show (AR\$ 40/60 / USD 12/18). Professional musicians hired for recording earn up to (AR\$ 200 / USD 58) per song.

In the case of independent recording, not always records reach mainstream point of sales, but are offered to small independent and local stores directly. Independent recording groups also release their records on in the informal market through a wholesaler that charges around AR\$ 250/300 USD 72/87 up to AR\$ 500 / USD 145 to introduce it to the city's biggest wholesale informal market, La Salada that attracts buyers from all over the country and border countries as well. They estimate the wholesaler makes about 5.000 copies, and it is impossible for them to think how many copies are made from these first ones.

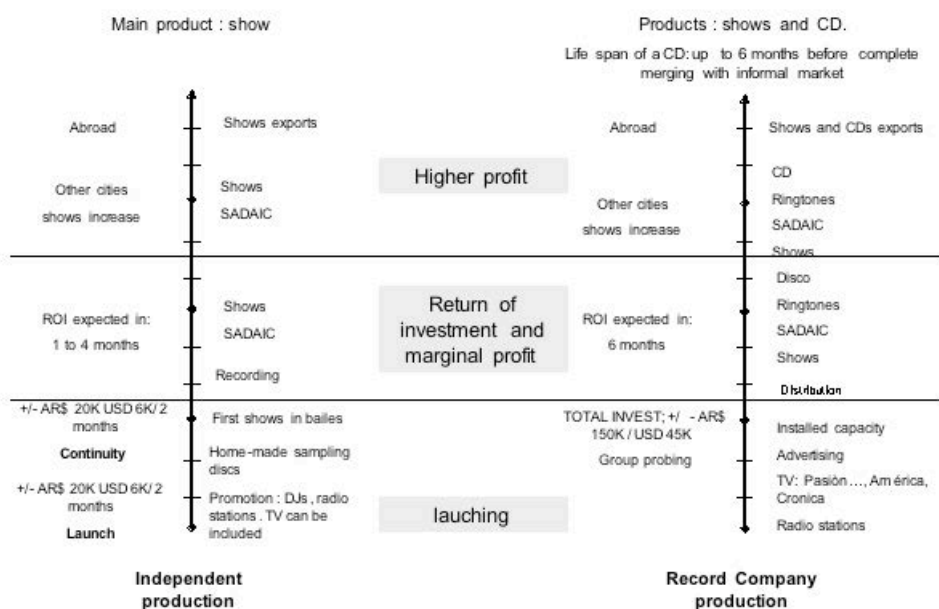
Smaller fairs' vendors and street vendors buy their copies in La Salada, and sell them on the streets or parlors.

Informal vendors also trade fake CD copies or compilations and remixes made by DJs. There is no way of properly track these copies.

In the case of mainstream Record Companies the whole process is much more involved, and the figures are higher. As we have already mentioned, Record Companies are diversifying their business and they not only make records, but participate in the whole production and sales process. Since a few years ago, some companies take care of the complete business or at least parts of it besides the actual recording of discs. When a group owner signs a contract with a Record Company, could sign for the whole operation. Duration varies from company to company and group to group. In many cases, companies record discs, design cover art, print, work with a publisher (this particular actor appeared only a few times in the interviews, its role has faded, and it is regarded as non-convenient by Cumbia Villera artists), a distribution company that can reach the whole country, have agreements with cell phone companies for digital sales, produce the shows, hire an agent, a manager and difusores, make agreements with radio stations and TV shows. A Record Company can invests up to AR\$ 150000 / USD 43500 (with all costs and expenses included) for a four months period for a group launching. This is for a Movida Tropical group in general.

The following chart illustrates independent and the more involved Record Companies production differential paths. There are simpler roads for Record or Production Companies that don't get into all the instances presented in this chart and have less installed capacities maintenance costs.

Group launching roads



6. Diffusion activities: a multiplatform realm

Once records are printed, the already mentioned sampling record is cut and the campaign to promote the disc begins. Producers or agents hired “difusores”, a sort of broadcasting promoters that work geographically (there are difusores for the northern, western and southern areas of Gran Buenos Aires) working to connect groups with radio stations. Their job is paid on a daily basis an average of AR\$ 80/100 USD 23/29 per day and a single payment of around AR\$ 300 / USD 87 for sampling record distribution. A “difusor” works in a single release for about a week.

Radio stations are the key traditional mass media players in Cumbia Villera broadcasting. Groups visit mainly *bailes*’ stations²² along with the “difusor”, usually a few days before a show is performed and when a new disc is released. The group leader (usually the singer or the “animador”) participates as a guest in a radio show, and while having a casual chat with the host, informs fans about band news, upcoming shows, and presents new songs.

If the group is very popular or a regular feature in that particular *baile* or it is about to offer a show, the station doesn’t charge for broadcasting songs, since it considers this as a part of its own business promotion. Some *baile*’ stations don’t charge any artists or group for broadcasting, some other do charge a fee to unknown groups. Prices are ranged from AR\$ 500 / USD 145 to AR\$ 1.200 / USD 350 for complete songs broadcasting and “microguías” (advertising pieces) during a month.

Appearances on the major TV show “Pasión de Sábado” are regarded as “useless” for most interviewees. However, also most of them consider this show as a part of their investment budget; even some independent productions do so. Common agreement is that radio stations are the major and more important traditional medium to get close to and interact with the audience, at least for the Greater Buenos Aires area where this research was conducted. But as shows in other Argentinean cities far away from Buenos Aires are a rather important part of the business and where all Cumbia Villera groups work intensively, value of the long range capability of TV to reach those audiences is very much appreciated. “Pasión de Sábado” is the only open TV show that it is broadcasted now, and that seems to be a problem for a large part of the *Movida Tropical* community. Monopolist characteristics of the show are resented and for some, a discretionary management of presentations fees and agreements as well. In any case, as much as they would like it, they cannot afford not being on “Pasión de Sábado” if they want to increase their show sales outside Buenos Aires.

That is not the case of some well regarded and respected people in the industry like Daniel Lescano or Cumbia Villera classics that almost not perform in Buenos Aires, like *Pibes Chorros* or *Pala Ancha* that keep playing in other Argentinean towns and cities without being on TV.

²² *Bailes*’ radio stations are called “puntuales” by the tropical community. It means “to the point”.

Internet dissemination of CDs and songs is a given fact, an assumption, something completely naturalized for most young Cumbia Villera artists. They assume that their work is going to have a life by itself outside the limits of the disc, or the home recorded songs posted by them. They know that they cannot control it (the whole concept of controlling what is going on over the internet is foreign for those who haven't had much interaction with the industry yet), and they leave it that way. They recognize the promotion value of on-line circulation of songs, and use it at will. They actually don't care very much about who made a post, and enjoy greatly when incidentally run into one of their songs while browsing.

