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Amelia Andujar

April 10th, 2024

“Well if *Rolling Stone* said it, then it must be true”: An Analysis of Cultural Intermediaries
Legitimizing Dominican Alternative Musicians Locally and Abroad.

by

Amelia Andujar

Dr. Timothy Dowd

Adviser

Department of Sociology

Dr. Timothy Dowd

Adviser

Dr. Tanine Allison

Committee Member

Dr. Ju Hyun Park

Committee Member

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Abstract

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This research aims to understand and evaluate the implications of the international and local legitimization processes of the Dominican Alternative Music (DAM) scene, by situating them within the context of cultural gatekeeping, globalization and legitimization scholarship. This is achieved by examining the role of journalists as key cultural intermediaries actively shaping the perceived aesthetic value of the DAM scene cross-nationally. Through a mixed-methods approach, this study both quantifies the amount of coverage that Dominican Alternative creatives have received at a local level throughout the past decade, and qualitatively evaluates the discursive legitimization strategies employed by both local and international journalists when writing about these artists. In doing so, the results reveal that the Dominican Alternative Music scene is legitimated both more frequently and comprehensively by international journalists than it is by local Dominican journalists, challenging traditional legitimization process structures that dictate that scenes must acquire local legitimacy prior to diffusing and accessing general validation. These findings also add to the conversation on the effects of cultural globalization on musical exchange between peripheral scenes — such as the Dominican music scene — and central music hubs, such as the cities that are home to the media outlets evaluated in this study.

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“No se trataba de escuchar lo que estaba en la radio, sino precisamente lo que en la radio no ponen”
“It wasn’t about listening to what was on the radio, but precisely about what wasn’t there”
- Luis Díaz, *Early Pioneer of Dominican Alternative Music*

Chapter 1: Introduction

Juan Pablo González (1991) writes that society and culture shape music, as music simultaneously creates social and cultural reality (p. 63). This dual formation of canonic culture is not only shaped by musical consumers and creators, but it is a process mediated by social agents that decide what we, as a collective, lend our attention to. These actors, such as music critics, journalists, and publishers (Janssen and Verboord, 2015) consequently aid in constructing our perceptions of songs, musicians, and entire genres. They decide what is deemed as “in” and also what is “out”, producing symbolic profit for artists in the form of “fame, reputation or legitimacy” (Jones and Featherly, 2002, p. 32)

Due to its power to dictate what we collectively assign worth to, the concept of legitimacy is fundamental within the social sciences. Understanding the process of how cultural objects become legitimate is especially important to the field of sociology, given how widespread consensual beliefs about a social object can construct our reality and “fuel the reproduction of inefficiency and inequality in groups and organizations” (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 69). This has led to significant discourse within sociology of media and culture scholarship centered around the dynamic between cultural intermediaries and artists, to understand how cultural products become validated within a given context. To this end, several theoretical and empirical studies have focused on determining the process through which new objects gain legitimacy.

Johnson et al. (2006) point out four stages by which objects become legitimate, by being constructed as consistent with cultural beliefs, norms and values: innovation, local validation, diffusion and general validation (pp. 60-63). By the end of this process, they posit that “what is

becomes what is right” (p. 57). While these steps have been extensively empirically substantiated (e.g. Drori and Honig, 2013, Appelrouth, 2010, Schmutz and Van Venrooij, 2018, Choi and Burnes, 2021), I am interested in the instances in which they are interrupted, renegotiated, or even reversed.

This research examines the question of whether legitimation, especially for peripheral music scenes, can be transferred from a global context into a local one, rather than beginning internally and later diffusing externally. Some previous scholarship has begun to suggest that this is possible by studying the role of social media and digital spaces in displacing legitimacy processes (Verbood and Van Noord, 2016), or by examining how musicians engage in translocal authentication, rejecting local conventions and embracing connections to cosmopolitanism as a means to legitimate in their local contexts (Elafros, 2013). However, sociology of music scholars have not yet fully explored the possibility that widespread access to international music scenes has opened new frontiers for musicians to gain attention from cross-national cultural intermediaries. This newfound access uniquely challenges traditional legitimation models, with local and international legitimation becoming interactive and simultaneous, rather than reactionary processes.

1.1: Situating the Research

Within the Dominican Republic, the distinctive sounds of Merengue and Bachata have historically maintained a monopoly on local legitimacy. These genres are not only championed as a quintessential part of *Dominicanidad*, but are lauded as the local standard for what is deemed as art (Sellers, 2004). However, under the surface, the Dominican music landscape has grown to be increasingly diverse, both sonically and through the identities of its creators,

resulting in a broad, heterogenous and rich alternative music scene (Diaz, 2018). The growth of this scene has begun to receive international recognition from traditionally legitimating agents within the music industry such as *Rolling Stone* magazine (Schmutz and Faupel, 2010). Despite these artists having attracted positive international attention, they have still struggled to carve out legitimate local space. This has translated into narrow newspaper coverage, sparse radio airtime and a lack of access to legitimated venues for live performances. Studying the substance of the limited attention these musicians have received locally from cultural intermediaries in conjunction with that of the newly found traction they have received from legitimating agents abroad can allow us to understand how these musicians are distinctly perceived in each context.

Through analyzing patterns in journalistic reporting on Dominican Alternative Music (DAM) both in the Dominican Republic and abroad, this research attempts to understand how traditional legitimation processes are impacted by the increased cross-national musical exchange cultural globalization has produced. By illustrating the discursive legitimation strategies employed by cultural intermediaries when speaking of this scene in both local and international contexts, this thesis will serve as a case study of the potential for peripheral music scenes to legitimate externally prior to achieving local validation.

1.2: Overview of the Study

This research is organized in six sections:

Introduction: This section provides an overview of the background and purposes relevant to this research.

Literature Review: This section details existing literature related to the sociology of music, legitimation processes, cultural globalization and Dominican Alternative Music.

From this theoretical overview, gaps in the literature are identified and assessed.

Data and Methods: This section outlines the quantitative and qualitative methodology employed to conduct this study.

Results: This section presents the findings resulting from the outlined methodology, identifying key patterns relevant to the final analysis.

Discussion: This section interprets the study's findings, linking them to relevant literature and this study's outlined purposes.