While internet music exchange is a natural fact for younger artists, it's read as piracy by older and traditional players. But for them it is also an uncontrollable fact, and they realize that it is a powerful diffusion mean.

Mobile broadcasting plays a major role in the circulation of Cumbia Villera groups' songs. They think it as related to the internet exchanges, and like in that case, they don't think about the legality or illegality of the practice but see it as a particularly powerful mean to reach their audiences, to make their work visible. Asked about how his songs reach the internet, "El Cave" (nickname that is a shorter version of "El Cavernícola", which means prehistoric cave dweller), a young singer who is being successful at this time, answered: *"Maybe we've given it to a kid, he downloads it and that's it. It's all over. I send it to that kid from my phone to his using Bluetooth and that's it."*

"El Cave" also would like to get a sort of Bluetooth signal emitter device that he's recently learned about to transmit his group songs to the audience during shows: *"it is a thing where you download a song. Then you say in the baile: 'turn on all the cell phones'. All phones turned on, a thousand with Bluetooth. This thing shoots some waves and sends all the songs to them."*

He would be willing to invest the 20 thousand US dollars that he thinks it costs if he had them.

Another important actor in the diffusion circuit that is critical for groups are DJs. They not only manage music played at the bailes, and decide trying a new group work or a new song if they like it, but assess the mood of the audience and prepare it to receive the live shows. DJs also remix songs, and create original records that they give to their radio stations' audiences.

DJs usually work at bailes' radio stations as musical directors and can also work as broadcast operators. Technology is a decisive tool for them. They use specialized equipment and software. Some DJs make compilation CDs ordered by informal wholesaler.

DJs are bailes' employees. They are paid around AR\$ 150/200 USD 45/60 by night when acting as resident DJs, and a salary for their work as musical directors of radio stations.

7. Author rights issue and Open Business Model evaluation

Cumbia Villera artists mainly consider two types of copyrights, and a third type is mentioned as known about but it has little relevance among them:

1. First and most important are the already mentioned rights fees derived from the public execution of songs in live shows. They consider their own performances because they have registries and control over them through SADAIC's "execution registry" forms that are usually completed after each show by their manager with the lists of works of their own authorship and others' as well. They know that other groups may also perform some of their works and declare it to SADAIC, but they have no means to control it other than the good will of their colleagues to tell them that were included in their registry form.
2. Second are the rights derived from formal CDs sales. They are perfectly aware that these are performers' rights, and that they are an integral part of the contracts they sign with Record Companies²³. They also know that these rights oscillate between the 3% and the 10% of the CD sales²⁴. Artists consider these rights, but as CD sales are low, they don't regard them as a significative income. Besides, some young artists don't entirely trust Record Companies. They are suspicious about the sales figures companies inform. Taking all these into account, they think that these rights are not worth compromising independency. When a Cumbia Villera group works with a Record Company, it does it for other benefits, mainly its distribution strength. Performers' rights are among the issues they discuss with the company, but definitively they are not a priority.
3. Third are rights for public broadcast of their work as performers, not authors. They almost don't mention them, and they don't take them into account, with the exception of a long career musician very interested in authors' rights as income source. These rights are collected by AADI-CAPIF an association of the institution that represents performers (AADI) and another one that represents phonograms and videograms producers (Record Companies). Rights are distributed to performers through AADI. In order to be able to draw these rights legally, the artists must be an AADI member²⁵.

²³ Regulated by art. 56 - Ley 11.723

²⁴ Lawful limits are 2% to 10%

²⁵ Decreto 1671/74

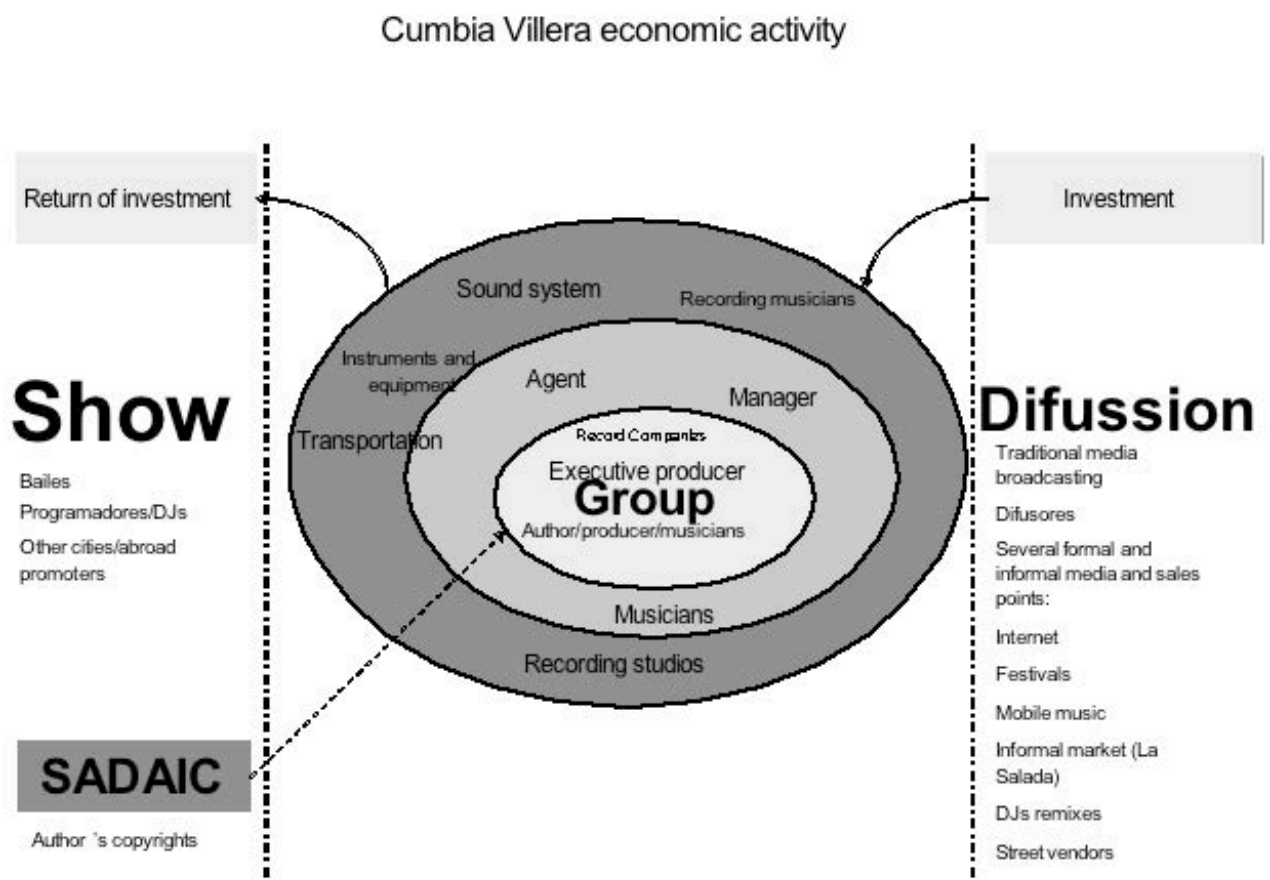
Open business models evaluation

All interviewees were asked to consider an alternative business model that doesn't rely on author's rights necessarily but rather on the free circulation of works protected by open licenses.

All of them understood perfectly what this is about. Artists consider that free circulation of works is already a fact. They cannot see the advantage in a model that would prevent them to collect authors' rights earned in their own group shows for performing their own works. That represents the main obstacle raised by the concept among musicians. Other profiles, not authors, find this same weakness in the idea.

As long as live shows authors' rights are compromised by any open business model, artists would not see its feasibility.

The following chart serves a synthesis of Cumbia Villera Economics:



VIII. Cumbia Villera economics: key actors and activities

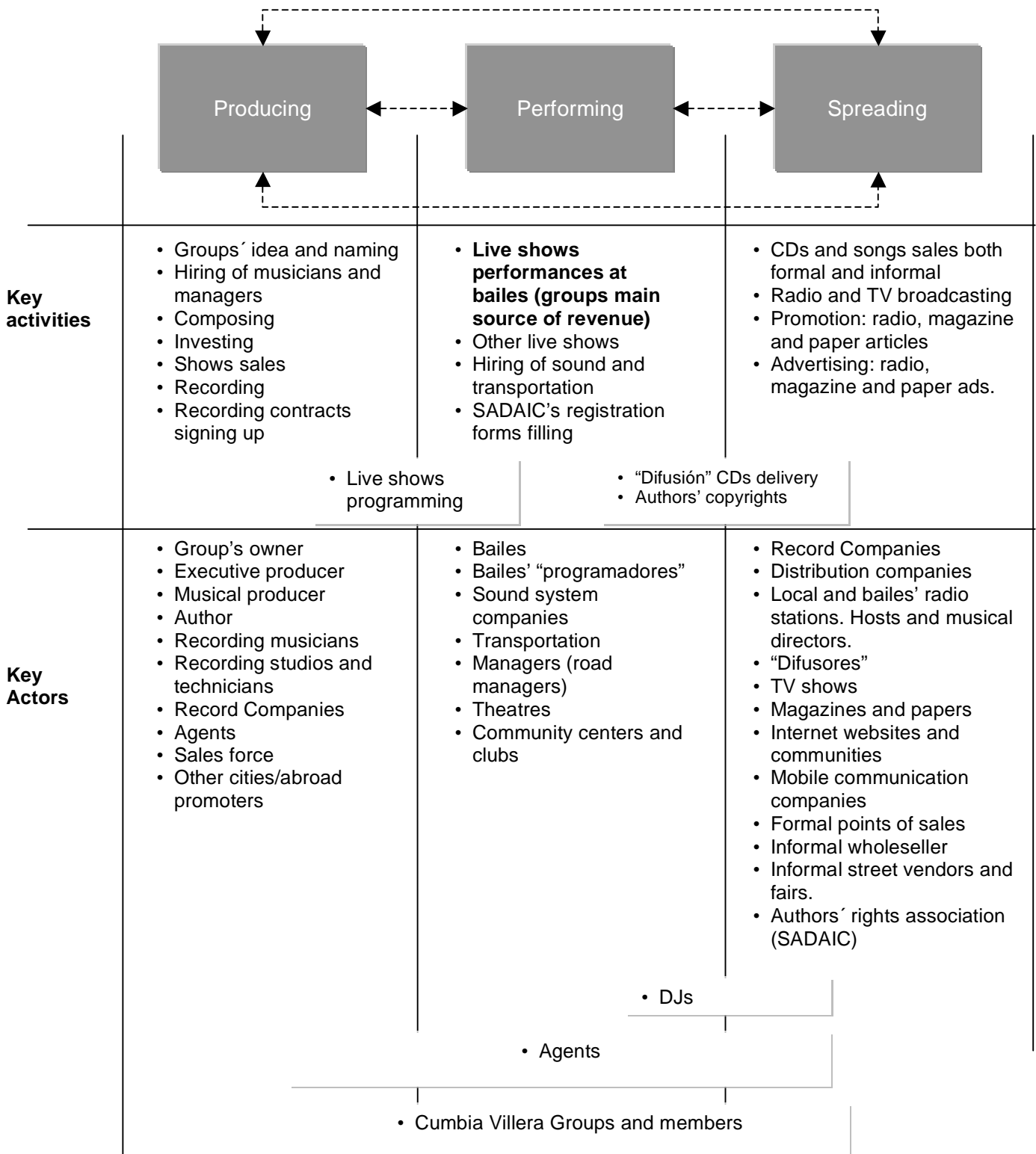
Whereas shows are the main source of revenue for groups and what keep business running, an intricate wave of economic actors and relationships organizes around them.

Cumbia Villera economics can be organized in three major phases: producing, performing and spreading. In all three areas we have found formal, traditional and mainstream practices and also informal, alternative and independent practices that don't describe separate paths necessarily but coexist and combine.

Relationships among these three phases are dynamic, and although a group success and continuity depends on its ability to offer a good live show, and to produce attractive songs, it cannot be sustainable either economically or artistically without the other two.

All relevant information refers to Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (AMBA), composed by the City of Buenos Aires (CABA) and the Greater Buenos Aires (GBA).

The following chart displays the key economic activities and actor involved in each of the three phases:



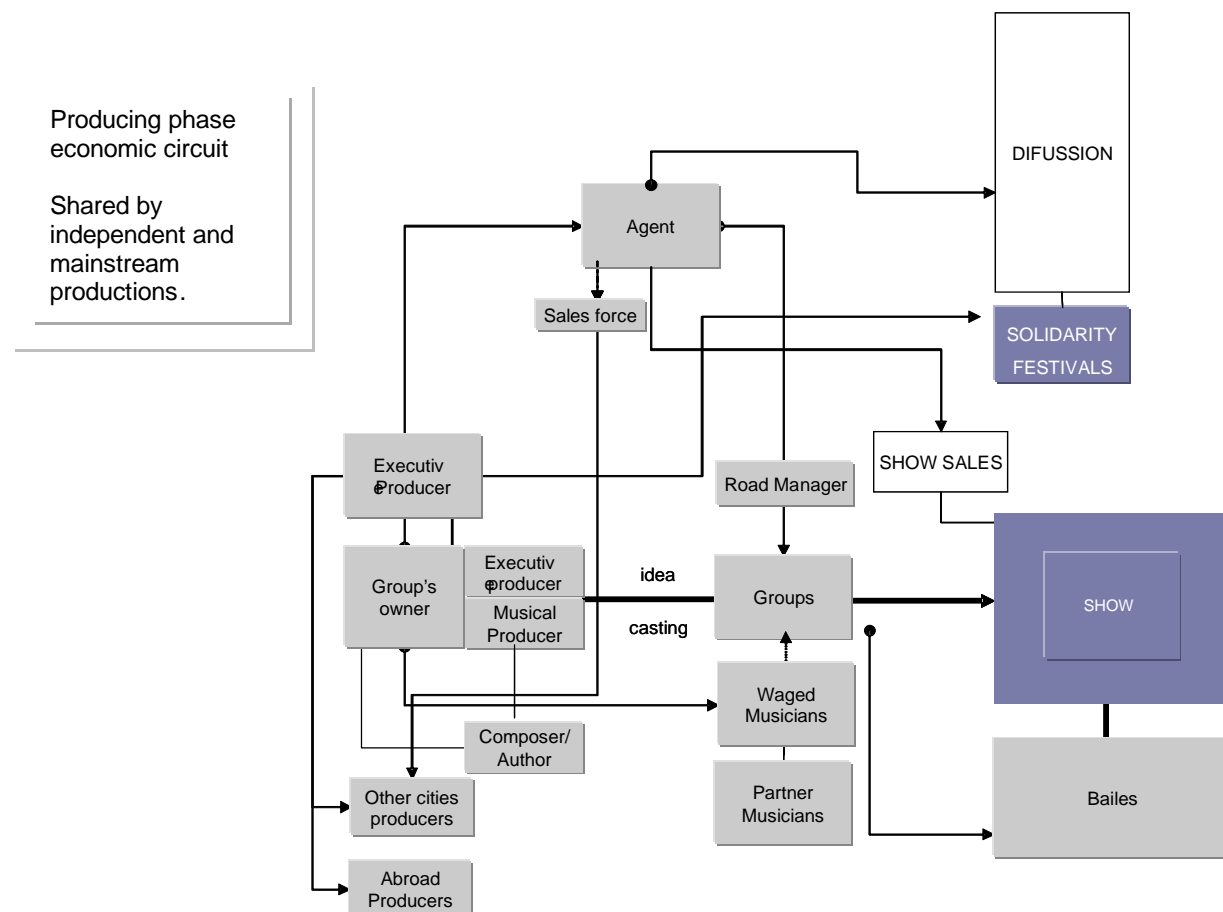
As it happens in the Movida Tropical business, Cumbia Villera key economic actors represent roles rather than people and it is very common that a single person fills several roles displaying their corresponding activities.

In the following sections actors' functions and economic activities are organized. It is important to keep in mind that several economic roles as actors sometimes are displayed by the same person. For instance, investments are executive producers' activities. On some occasions, a group owner can also be the executive producer of the group, but the investment activity corresponds to his executive producing capabilities rather than to his group's owner condition.

1. Cumbia Villera Producing Phase: Key Actors and Activities

Producing area activities involve the creatives of the Cumbia Villera economics as well as investment making and groups' formation casting.

Key actors											
	Cumbia Villera Groups	Recording musicians	Recording studios and technicians	Record Companies	Group's owners	Executive producers	Musical producers	Authors	Agents	Sales Force	Other cities/abroad promoters
Key activities	Recording				Group's idea and naming		Recording/ shows aesthetics	Composing	Live shows programming		
				Recording Contracts' signing up					Shows sales		
				Investing	Hiring of musicians	Investing					
					Signing up contracts with Record Companies	Hiring of agent			Hiring of managers		



Production phase circuits are rather standardized: owner and executive producers have an agreement for shows commercialization and booking. This is channeled through an agent that treats with bailes' programadores for sales and booking and hires a manager to be responsible for collecting earnings at the shows and fulfillment of SADAIC's registry forms.

Agreements include musicians casting, composing and artistics; as well as recording of trial songs and CDs. When the group has already record previous CDs and has built a career, trials are cut from new CDs. Executive producer makes the initial investment for the whole process, and group owner is responsible for musicians casting, composing and musical artistic producing.

All this part of the process is oriented to sell shows.

Mainstream and independent economic circuits take the same path at the production stage. Differences are not to be found in the circuits themselves, but in actors' profile, relationship status, and amount of money involved:

When an independent executive producer and group owner are different people, relationship between them tend to be informal. It can be a partnership or an informal contract.

In some cases, the independent executive producer and group owner is the same person.

Investments are usually the minimum required to get the cycle started.

When a Record Company is involved in executive producing, relationship is formalized through a signed contract for a time period and usually encompasses the whole producing, recording, and diffusion activities. Author and performers rights issues are more involved since both of them are included in the contract. Investments are bigger and are aimed farther.

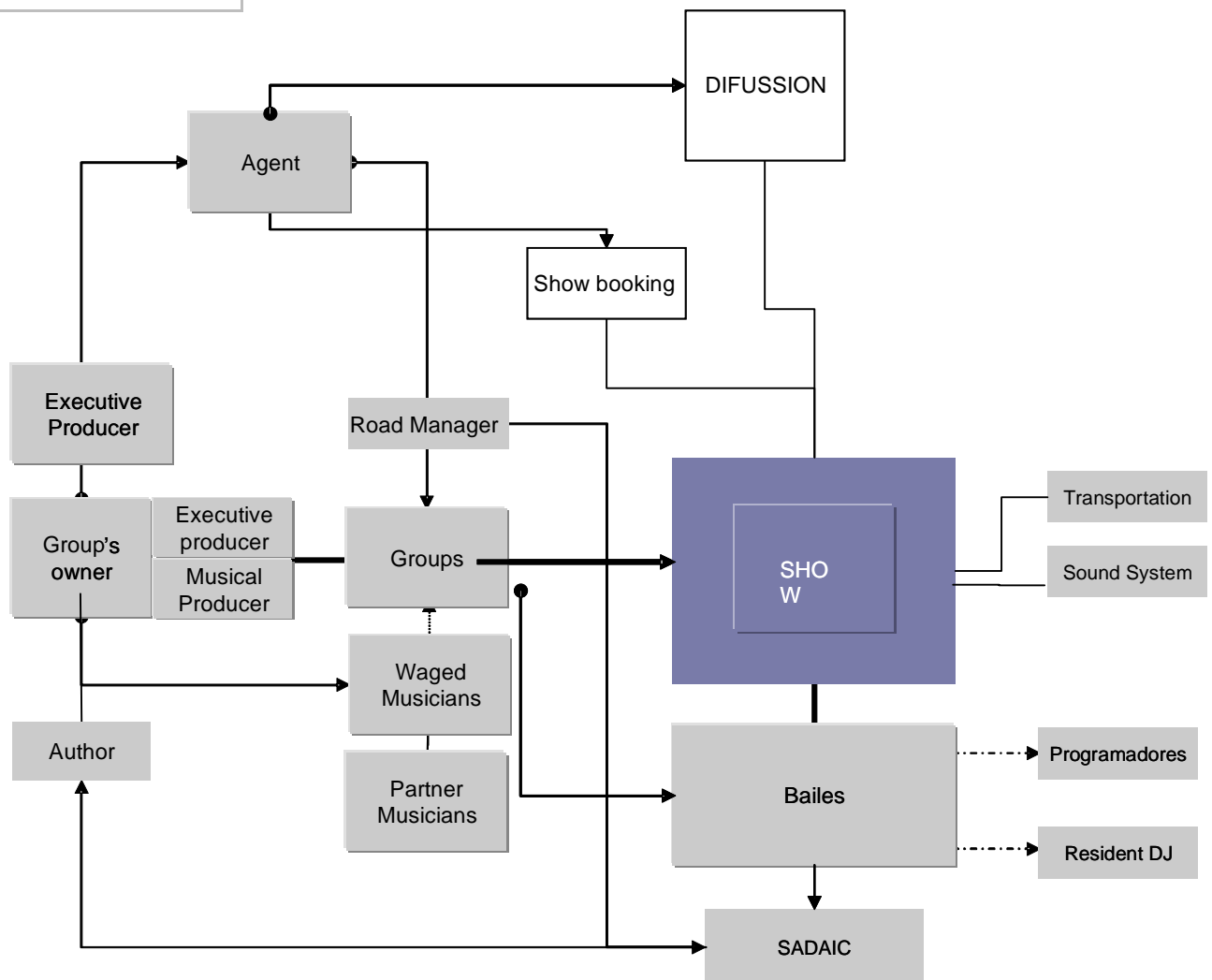
2. Performing Phase: Key Actors and Activities