Conclusion: This section summarizes the research, outlines the study's limitations and provides recommendations for future literature conducted on the subject.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualizing Legitimation

Regardless of artistic merit or perceived “quality”, some art receives recognition, while some does not. To understand why this happens, it is key to first understand the process by which cultural objects become legitimate. This concept of legitimacy has been broadly and diversely defined within the social sciences. While sociologists like Max Weber would argue that legitimacy is closely linked to individual compliance with a perceived social order, others like Pierre Bourdieu have employed a class-based approach, focusing on the role of legitimacy in determining what is deemed as “high culture” (Johnson et al., 2006, Ostrower, 1998). Despite the nuance in definitions of the concept of legitimation itself, scholars generally agree on the pivotal role it plays in shaping how societies collectively determine the worth of things, such as ideas, organizations or culture.

For this study, I narrow my definition of legitimacy to that of cultural art forms, primarily adopting definitions of legitimation from Johnson et al. (2006) and Baumann (2007). Shyon Baumann understands legitimation as a social process by which “the new and unaccepted is rendered valid and accepted through consensus” (p. 49). It is a social construction defining what deserves to be deemed as valuable, which usually requires an alignment with existing cultural beliefs, norms and values shared by a given community (Johnson et. al 2006, Suchman 1995).

This process, shaped by audience members and gatekeepers, enables an artistic product to graduate from being perceived as commerce or entertainment into being viewed as a valuable piece of culture. Within this context, “gatekeeping” refers to the actions of authorities whose interpretative statements or decisions influence who is “in” and who is “out” of sociocultural settings (Hamann and Baljean 2019, Coslor et al., 2019). The development of legitimacy is

necessarily a collective process, as even the most independent artists are subject to interaction with societal agents, as well as to a series of exogenous environmental factors that will ultimately determine their perception, success and consecration (Schmutz and Faupel, 2010).

2.2 Consensus and Justification

While a cultural product necessitates a degree of collective agreement from consumers and gatekeepers to be considered art, scholars argue that consensus must be “measured minimally” (Baumann, 2007, p. 49). Zelditch (2001) established that “near consensus” (10) must count as consensus for pragmatic reasons, given that it would be impossible to accurately measure absolute consensus at a societal level. Consequently, consensus is viewed as issue-specific, developing within a narrowly defined context, often linked to a specific locality and audience.

The consensus required to achieve legitimation in the art world is developed through justification (Baumann, 2007). Justifying arguments regularly rely on framing the new or unacceptable as valid by signaling the product’s conformation to existing norms, values or rules upheld within a given context. While these arguments can come from any source, they hold the most weight when they are asserted by gatekeeping cultural intermediaries (Maguire and Matthews, 2010).

These intermediaries can be institutions like museums (Aparicio 2022), individuals like critics and journalists (Bourdieu, 1993, Dowd et al., 2019, Janssen et al., 2008), as well as entire media outlets or elite newspapers (Koreman, 2014, Schmutz, 2016). They play a pivotal role in the legitimation process, as their labor acts as a filter between creative production and consumption (Vaughn, 2019, Janssen and Verboord, 2015). Due to this role, extensive studies

(e.g.: Schmutz and Faupel, 2010, Cheyne and Binder, 2010, Jones and Featherly, 2002, Daenekindt and Schaap, 2022, Koreman, 2014) have focused on their influence on building consensus surrounding the value of a cultural product as a means to understand how legitimation is achieved.

2.3 Journalists and Music Critics as Legitimizing Agents

This study centers around two key cultural intermediaries: journalists and music critics. These gatekeepers play a pivotal role in determining the “taken-for-granted” vocabulary that audiences use to perceive and describe cultural products (Daenekindt and Schaap, 2022, p. 1618). The selection of who receives the attention from these sources, as well as the content of their evaluations both shape consumer taste, and play a pivotal role in framing an art world as legitimate (Verboord and Van Noord, 2016, Baumann, 2007). The importance of critical and media outlet attention has been demonstrated in the reframing of previously peripheral music scenes such as jazz (Appelrouth, 2010) and rock (Schmutz and Van Venrooij, 2018), aiding in transforming them into consecrated genres in the American music canon (Dowd et al., 2019).

The discourses these intermediaries publish help “produce, maintain and/or deconstruct” perceptions of cultural products (Daenekindt & Schaap, 2022, p. 1616), providing guidelines for audiences to assign the “correct” amount of value to a given art world. These prescriptions most explicitly occur in the form of music reviews that qualitatively evaluate the worth of an album, a song or a scene at large. However, the sheer coverage of music by general media outlets or elite newspapers also functions to signal mainstream acknowledgement of a music scene, effectively incorporating the scene into a system of aesthetic recognition that implicitly transfers worth (Baumann, 2007, Koreman, 2014).

Many scholars indicate that the role of journalists and critics in the legitimation process can vary significantly cross-nationally (Van Venrooij, 2009, Varriale, 2018, Koreman, 2014). In their study of American elite tastes for hip hop music, Cheyne and Binder (2010) assert that sociologists have “largely overlooked how place works as a structuring feature of the taken-for-granted assumptions that constitute social perception” (p. 2), given how differences between national meaning systems can heavily influence a critics’ opinions and evaluations, and audiences socially construct value very differently according to their local context. Most studies on the sociology of music currently spotlight American music, even when evaluated in conjunction with a peripheral music scene.

2.4 Cultural Globalization and the Legitimation Process

Johnson et al. (2006) identify four stages in the legitimation of social objects: innovation, local validation, diffusion and general validation. Applying this procedural framework to a cultural product like music, we should see a similar pattern occur. First, an innovative or unaccepted music scene emerges within a given context, and artists must achieve local validation by linking their work to widely accepted cultural frameworks or beliefs. This local acceptance enables the cultural product to expand further, triggering a diffusion that eventually grows wide enough to be deemed as generally validated. Scholars have identified how this process has played out within different areas of the art world, such as folk music (Redhead and Street, 1989), American films (Allen and Lincoln, 2004), and French rap (Hammou, 2016).

This study focuses on the instances in which this process is obscured, interrupted, or even reversed. The contemporary media landscape, characterized by the globalization of culture (Gebesmair, 2022, Ferreira and Waldfogel, 2013) has increased the musical exchange between

“central” music hubs (e.g.: New York City, London, Los Angeles) and those belonging to the periphery (Van der Hoeven and Hitters, 2019, Verboord and Van Noord, 2016). In this new era of musical access, cultural products easily cross national borders, and are actively diffused internationally (Koreman, 2014).