Performing activities involved live shows tasks specifically. This is the main source of revenue for most actors. Authors' rights registration is included in this phase.

	Key Actors									
	Bailes	Theatres	Community centers and clubs	Bailes' Programadores	Agents	DJs	Cumbia Villera Groups and members	Road Managers	Sound System Companies	Transportation
Key activities	Show venue lending			Live shows programming		Shows musicalization	Live shows performance	Collecting show fees	Lending and assembling sound systems	Transfers
						Good mooding the audience		SADAIC's registration forms filling		

Performance phase
economic circuit

Shared by
independent and
mainstream
productions.



Economic circuits are also standardized at the performing phase. Once shows are sold, and programmed, agent takes care of hiring transportation, and sound system for the show.

Bailes are the key actor in this stage, since through them revenue is collected. As we've said before, clubs closings after Cromañón tragedy in 2004, which reduced significantly the quantity of available venues; and the new cycle of economic crisis contributed to weaken the whole market bases.

Musicians are paid in wages. They receive a fixed amount per show. They wear sports clothing and sneakers, as usual.

Groups' owners and executive producers share profits and pay expenses.

Managers are in charge of SADAIC registry forms and collecting earnings.

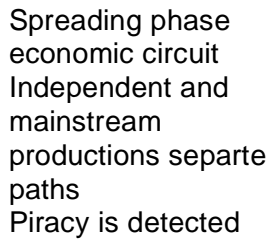
Like in the producing phase, in this one independent and mainstream circuits are the same. Profile and relationships among actors vary in the same fashion than in the previous stage.

3. Spreading Phase: Key Actors and Activities

Spreading involves all tasks and activities related to the promotion, advertising and diffusion of groups and their live performances.

	Key actors							
Table 1	SADAIC (Authors' rights association)	Cumbia Villera Groups	Groups owners	Agents	Difusores	Local and bailes' radio stations and hosts and musical directors	TV Shows	Magazines and papers
Key activities	Collects authors' rights from bailes	Interviews to media	Promotion and press tasks: contacting media		Connecting groups with local and bailes' radio stations	Hosting of live interviews on shows	Live shows Hosting	Interviews and news publishing
	Pays authors every four months	TV performances		Hiring of difusores	Booking of live radio show interviews	Broadcasting songs and Ads	Broadcasting video recorded shows and ads	Ads publishing
				Hiring of sales force	Delivering diffusion CD to radios			

	Key actors							
Table 2	Internet websites and communities	DJs	Record Companies	Distribution Companies	Mobile Communication Companies	Formal Point of sales	Informal Wholeseller	Informal Street vendors and fairs
Key activities	Songs posts hosting	Songs playing at bailes	Sales and distribution of formal CDs and DVDs		Sales of Ringtones and Truetones	Sales of formal CDs and DVDs	Purchase of CD for distribution	CD Informal Sales
	Downloading availability	Remixes and Collections recording	Advertising		Advertising of digital contents		Distribution in informal market	
			Sales of digital songs					
			Mobile Com Companies contracts					



independent and mainstream paths diverge, and piracy issues come into view.

Record Companies tend to encompass all the production, with music in all its support formats (live shows, CDs, DVDs, single digital songs, mobile ringtones and truetones) as the product to be commercialized. They are involved in the live show production business, have diversified hard support and contents recording a more complete product on DVDs; and have opened a new market through agreements with Mobile Communications Companies. They also take charge of promotion and advertising, and offer a solid distribution network for CDs' and DVDs' sales.

Independent economics tend to concentrate on the shows production stages of this economy and treat songs and discs productions as difussion means.

Although undoubtedly mainstream economics are more complex, and their range is wider than independents, both models share media diffusion paths: hiring of difusores for radio stations' activation, TV shows presentations, graphic media promotion and advertising. They both include discs delivery to resident DJs for bailes musicalization as well. Both models hire professional musicians for recording CDs since they are faster and can achieve better musical quality performances.

Differences appear when it comes to commercialization methods and means.

Whereas mainstream models rely on signed contracts that include all the stream of business, and have a tight control over artists careers, including both author's and performer's rights management; independent's tend to focus on shows sales and treat CDs recording and release merely as a diffusion mean. Performer's rights are not a focus, and author's rights are taken care of at shows performing level only. This point is the greatest obstacle we have found for open business formats since live shows author's rights are a steady source of income that registered authors are reluctant to give up. It remains to be analyzed if an open business model retaining live show author's rights is possible.

Commercial paths differences are substantial:

Mainstream models are based on original CDs, DVDs and single songs sales through both traditional (long reach distribution companies – regular point of sales) and innovative distribution means (mobile contents). Piracy issues are a great concern here since copying and informal distribution of protected works begins almost as soon as the recording is finished, enormously shortening the business cycle.

Independent models are base on shows sales, and releasing of records through both formal and informal channels: they record and print original CDs, but also hire informal wholesalers to release the record to the informal market, and distribute freely songs through mobile bluetooth devices and internet websites. Basis of independent business are closer to the idea of massive diffusion to feed live presentations than of the commercialization of recorded music.