In response to this material change in the transnational music field, scholars have widely focused on the issue of competition (Koreman, 2014) and homogenization (Kong, 2002), measuring whether “central” music hubs are eclipsing local music scenes. These have examined, for example, how the emergence of American pop music in peripheral countries obscures the legitimation of local genres by oversaturating local markets. Some of these studies have begun to point to cases in which the “local validation” stage outlined in Johnson et al’s scholarship is blurred, or even bypassed (Verboord and Van Noord, 2016, Koreman, 2014, Echevarria, 2020).

These authors consider how interconnectivity, enabled by the rise of the internet and social media, have reshaped the significance of geography in the legitimation processes for artists. Studies like Verboord and Van Noord’s (2016) focus on musicians from outside of central cities for global music production, but specifically point to whether these artists have a “fair chance” at legitimating now that they are competing with larger, powerful international counterparts. The question of how this globalization process may have opened up new, international markets for music scenes struggling to legitimate in peripheral countries remains largely unexplored.

2.5 Dominican Alternative Music

For this study, I identify Dominican Alternative Music (DAM) as a music scene, rather than a genre. This network of musicians comprise a scene firstly due to their high degree of heterogeneity, lacking the consistent musical elements that often encompass a genre (Ramirez,

2016). Instead, DAM is characterized by a widespread fusion of Dominican folkloric rhythms and themes with a variety of Anglo-American and Latin American genres, such as Pop, Rock, Blues, Jazz, Són, Salsa, Hip Hop and Reggaeton (Díaz, 2018). Fusion is so fundamental to DAM that Dominican music scholar Rossy Diaz describes it as a parallel universe to traditionally local Dominican genres like Merengue and Bachata.

Secondly, in line with Verboord and Van Noord's 2016 conceptualization of the music scene, as opposed to the music industry, DAM is created in a relatively small context where "performers, support facilities and fans loosely interact" (p. 61). These musicians have proven to be a locally tight knit network, where music festivals are organized and dedicated to the scene, exchanging supporters and frequently collaborating. Lastly, we can view belonging to the DAM scene as a "claim", where musicians may identify themselves, or journalists may classify them as detached from popular music (Bennett, 2004), or as claiming "commercial independence and autonomy from mainstream culture, propagated by a so-called do-it-yourself ethic" (Moore, 2003, p. 236)

The scene is identified as originating in the 1960s as rock and pop music began to arrive in the Dominican Republic from the United States, in conjunction with the eclectic politically charged sounds of La Nueva Trova in Cuba (Díaz, 2018). Local and Latin American musicians at large began to interact with these new genres, and the region broadly began to develop its own *Rock en Español* (T: Rock in Spanish) sound, which starkly contrasted traditional and folkloric rhythms like Dominican Merengue or Colombian Cumbia (Valdéz and Urióstegui, 2015).

2.6 Local and Translocal Music Scenes

In their work conceptualizing local, translocal and virtual music scenes, Andy Bennett and Richard Peterson (2004) define a local music scene as a site in which “narratives of emergent local identity” incorporate “local cultural forms like dialect, dress and history” (p. 7) as a strategy to both penetrate the local market and resist local circumstances. This characteristic becomes especially salient in the degree of fusion and subversion of local genres, idioms, and themes regularly incorporated into the DAM scene. This strategy is employed as a means of resisting local social marginalization, considering that “socioeconomic hardship, racism, sexism, and identity” are all shaped and experienced at a local level (Bennett and Peterson, 2004, p. 8). Given the power of music to construct shared narratives of everyday life and experiences, members of a given music scene will often employ it as a tool to generate parallel narratives to those dominating the status quo.

However, the rise of cultural globalization through the internet has significantly shifted the way in which local music scenes develop and operate. Increased connectivity has altered the significance of geography, specifically modifying the role of locality in scenes scholarship (Verboord and Van Noord, 2016). In response to this shift, Bennett and Peterson (2004) introduce the concepts of translocal scenes, spanning several geographic locations, and digital scenes, primarily developing online. Translocal scenes preserve many of the characteristics of local scenes, but access a network of “kindred spirits miles away” through digital tools (p. 8). For virtual scenes, “scene-making conversations” primarily occur on the internet (p. 10). While each of these designations carry their own characteristics, a given scene can simultaneously encompass all three (Dowd, 2014).

2.7 Gaps in the Literature

There are a few key gaps in existing sociology of music literature that this study seeks to address. Firstly, and most broadly, there is a significant lack of studies focused on legitimation processes within local Latin American music scenes. These scenes require specific attention as Latin American genres are a unique product of a complex history, and are “associated with social classes and cultural groups, remaining an important element for the construction of identities and historical narratives.” (Mendivil and Espinosa, 2016, p. 161). Studies from the United States (Allen and Lincoln, 2004, Vaughn, 2019, Dowd et al., 2021), Europe (Hammou, 2016, Koreman, 2014, Janssen et al., 2008) and Asia (Choi and Burnes, 2022, Lie, 2014, Shakuntala, 2010) alike provide a theoretical basis to understand these scenes, but specific work must be done within them to accurately illustrate regional legitimation dynamics, and the social norms surrounding them.

Secondly, this work strives to address the lack of recent reconstruction of the “stages” in which legitimation processes occur. While scholars have addressed how the rise of the internet has significantly shifted the landscape in which artists undergo legitimation, few have attempted to explicitly restructure this process accounting for modern-day artists, audiences and gatekeepers at an international level. This study will revisit Johnson et al.’s stages of legitimation in an attempt to reconfigure how these take shape when accounting for local and international legitimation processes occurring simultaneously, rather than the former triggering the latter.

In the third place, while there is a growing body of literature evaluating whether the globalization of culture is causing central music scenes to affect local scenes in peripheral countries, the question of how this increased musical exchange may have opened new frontiers for peripheral music scenes to legitimate abroad prior to doing so locally remains widely

unexplored. This is especially important to consider through the lens of media outlet attention, given that generally, the most influential global music publications are located in cities where “‘scenes’ aficionados are seeking out the latest news in the music world” (Verboord and Van Noord, 2016, p. 62). This study attempts to address this gap by placing the legitimation processes of Dominican alternative musicians within the context of cultural globalization, considering both how they are received within the periphery and within central music scenes.