IX. Cumbia Villera economic valuations and market estimations

Information gathered during fieldworking offer a good basis to build up an estimation of the size of the Movida Tropical business that develops at bailes, performing live shows. It is necessary to remember that this research has been conducted applying qualitative methodologies, not quantitative surveys, therefore information cannot be treated statistically and estimations are approximated and mainly orientative. However, qualitative sample has presented a high level of saturation regarding consistency of economic information, which contributes to the reliability of the estimations.

Estimations were built considering estimated quantity of dance clubs currently in business for the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (AMBA), which includes Buenos Aires City and Greater Buenos Aires Area only.

Market size estimations consider total Movida Tropical shows performed at bailes:

- Including groups of all cumbia styles enclosing Cumbia Villera and its related styles. Cumbia Villera and its sibling cumbia genres are included in estimations as they cannot be easily isolated since they share venues, executive producers, group owners, Record Companies, even informal market factors.
- Excluding long career traditional cumbia and cuarteto groups which have a different performing frequency at bailes, and have higher live shows prices.

Despite that we have found that other Argentinean cities and abroad shows are a great source of income for Cumbia Villera in particular and Movida Tropical groups in general, exploration of these markets exceeded the limits of this research and were not considered.

We define Movida Tropical market for this estimation as the economic activities developed at Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires bailes, and a complementary share estimated for original CDs' sales that have been calculated upon the live shows estimations since information about Movida Tropical discs sales is not available.

However, a rough estimation about participation of Cumbia Villera can be made considering that some of the Movida Tropical representatives interviewed estimated that Cumbia Villera represents between 25% and 30% of the total tropical market for Buenos Aires Area (Metropolitan Area: Buenos Aires City and Greater Buenos Aires). Then, upon calculation of the total market size for live shows in bailes, a incidence factor for Cumbia Villera specifically was applied, following the mentioned interviewees declarations.

Informal market has been excluded of this estimation as information is not available, and it is not possible to gather through the methodology applied in this research.

Information and estimations has been organized in this chapter as follows:

- i. in the first place, we have summarized economic activities appraisals and economic actors earnings. All calculated figures are based on information emerged during fieldworking and that was already mentioned in different sections of this report.
- ii. then, we have proceeded to indicate calculations methodology and constructed assumptions over which all estimation calculations were made.
- iii. finally, Movida Tropical and Cumbia Villera market sized estimations have been presented.

1. Economic activities appraisals and economic actors earnings summary

Economic activities appraisals and economic earnings are organized according to the three major phases: producing, performing and spreading already described. It is important taking into account that dynamic relationships among these three phases express themselves in the circulation of money involved in the business. Then, launching groups investment, for instance, that is thought as a whole appraisal by executive producers, are later on assigned to different stages and actors. Numbers are for general Movida Tropical business, including Cumbia Villera as one of its main genres as it has been stated before.

Appraisals and earnings summaries are presented in a range from bottom to top estimations. Again, it is important to keep in mind that information was gathered using a qualitative methodology. Thus, figures are descriptive and have no parametric methodological frame to validate them.

Monthly estimations are given where available information allow them. Otherwise, information is simply summarized to facilitate reference.

a. Producing Phase appraisals and earnings summary

Investments

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	3.45	Prices		
		Scale	AR\$	USD
Investment	Group's launching initial investment for a 2 month period - Independent production	Average	20000	5797.10
	Group's launching initial investment for a 4 month period - Record Company	Average	150000	43478.26
	TV shows appearances unit	Average	3000	869.57
	TV shows appearances 4 appearances deal	Bottom	1500	434.78
		Top	2000	579.71
	Instruments and basic equipment investment	Bottom	15000	4347.83
		Top	20000	5797.10
	Group's brand name registry	Average	200	57.97

Recording expenses

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	3.45	Prices			Units (when available) for a disc recording		Total appraisals	
		Scale	AR\$	USD	Qty	Unit	AR\$	USD
Recording expenses	Recording a disc investment (1)	Bottom	2000	579.71		-		
		Top	15000	4347.83		-		
	Groups' musicians recording wage. By song	Bottom	40	11.59	14	songs per disc	560	162.32
		Top	60	17.39	14	songs per disc	840	243.48
	Professional musicians recording wage. By song	Average	200	57.97	14	songs per disc	2800	811.59
	Studio hour (independent)	Bottom	30	8.70	60	hours per discs	1800	521.74
		Top	40	11.59	60	hours per discs	2400	695.65

(1) Investor usually expect a 4 to 6 months period return of investment according to investid amounts. Groups that cannot reach payback in that period risk losing financial support.

Executive producers' and agents' fees

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	3.45	Fees		Average show price		Average shows per month	Total appraisals (bottom and top ranges) Monthly	
				AR\$	USD	Qty per month	AR\$	USD
Executive Producers and Agents fees per Group	Average Executive producers fee (includes agents' fee and advertisement)	Bottom	50%	3000.00	869.57	4	6000	1739.13
		Top	50%	3000.00	869.57	32	48000	13913.04
	Average Agent fee	Bottom	20%	3000.00	869.57	4	2400	695.65
		Top	30%	3000.00	869.57	32	28800	8347.83

There is no information available about how many groups are produced by a single executive producer and represented by a single agent

b. Performing Phase appraisals and earnings summary

Show expenses and employees' wages

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	3.45	Prices per show			Units		Total monthly valuations	
		Scale	AR\$	USD	Range	Average shows per month per group	AR\$	USD
Show expenses and employees wages. There are expected to be covered by shows sale price. Otherwise, executive producer pay for them as part of his investment.	Sound sytem Basic service	Average	200	57.97	-	-	-	-
	Sound sytem Standard service	Bottom	500	144.93	Bottom	4	2000	579.71
					Top	32	16000	4637.68
		Top	800	231.88	Bottom	4	927.54	268.85
					Top	32	7420.29	2150.81
	Transportation per show	Bottom	150	43.48	Bottom	4	600	173.91
					Top	32	4800	1391.30
		Top	200	57.97	Bottom	4	800	231.88
					Top	32	6400	1855.07
	Employee musicians wages	Bottom	40	11.59	Bottom	4	160	46.38
					Top	32	1280	371.01
		Top	60	17.39	Bottom	4	240	69.57
					Top	32	1920	556.52
	Employee Singer/ "animador" wages	Bottom	80	23.19	Bottom	4	320	92.75
					Top	32	2560	742.03
		Top	150	43.48	Bottom	4	600	173.91
					Top	32	4800	1391.30
	Partner Singer/ "animador wages	Bottom	175	50.72	Bottom	4	700	202.90
					Top	32	5600	1623.19
		Top	250	72.46	Bottom	4	1000	289.86
					Top	32	8000	2318.84
	Manager wage	Bottom	50	14.49	Bottom	4	200	57.97
					Top	32	1600	463.77
		Top	60	17.39	Bottom	4	240	69.57
					Top	32	1920	556.52