Lastly, there is a limited body of sociological research focused on the Dominican Republic, decreasing even further for studies of Dominican music. This limited body of research entails a lack of data and resources to turn to when assessing Dominican culture both academically and pragmatically. By organizing and analyzing music journalism data available in local digital newspaper archives, this study contributes to addressing this gap in systematic categorization and quantification of the interactions between Dominican musicians and Dominican society. To these ends, this work not only adds to the conversation on international music scenes, legitimation processes and cultural globalization, but aids in laying the groundwork for future bodies of sociological work on Dominican culture.

Chapter 3: Data and Methods

The present study employs a mixed methods approach to understand how Dominican Alternative Music is framed by cultural intermediaries, accounting for both the amount and the content of the newspaper coverage surrounding this local scene. Qualitative content analysis was employed to analyze how Dominican Alternative musicians are discursively legitimated by both international and local sources, while Quantitative analysis of the coverage of these musicians was only employed for local Dominican sources, spanning three timeframes: 2015, 2019 and 2023.

3.1 Methodology Rationale

Several scholars have turned to newspapers to understand how peripheral music scenes are received by cultural intermediaries. While many of these studies exclusively focus on the content of what is being said by critics in the art world (Baumann, 2001, Schmutz and Faupel, 2010, Schmutz, 2005), the amount of coverage of music in elite newspapers itself is an important factor to consider in order to measure the legitimation of a given scene (Koreman, 2014). Both qualitatively analyzing articles pertaining to Dominican Alternative musicians and quantifying the amount the local attention they receive illustrates a more complete picture of the local legitimation landscape for these artists for three key reasons:

Firstly, when evaluating underground or marginalized genres such as alternative music, presence in mainstream media outlets and newspapers can be especially indicative of increased legitimation or neglect, as it places the attention the scene receives from cultural intermediaries in relation to the attention comparable local genres receive. Secondly, there are very limited mainstream Dominican platforms exclusively dedicated to music reviews, criticism and

reporting. Instead, local audiences broadly rely on newspapers for music and entertainment reporting. Given the lack of music-centric media outlets as legitimating agents, situating the vocabulary journalists use to describe these musicians within the context of the frequency with which they are spoken about is key to understanding the local legitimation landscape. Lastly, quantifying coverage at three distinct points in time helps indicate how local norms and cultural hierarchies have shifted throughout the past decade (Daenekindt and Schaap, 2022).

3.2 *Quantitative Analysis*

A total of 678 articles were drawn from the digital archives of *El Diario Libre*, an elite Dominican newspaper established in 2001. This newspaper was selected for this study for two primary reasons:

- 1) Archival Accessibility: *El Diario Libre* is the only digitally accessible Dominican newspaper that allows for users to search for articles in the past ten years, sorting by both year and category.
- 2) Widespread Availability: Print editions of *El Diario Libre* are distributed for free across the entire country daily. The outlet also has an active social media presence and its website is updated hourly, making it a sound source to illustrate what information on DAM artists the average Dominican citizen receives.

This sample accounts for all articles categorized under *Música* (T: Music) and *Entretenimiento* (T: Entertainment) for three years: 2015, 2019 and 2023. The starting point of 2015 was selected for this study due to categorized archival availability beginning that year. This initial search yielded 678 articles, although only 650 were included in the final analysis.

Articles were initially classified by Format, Location and Alternative Scene Presence. Under Format, articles were categorized as either *Music Reviews* (i.e: song and album reviews),

Music News (i.e: concert announcements and new release announcements) or *Background Pieces* (i.e: profile pieces on specific artists or scenes). However, this categorization was not included within the final quantitative analysis. Under Location, each article was categorized as either *International* or *Local* based on the nationality of the artist/s highlighted. If the artist was Dominican, it was categorized as local. If they were not, the article was categorized as International. Finally, Alternative Scene Presence was quantified dichotomously (YES/NO) based on whether an alternative musician appeared in the article. If at least one musician or group was named, the article received a YES for this category.

3.2.1 Exclusionary Criteria

Upon coding for the initial yield of 678 articles, exclusionary criteria were developed to minimize confounding variables. If an article met any of the following criteria, it was excluded from this study's sample:

- 1) Article is unrelated to music or entertainment and appears to have been miscategorized within the digital archives;
- 2) Article spotlights several artists from diverse nationalities;
- 3) Article pertains to updates on the local singing competition show *Dominicana's Got Talent*;
- 4) Article does not mention at least one musician or musical group by name;
- 5) Article focuses on a streaming platform such as Spotify, Youtube, or Amazon Music rather than an artist.

3.3 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis portion of this study was designed to measure the differences in journalistic discursive legitimation for Dominican Alternative musicians both locally and internationally. This was conducted by developing the coding scheme outlined below, and applying it to a sample of 24 articles. This sample is a result of two random selections of 12 articles from two pools of 25 articles featuring Dominican alternative musicians. The first collection of 25 articles were extracted from American mainstream media sources, and the second collection of 25 articles were extracted from Dominican media sources. These articles spanned music news, reviews, ranking lists, background pieces, and concert announcements. The final sample of 12 local articles is composed of pieces from three Dominican elite newspapers: *El Diario Libre*, *El Listin Diario* and *El Caribe*. The final sample of 12 international articles comprises five American sources: *Rolling Stone*, *Pitchfork*, *NPR*, *The New York Times* and *Variety*.

3.3.1 Exclusionary Criteria

Upon selecting the initial 50 articles featuring Dominican Alternative musicians from local and international sources, another set of exclusionary criteria were developed to minimize confounding variables:

- 1) The article consists of an interview with a Dominican Alternative musician;
- 2) The article was published prior to 2015;
- 3) The article is under a page in length;
- 4) The article only mentions, but does not elaborate on the work of a Dominican Alternative musician.

3.3.2 Legitimizing Discourse Coding Scheme

To measure for legitimating discourse in each of these articles, the following categories were developed and coded using MAXQDA software:

Coding Category	Description	Criteria
<i>Alternativism</i>	Article identifies the artist, song or album covered alternative or genre-bending. Code was excluded from final analysis.	(1) Employing explicit descriptions as “alternative”, “indie” or “underground”, or describing the artist as opposed to, or not belonging within, popular culture or music; (2) Emphasis placed on genre fusion, genre subversion or describing an artist as simultaneously employing more than four genres; (3) Mentions of subculture or counterculture
<i>High Art Criteria</i>	Article employs “High Art” vocabulary when describing the artist, song or album, as adapted from Baumann (2007) and Schmutz and Faupel (2010).	(1) The song, artist, album or scene is praised for its originality or innovativeness (“trailblazing”, “daring”, “unique”); (2) The subject is described as serious or intelligent (“genius”, “committed”, “enriching”); (3) The subject is described as an autonomous creative force (“artisan”, “producing”, “curious”); (4) The subject’s complexity, symbolism or ambiguity is highlighted (“poetic”, “complicated”, “challenging”); (5) Finally, the employment of any term outlined in Baumann’s list of vocabulary commonly found in high art fields (“art”, “master”, “inspired”).
<i>Local Networks</i>	Article places the artist within Dominican legitimated networks.	(1) Mention of local award ceremonies (e.g: Premios Soberano, Premios Indie Dominicanos, Premios lo Nuestro); (2) Artist is connected to a real or imagined network of popular or consecrated Dominican musicians as artistic influences or sonically comparable musicians (e.g: Juan Luis Guerra, José Duluc); (3) Mention of recognition from a governmental, academic institutional or cultural entity (e.g: the Dominican Ministry of Culture,

		Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo); (4) Mention of the artist playing at a legitimated venue, or their music playing on the radio (e.g: Teatro Nacional Eduardo Brito, El Estadio Olímpico)
<i>International Networks</i>	Article places the artist within international legitimated networks.	(1) Mention of international award ceremonies (e.g: Latin Grammys); (2) Mention of the artist's recognition in an international publication (e.g: Rolling Stone); (3) Artist is connected to a real or imagined network of international artistic influences or sonically comparable musicians (e.g: Bad Bunny, The Beatles); (4) Mention of the artist playing at a legitimated venue abroad; (5) Mention of the artist as connected to an internationally legitimated institution or cultural entity (e.g: universities, museum boards, art collectives).
<i>Local Popular and Traditional Music</i>	Article mentions popular, traditionally legitimated Dominican music genres.	(1) Mentions of Merengue, Bachata, Son, Salsa or Christian Music as associated with the scene, artist, album or song's sound.
<i>Rhetoric of Resistance</i>	The article identifies the artist or their music as actively resisting cultural norms, opposing dominant culture, or associated with a locally marginalized identity.	(1) Identification of the artist as afro caribbean, influenced by african ancestry or emphasizing Black identity; (2) Identification of an artist as queer or influenced by queer culture; (3) Identification of the artist as outside of the gender binary ("genderqueer", "transgender", "nonbinary"); (4) Identification of the artist a feminist, or of a song as featuring feminist content (5) Descriptions of the artist as struggling against local culture, or defying social expectations ("destigmatizing", "resisting", "liberating")

This coding scheme was applied separately to each sample of Dominican and American articles. To ensure that this methodology assesses discursive legitimation as mediated by cultural

intermediaries such as journalists, these categories were not applied to categorize any direct quotes by the artists featured. Instead, they were only applied to descriptions or interpretations by the authors of the articles selected.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Quantitative Results: DAM Coverage in Dominican News

This section presents the results of the quantitative analysis of 650 articles from *El Diario Libre*, accounting for the nationality of the artist they focused on, and the mention of a Dominican alternative musician.

4.1.1: Increase in Music-Related Journalism

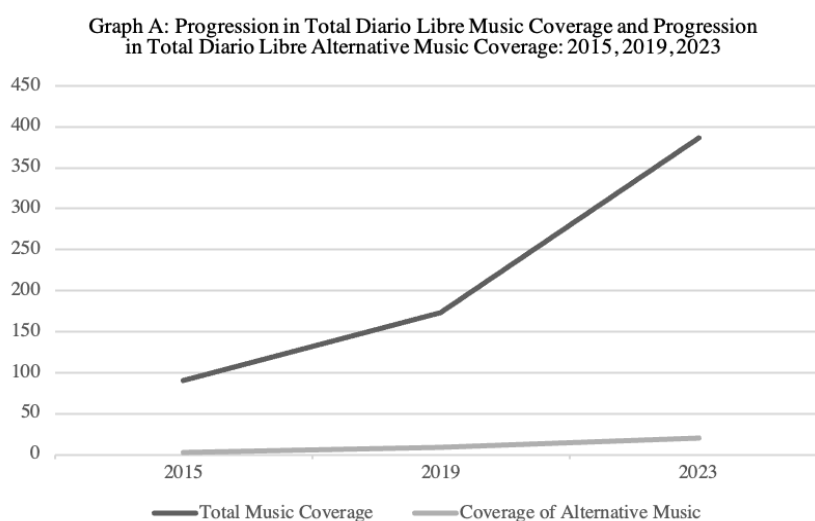
The first notable finding is the significant increase in overall music reporting from this source across the past decade. For each year measured, the increase in music-related articles more than doubled from the year prior: 2015 (N = 90), 2019 (N = 173) and 2023 (N = 387). However, despite this general increase in journalistic attention to the music world, the coverage of Dominican alternative musicians remained negligible. In 2015, only 3 articles mentioning an alternative musician were published, increasing to 9 in 2019 and 20 in 2023 (See Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of Local, International and Alternative Coverage in *El Diario Libre* for 2015, 2019 and 2023

	2015	2019	2023	N
Local	57	79	173	309
International	33	94	214	341
Dominican Alternative	3	9	20	32
Total Articles in Yearly Sample	90	173	387	

When this apparent yearly increase in DAM presence is placed relative to the overall growth of music-related reporting, these numbers all place the coverage of Dominican alternative musicians firmly below five percent of the total amount of music coverage each year (See Graph A). Even within this limited sample, a final relevant pattern was also found in the

depth with which these articles reported on alternative music. The majority of the articles qualifying as “alternative” for the sake of this study were coded as such given a singular mention of an alternative musician, often present as part of a line-up or list, rather than explicitly highlighting, reviewing or describing a song, album or artist from this scene.