Authors' rights four month period earnings

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	3.45	Total per author		
		Scale	AR\$	USD
Live shows Author's rights	Authors's four month rights	Average	4000	1159.42

There is no information available about how many either Movida Tropical or Cumbia Villera authors are associated to SADAIC.

c. Spreading Phase prices, appraisals and earnings summary

Diffussion activities

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	3.45	Prices per disc		
		Scale	AR\$	USD
Diffussion activities	"Difusor" fee per working day (estimated 7 per disc)	Bottom	80	23.19
		Top	100	28.99
	"Difusor" fee for record CD cut delivered to radio station	Average	300	86.96
	Radio fees for broadcasting when charged	Bottom	500	144.93
		Top	1200	347.83
	Bailes ' DJs wage. Per night, paid by bailes	Bottom	150	43.48
		Top	200	57.97

Recorded music prices

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	3.45	Prices		
		Scale	AR\$	USD
Recorded Music Market prices	Ringtones/Truetones original downloads	Average	5	1.45
	Original CD	Average	20	5.80
	Copied Informal CD / Compilations/Remixes	Average	5	1.45

There is no available information either about Movida Tropical or Cumbia Villera original CDs sales.

For total Argentinean market sales see Chapter IV. Argentinean Musical Consumptions and CDs sales: General Frame Information of this report.

Mobile digital songs downloads are estimated in about 50/60 thousand by a single major Record Company.

Informal distribution

Exchange Rate USD 1 =	3.45	Prices per disc		
		Scale	AR\$	USD
Informal distribution	Fee paid by the group to an informal wholeseller	Bottom mentioned	250	72.46
		Average mentioned	300	86.96
		Top mentioned	500	144.93

2. Movida Tropical and Cumbia Villera market size estimations

a. Estimation's applied methodology:

Estimation of the total income of Cumbia Villera industry in the AMBA region, was developed with two different and complementary topics:

- Incomes related to bailes (A)
- Incomes related to cds (B)

(A) Incomes related to bailes (dance clubs)

This estimation was developed with a down/ top analysis.

The relevant bailes were categorized based on their operational characteristics such as number of nights they are opened per month, square meters available for dancing, average attendance per night, live shows usually offered per night. The categories (see page 59 for reference) defined are:

- Major,
- Important,
- Minor

Incomes were estimated according to their source considering each clubs' category. Two sources of revenue were identified:

- tickets (entrance fees)
- consumption (club's bar purchases - basically drinks)

Since performing shows at bailes represents the main income for bands, this amount was estimated within this topic, based on the number of shows that usually is offered per night per type of club. These numbers were treated as averages for estimation assumptions building.

(B) Incomes related to original CDs

This estimation was also developed with a top/ down analysis.

In this topic original CDs non-legal sales were not considered since information is not available. The legal CD sales were estimated as a share of total market calculated upon groups' total income generated in the shows, from consistent reports about both activities' business proportions: shows 85% and original CDs sales 15% for AMBA (Buenos Aires City and Greater Buenos Aires Area) Region.

Estimation's assumptions:

Market estimations were built upon the following assumptions, which were designated following the most likely average number for each category according to fieldwork information analysis. In the previous chapters those data were offered in detail, establishing their bottom and top limits. Here, information was processed accordingly to estimation methodological requirements.

(A) Movida Tropical total income including Cumbia Villera and related styles in AMBA region bailes – General assumptions.

1. Entrance tickets and drinks expenditures per type of baile. Assumptions for market estimations

Concept	Major Baile		Important Baile		Minor Baile	
Estimated Bailes Quantity and classification by type	10		25		25	
Days opened per week	Friday, Saturdays and Sundays		Friday, Saturdays and Sundays		Friday, Saturdays and Sundays	
Average quantity of attendance – Friday	875		700		600	
Average quantity of attendance – Saturday	3,500		2,800		1,200	
Average quantity of attendance – Sunday (1)	438		350		0	
% of men	0.6		0.6		0.6	
% of women	0.4		0.4		0.4	
Exchange Rate 1 USD = AR\$ 3.45	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD
\$ Average men entrance ticket – Friday	10	2.9	10	2.9	10	2.9
\$ Average men entrance ticket – Saturday (3)	20	5.8	20	5.8	20	5.8
\$ Average men entrance ticket – Sunday (1)	10	2.9	10	2.9	10	2.9
\$ Average women entrance ticket – Friday	0		0		0	
\$ Average women entrance ticket – Saturday	5	1.45	5	1.45	5	1.45
\$ Average women entrance ticket – Sunday (1)	0		0		0	
\$ Average men consumption ticket – Friday	35	10.14	35	10.14	35	10.14
\$ Average men consumption ticket – Saturday	25	7.25	25	7.25	25	7.25
\$ Average men consumption ticket – Sunday (1)	35	10.14	35	10.14	35	10.14
\$ Average women consumption ticket – Friday (2)	0		0		0	
\$ Average women consumption ticket – Saturday (2)	0		0		0	
\$ Average women consumption ticket – Sunday (1) (2)	0		0		0	

(1) Some bailes are opened on Sundays, and some are not. When opened, assumed entrance ticket average is AR\$ 10 / USD 2.9.

(2) Women have two major consumption situations in bailes: men sometimes offer courtesy drinks on dates, or they make groups' purchases. As their drinks' purchases seems to be more erratic than men's, and since we do not count with enough information to estimate them, our chosen criterion was to assignate a zero drinks expense to women.

(3) Men entrance tickets in bailes are about the same for all bailes types. They can rise in a top end baile on Saturdays or when performing a prestigious traditional cumbia or cuarteto group, which are more expenses shows for bailes.

2. Shows quantity and prices in AMBA Region Bailes – Assumptions for market estimations

Concept	Major Baile		Important Baile		Minor Baile	
Average quantity of shows per Friday (1)	0.5		0.5		0	
Average quantity of shows per Saturday (1)	2		2		1	
Average quantity of shows per Sunday (1)	0.25		0.25		0	
Exchange Rate 1 USD = AR\$ 3.45	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD
Average fees per show – Friday	3,500	1,014	3,000	870	0	
Average fees per show – Saturday	3,500	1,014	3,000	870	2,500	725
Average fees per show – Sunday	3,500	1,014	3,000	870	0	

(1) Weighting factor for shows bailes expenditures, calculated as the average quantity of shows than can be held at each type of bailes per Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, according to interviewees declarations.

(B) Total income from original CDs sales in AMBA region – General assumption

As there is no available information that allows original CDs sales calculations properly, estimations have been built assuming as true the agreement that states that proportion of cds sales of Movida Tropical income is around the 15% complementary to a 85% total income generated by shows in bailes.

b. Market size estimations

a. Total relevant Movida Tropical bailes revenue calculation for AMBA (Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area).