4.1.2: Local versus International Coverage Distribution

The second relevant result from this data lies in the distribution between articles focused on local musicians, when contrasted with those focused on international musicians. As summarized in Table 1, the coverage of international artists comprised the majority of all music and entertainment coverage in *El Diario Libre* in the time period measured. 2015 was the only year in which local artists were featured more than their international counterparts. Even so, across all three years, a total of 341 articles focused on international musicians, while 309 articles focused on local musicians.

4.2 Qualitative Results: Discursive Legitimation in Local and International Sources

This section outlines the results of analyzing a total of 24 articles from both Dominican elite newspapers (N = 12) and American elite media outlets (N = 12). This data was coded

employing the 6 previously outlined categories: High Art Criteria, Rhetoric of Resistance, Local Popular and Traditional Music, Local Networks, International Networks, and Alternativism. The Alternativism code was ultimately excluded from this study's final results, as it was primarily employed to ensure that the article categorized the Dominican musician highlighted as belonging to the alternative music scene.

Table 2: Distribution of Various Forms of Discursive Legitimation by Source Location

	Dominican Sources	International Sources	N
High Art Criteria	33	58	88
Rhetoric of Resistance	24	34	57
Local Popular & Traditional Music	30	13	39
Local Networks	31	12	41
International Networks	30	22	52
Alternativism	18	37	54
N	161	170	

4.2.1: Discrepancies in the use of High Art Criteria

The first significant result displayed in Table 2 is the substantial variance between the extent to which Dominican and International sources employed High Art Criteria when writing about Dominican alternative musicians. 58 High Art terms were identified across the 12 international articles, while 33 terms were identified in local articles. This discrepancy is important to note, as these terms aid in situating subjects as artists and innovators, as well as lauding them for their musical craftsmanship. Terms such as “masterpiece”, “stunning”,

“defiant” and “brilliant” (See Appendix A) were extensively employed to describe DAM creatives in sources like *Rolling Stone* and *The New York Times*. Terms such as “gran calidad” (T: high quality), “único” (T: unique), and “auténtico” (T: authentic) (See Appendix B) were employed to describe these creatives in sources like *El Listin Diairio* and *El Diario Libre*, although these descriptors were deployed less frequently.

4.2.2: Local and International Networks

The second significant finding is the discrepancy between the extent to which local and international networks were referenced as legitimating agents in each of these samples when describing Dominican alternative musicians. Dominican journalists were found to both reference Local Networks (N = 31) and International Networks (N = 30) more frequently than their international counterparts (N = 12, N = 22).

Although the Local Networks code accounted for several dimensions of local legitimacy, such as the mention of Dominican awards, references to certain venues and recognition from academic or cultural institutions, the primary manner in which connections were drawn between DAM artists and their local networks was by extensively linking them to a real or imagined network of previously legitimated local talent. This was most commonly observed in citing recognizable local names as influential to a musician’s work, or by emphasizing their approval of it. Article L2 from the Dominican journalism sample (See Appendix B) exemplifies this pattern: “Manerra tiene influencias de los compositores Rafael Solano, Jose Antonio Molina y Juan Luis Guerra” (T: “Manerra is influenced by composers like Rafael Solano, Jose Antonio Molina and Juan Luis Guerra”). Given that direct quotations from DAM artists were excluded when coding

each article, the only claims to local and international network influences and connections in this study are those projected by journalists.

Similar patterns were observed in the deployment of International Networks by Dominican journalists. Artists such as Juanes, Natalia Lafourcade, Rubén Blades and J Balvin (See Appendix B) were frequently referenced as sonically comparable to the work of these musicians. While extensive mentions of international musicians were also employed, another key pattern became salient. Local journalistic sources frequently alluded to international coverage from elite publications within their descriptions of alternative musicians, specifically citing media attention these artists have received from *Rolling Stone*. This finding is consistent with several studies that have found *Rolling Stone* to be a distinctly notable legitimating agent within the music world (Jones and Featherly 2002, Schmutz and Faupel 2010, Antonnen 2017).

4.2.3: Local Popular and Traditional Music

Another significant discrepancy in the extent to which a given code was identified in local and international sources is found in the Local Popular and Traditional Music category. Local sources deployed references to genres like Merengue and Bachata far more frequently (N = 30) than their international counterparts (N = 13). This was primarily accomplished by emphasizing an alternative artist's use of these genres within their own style (e.g: "Rojas, que fusiona merengue y reguetón") (T: "Rojas, who fuses merengue and reggaeton"). These references were often found several times within a singular article, whereas international sources only occasionally alluded to these influences. For example, Article L1 from the Dominican sources sample alone features 8 mentions of traditional Dominican music when describing DAM

artists, whereas the articles with the most mentions of traditional Dominican music in the American Journalism sample (Articles I6 and I7) feature only 3 mentions of these genres.

4.2.4: Rhetoric of Resistance

While the differing quantities in Dominican (N = 24) and international (N = 34) sources employing Rhetoric of Resistance terminology is not as significant as the discrepancy highlighted in other categories, the degree of specificity of the vocabulary coded for each sample is worth noting. International sources placed Dominican alternative musicians as resisting local sociocultural norms, and identified them as belonging to a marginalized identity, both more frequently and more precisely than their local counterparts. Dominican journalistic sources often described the content of the DAM scene as “abordando asuntos sociales” (T = addressing social issues) and as singing about issues like “la fuerza femenina” (T = female strength). However, these journalists rarely named or described the social circumstances these alternative musicians were tackling. On the other hand, international sources consistently explicitly situated these musicians as grappling with local social issues such as racism, sexism, and homophobia. Within these articles, Dominican alternative music was described as addressing “historical scars of slavery”, “women hustling in a deeply patriarchal Caribbean society” and as “displaying Black pride”.

Chapter 5: Discussion

These results shed light on several patterns in legitimation processes pertaining to the Dominican Alternative Music scene. By evaluating the amount of coverage these musicians receive locally, in conjunction with the contrasts in discursive legitimation strategies deployed by local and international journalists, we find that international cultural intermediaries position DAM creatives as legitimate artists more frequently and explicitly than their local counterparts. However, there are key nuances in the way in which this legitimation occurs pertaining to autonomy, locality, and sociocultural resistance. Together, these factors help us understand how the DAM scene has amassed more international legitimacy than local legitimacy, challenging the traditional order of established legitimation processes.

5.1 Constructing Artistry

As outlined previously, existing literature suggests that the construction of artistry within the music world requires a degree of consensus, which is primarily achieved through cultural intermediary justifications. Through the extensive employment of High Art terminology to describe the Dominican Alternative Music scene, international sources provided the scene with more comprehensive aesthetic legitimation than their local counterparts. Given how this terminology emphasizes “creativity, originality, complexity and seriousness” (Koreman, 2014, p. 505), the more frequent use of High Art Criteria when describing DAM signals to consumers that the scene is home to “full-fledged art” (Hammou, 2016, p. 80).

The most significant pattern to note in formulating this unique international framing of Dominican alternative music is in these authors’ references to originality and innovation as high art criterion. Analyses by Baumann (2007) and Koreman (2014) have found that being perceived

as authentic and original are two of the most important characteristics that legitimate the work of foreign and domestic artists, and predict their consecration within the music world. The use of descriptions such as “flourishing curiosity”, “charting new waters”, “daring selections”, “boundary pushing” and “architecting a world of their own” all reposition DAM artists from musicians operating outside of traditional genre boundaries or industry practices, and into being lauded as cultural innovators and musical alchemists.

The discrepancy in vocabulary employed in Dominican journalism vis-à-vis American journalism is consistent with Schmutz and Faupel’s 2010 study of gender and cultural consecration. Through analyzing *Rolling Stone* Best Album reviews, these authors find that while male and female performers alike were described in language that afforded them a certain degree of cultural legitimacy, female performers were rarely on the receiving end of discourse that positioned them as unique creative forces, and their work as distinctly intelligent. This, combined with the general lack of media coverage that female performers received relative to their male counterparts, places them at a disadvantage to be consecrated within the American music canon.

A similar pattern was found in this study in the discrepancy between High Art criteria identified in American sources, extensively acclaiming the DAM scene for its sharp uniqueness, innovation and masterful creativity, and the High Art criteria identified in Dominican sources, which remained more vague and sparse. This discursive discrepancy, placed within the context of the minimal journalistic attention DAM artists received relative to all Dominican music coverage, obfuscates their path to being perceived as legitimate creative forces, and complicates their access to local audiences and spaces.

5.2 Claiming Autonomy or Stripping Locality?

Another key source of legitimacy for artists lies in the construction of what has been coined as the “ideology of the autonomous artist”. This ideology has been defined as associated with an artist who “produces art for its own sake, as a pure creative expression and maintains artistic integrity by shunning external influences” (Schmutz and Faupel, 2010, p. 690). A lack of creative autonomy can be signaled both through language that seems traditionally negative (e.g: referring to a cultural product as artificial, cliché or ghost-written), but also in ways that would appear to be positive (e.g: referring to a cultural product as reminiscent of a well-respected artist’s work). Both of these discursive strategies can become centric in an artist’s struggle for autonomy and legitimacy (Sanders, 2002).

A key manner in which artists are legitimated “by proxy” yet stripped of creative autonomy is by consistently linking them to real or imagined social networks, as measured through the Local Networks and International Networks codes in this study. Here, we find that while Dominican journalists employ extensive efforts to legitimate DAM artists by citing their international and local influences, this can place the artists at a disadvantage in their claims for artistic autonomy and authenticity. Consistently situating musicians within these real or imagined networks conditionally legitimates their art through their personal and professional ties, rather than through the critical recognition of its own quality.

Another key strategy deployed in Dominican journalism that could conflict with establishing an ideology of autonomy for the DAM scene is the extensive connections drawn to local traditional and popular music. By consistently citing Merengue and Bachata as pivotal to alternative musicians’ sound, local Dominican sources enter a gray area that both recognizes the

music scenes' foundational elements, yet overwhelmingly attempts to sell it to local audiences by appealing to familiarity.

Despite deploying these legitimization “by proxy” strategies less frequently, I find that international journalists also operate within a legitimating gray area for these musicians, overlooking their locality. The limited extent to which international journalistic sources referenced traditional Dominican rhythms when describing the DAM scene can be viewed as consistent with Cheyne and Binder’s 2010 finding that critics overwhelmingly strip international genres of local context when framing them as “authentic”. In their mediation of Dominican alternative music as a cultural product, international sources such as *Rolling Stone* and *The New York Times* would often applaud the scene’s defiant sounds and innovation, but rarely explicitly recognize the local rhythms that these artists claim as fundamental to their sound. While this may aid in legitimating DAM musicians as unique creative forces abroad, this legitimization seems to currently come at the expense of a loss of acknowledgement of the complex manner in which Dominican alternative music integrates and subverts Dominican rhythms, language and customs.

5.3 Internationally Admiring and Locally Suppressing Resistance

Dominican alternative music is not only characterized by its genre fusion and sonic innovation, but also by its distinct interaction with Dominican social taboos. This is most notable in their embracing of queerness and Afrocaribbean roots, both of which carry a negative local connotation. Heightened local degrees of homophobia (Chaux and Leon, 2016) reinforced by the country’s anti-queer public indecency laws (Horn, 2010), make the assertion of queerness in Dominican Alternative music into a key point of contention when adapting into local frameworks of acceptability. A similar dynamic occurs in asserting Blackness or Afrocaribbean

identity. Despite traditional Dominican genres such as Merengue's "links to the transnational Black atlantic landscape" due to colonial legacies, the country has extensively shunned its African heritage in lieu of highlighting Hispanic identity (Austerlitz, 1998, p. 67). Dominican alternative musician Xiomara Fortuna describes this experience, "Anything linked back to Africa is immediately associated and disparaged as Haitian in origin", and continues asserting that "even today [Dominican] people look down on Black music".

International sources frequently acknowledged and praised the "rhetoric of resistance" embedded into the DAM scene, both by highlighting lyricism linked to open queerness and Black pride, as well as by explicitly identifying figures within the scene as LGBTQ or Afrocaribbean in their reporting. On the other hand, local sources seemed to employ a more diluted vocabulary when speaking of these artists' links to marginalization and oppositional stances to Dominican cultural norms. In line with Baumann's notion of consensus and justification, the four stages of the legitimation of social objects (Johnson et al. 2006) establish that local validation is often achieved when an artists' work is linked to existing widely acceptable cultural frameworks and beliefs. By not highlighting the ways in which the DAM scene explicitly divorces several dominant social standards in Dominican culture, Dominican journalists simultaneously work towards positioning for the DAM scene within existing sociocultural boundaries, and temper their radical work.