Based upon the previously mentioned assumptions about:

- quantity of bailes in the area classified by type: major, important and minor
- average quantity of audience per baile
- incidence of men and women in the audience
- average entrance ticket value for men and women
- average consumption value at bailes
- for a 52 weeks year, without taking into account holidays.

An estimation of entrance tickets plus drinks' expenditures at bailes was calculated:

Bailes' revenue estimations per YEAR	Major		Important		Minor		Total industry	
Exchange Rate 1 USD = AR\$ 3.45	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD
Total entrance tickets	29,575,000	8,572,464	59,150,000	17,144,928	26,520,000	7,686,957	115,245,000	33,404,348
Total drink expenditures	41,632,500	12,067,391	83,265,000	24,134,783	39,780,000	11,530,435	164,677,500	47,732,609
Total revenue	71,207,500	20,639,855	142,415,000	41,279,710	66,300,000	19,217,391	279,922,500	81,136,957

b. Total included Movida Tropical groups' live shows at bailes for AMBA (Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area)

Based upon the estimation for total bailes revenue plus previously mentioned assumptions about:

- Assumed average quantity of shows performed at bailes by type of baile and day of the weekend
- Assumed average live show prices paid by bailes

These averages quantities and prices don't take into account major traditional groups which shows' prices are higher. Cumbia Villera groups are included in these averages estimations.

An estimation of total included Movida Tropical live shows at bailes revenue:

Groups Income Source	Weekly		Monthly		Yearly	
Exchange Rate 1 USD = AR\$ 3.45	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD
Major bailes	96,250	27,899	417,083	120,894	5,005,000	1,450,725
Important bailes	206,250	59,783	893,750	259,058	10,725,000	3,108,696
Minor bailes	62,500	18,116	270,833	78,502	3,250,000	942,029
Grand total	365,000	105,797	1,581,667	458,454	18,980,000	5,501,449

It's important to take into account that estimated total live shows groups' revenue per show, represents about **7%** of bailes estimated total bailes' revenue.

However, since major bailes usually offer more shows per week and also hire other Movida Tropical more expensive groups, the proportion of their revenues that this type of bailes invest in groups live presentations- around 10% - is bigger than what Important and Minor Bailes affect to this activities.

c. Total included Movida Tropical income from original CDs sales in AMBA region

Since Movida Tropical original CDs sales information is not available, it has been estimated as the 15% complementary proportion of total Movida Tropical live shows at bailes indicated as 85%:

Exchange rate 1 USD = AR\$ 3.45	AR\$	USD
Original CDs business value AMBA	3,349,412	970,844

d. Total included Movida Tropical business value size

According to the previous calculations total included Movida Tropical business would be situated around 22 million Argentinean pesos per year (USD 6,5 million).

Total Incomes	Total Included Movida Tropical	
Exchange Rate 1 USD = AR\$ 3.45	AR\$	USD
Shows at Bailes	18,980,000	5,501,449.3
Sales original CDs	3,349,412	970,844.0
Grand Total	22,329,412	6,472,293.3

e. Cumbia Villera and related styles estimated share of included Movida tropical total bailes and original CDs sales. – Yearly AR\$ (25%~30% of Movida Tropical)

Cumbia Villera and its close related styles estimated market value share, considering that its market incidence would be about 25/30% of the included Movida Tropical live shows at bailes and original CDs sales, can be situated around USD 1.6 million to USD 1.9 million per year.

Total Incomes	Total Included Movida Tropical		Cumbia Villera Groups			
			25% of Movida Tropical		30% of Movida Tropical	
Exchange Rate 1 USD = AR\$ 3.45	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD	AR\$	USD
Shows at Bailes	18,980,000	5,501,449.3	4,745,000	1,375,362	5,694,000	1,650,435
Sales original CDs	3,349,412	970,844.0	837,353	242,711	1,004,824	291,253
Grand Total	22,329,412	6,472,293.3	5,582,353	1,618,073	6,698,824	1,941,688

X. Conclusions

Cumbia Villera was born ten years ago, right on the onset of perhaps the crudest crisis that Argentina has undergone in its history. It'd burst out of the will to express what was happening at the poorest and most marginal neighborhoods of the biggest, most stubborn city in the country, Buenos Aires. Getting hold of what was at hand, the music they knew and enjoy the most, cumbia, people started to talk.

Harshly, roughly, rudely, coarsely, being almost unbearable offensive to women, without many words, lacking the cultural and social capital that gives vocabulary resources, but screaming stories that hadn't been told for many years.

Ten years later, is still here. Opinions diverge about today's Cumbia Villera quality of its music and lyrics. For some it would need going back to the beginning to get back its ability to talk to people and make people talk about what matters. Some of them seem to believe that kids have lost part of their capacity to see the microworld around them, and that's why they cannot longer talk about it as they used to do. Kids say that they talk about life as they see it everyday, about their present. Everyone agrees that now Cumbia Villera is poorer culturally than how it was ten years back, that it's lost its edge. All of them talk about Pablo Lescano once and again, about his creative strenght and courage to keep going and daring.

Cumbia Villera never has tried to separate its more cultural and social than artistic identity from its economics. Since its beginning, was meant to be a mean to make a living, to earn some money, to have an income for kids and men who have grown up with the certainty that getting a regular and dependable job was almost an utopia, not a right, not a everyday life evidence as it should be. As it was, it has never been marginal but inmediatly found its way right to the core of a well established industry, and its people started to get paid on a regular basis and created jobs for their friends and families, and since then they have kept trying.

Movida Tropical economics have been on a flat line for a couple of years now. A hideous club tragedy on December 30th 2004 that kill almost two hundred kids, has have as a consequence raised safety requirements to decent standards and the subsequent closing out of more than a half the venues available for live shows in Buenos Aires and Greater Buenos Aires. This has shaken the main source of revenue of this industry, because there are less places where to play. But also, people have not complety found they way back to the dance clubs yet, in part because they probably have new recreational preferences, in part because crisis is striking again and Argentineans have learned to get very cautious before economic uncertainty.

Cumbia Villera, has restlessly searched for better economic opportunities. That way it has started an independent producing path. Cumbia Villera artists were among the first to try to get rid of contracts not as convenient for them as they thought they should be, and they have found an alternative way of doing business, less powerful and smaller, but efficient enough to generate jobs. Use of new technologies is fluent and natural for most artists and they make use of them to spread their work, to call people to the shows. Technology is there to use it to make music, to print their work, to share it.

They don't care much about quality of sound when they think about unauthorized copies that circulate over the internet or through cell phones. As long as people recognized the songs as theirs, enjoyed them and thought about going to a show; it's fine that the disc wouldn't be very good.

Cumbia Villera is still a job making machine, an imagined career path where making a decent living is a possible ambition for many of the kids that are trying to make it.

Always with its sound like tins, as Daniel Lescano says. Not like pans and pots.

Buenos Aires, July 10th 2009.

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