5.4 Cultural Globalization and New Legitimation Processes

As Dowd and Janssen (2011) assert, the global flow of music cannot be reduced to "dominant versus peripheral nations, especially because an array of individuals and organizations have collectively constructed transnational systems" (p. 520). The findings in this study would

suggest that through a newfound access to media attention from newspapers and magazines located in central music hubs such as New York City and Los Angeles (Verboord and Van Noord, 2016), cultural globalization has sufficiently democratized access to peripheral scenes such as Dominican Alternative music to enable them to begin to acquire legitimacy abroad prior to doing so locally.

Informed by the finding that local Dominican journalists extensively employ legitimation “by proxy” strategies, we can extrapolate that this international legitimacy may even serve as leverage by which musicians can attain local legitimacy. International legitimacy itself may trigger local sources to discursively legitimate alternative musicians, ultimately creating a distinctly reversed interplay between the local legitimation and general legitimation stages outlined by Johnson et al. (2006). This finding also aids in broadening the conversation on cultural globalization in the music world beyond traditional arguments regarding hybridization and cultural imperialism. Instead, we see new frontiers for legitimation open for music scenes in the periphery. Accessing new spaces and audiences as sources of legitimacy is especially important for the Dominican Alternative music scene due to the local journalistic neglect found in the quantitative analysis portion of this study, as local cultural intermediaries seem to not provide them sufficient attention to be deemed as serious, legitimate agents within the local arts scene.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This study demonstrated how, despite their struggle to attain local legitimacy, the Dominican Alternative music scene has begun to legitimate abroad. This not only demonstrates a shift in traditional legitimation processes that necessitate local validation to access external spaces, but places this dynamic in conversation with cultural globalization and music scene scholarship. Despite its foundational Dominican elements, engagement with Dominican culture and tight-knit local community, the DAM scene cannot be conceptualized as exclusively a local music scene. As defined by Bennett and Peterson (2004), DAM is a key example of how a peripheral music scene can simultaneously inhabit local, transnational and digital spaces. Through the attention that this scene has received from international media outlets, and the discursive legitimation strategies identified within this study, the Dominican Alternative Music scene bridges into transnational and digital spaces as a means to gain legitimacy in the face of local struggles to do so.

The experience of these musicians gaining international legitimacy is not just implied in these studies results, but is supported by the recent tangible indicators of success of many of these artists abroad. In an interview with *Rolling Stone*, Xiomara Fortuna reports that she has found an “audience receptive to her unyielding experimentation in Europe”, while another DAM pioneer, Rita Indiana, shared with the *New York Times* that she currently produces her music from New York City, where she serves as faculty in NYU’s Creative Writing in Spanish M.F.A.

On the other hand, newcomers to the scene Solo Fernandez toured in Mexico prior to gaining sufficient traction to do so locally. The shifted dynamic between international and local legitimacy that this scene has experienced is perhaps best summarized in a quote that one of the band members shared with *El Diario Libre*: “This tour confirms that the effort and work that has

gone into our craft is enough to prove that this project can yield favorable results, both for the development of our sound and of an entire music scene that seems to be limited by a lack of opportunity” (Original Text: “Esta gira confirma que el esfuerzo y trabajo que han venido realizando evidencia que sí se puede desembocar en resultados favorables para el desarrollo del proyecto y de toda una escena musical que parece estar limitada por falta de oportunidades”)

6.1 Study Limitations

A few key factors limited this research. Firstly, the quantitative analysis conducted relied on the accuracy of *El Diario Libre*'s journalistic digital archives. Given the identification of certain articles categorized under “Music” and “Entertainment” that were unrelated to these subjects, it is likely that music-related articles that would have been relevant to this study were not categorized as such within the archives, and were consequently absent from the final sample. Secondly, the lack of mainstream music-focused Dominican journalistic publications to analyze in contrast to sources such as *Rolling Stone* and *Pitchfork* inherently affects the direct comparability of the content of each pool of articles in the qualitative analysis. Moreover, the use of sources in both English and Spanish makes it impossible to search for the same “key words” in each sample for uniform coding purposes. Relying on translations to compare Dominican and American sources introduces room for error in categorizing and comparing discursive legitimation terminology.

This study's sample size of 24 articles evaluated qualitatively and 650 articles evaluated quantitatively is unable to capture the totality of Dominican alternative music locally and abroad. The sample's exclusion of direct quotes from DAM artists also limits this study exclusively to the perception of this scene on behalf of cultural intermediaries. The Dominican alternative music scene is complex and diverse, and the data captured in this study is only able to scratch the

surface of understanding how these musicians navigate the local music scene, and how they gain or lack legitimacy abroad.

Lastly, this study only accounts for the legitimating influence of “traditional” cultural intermediaries such as critics and journalists, limiting its consideration for the role of social media in building up these artist’s legitimated status.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Most notably, I hope that this study has contributed in laying the foundation for future sociological research focused on the complexities of the Dominican music scene, especially beyond that of dominant local genres. There is a need for scholarship that further seeks to understand what factors contribute to local cultural success, while also diving further into the role of sociocultural constraints in doing so. Studies that explore the racialized and gendered patterns that undergirl legitimacy within these contexts are also needed to both illustrate legitimacy challenges for local musicians, and to construct how social norms shape Dominican artistry at large.

Beyond a Dominican context, it would be interesting for scholars to continue to explore local versus international music coverage in further Latin American peripheral contexts accounting for a time period longer than the one employed in the present study. This would aid in further understanding the dynamic of gaining international prior to local legitimacy for peripheral genres, adding to the conversation on Cultural Globalization, while illustrating a more clear picture of the role of the rise of the Internet and increased interconnectivity in sparking this reversed legitimation process.

Lastly, there is an ample need for further studies that attempt to grasp the role of social media and fan culture in the international success of peripheral music scenes. While these sites for cultural mediation were outside of the bandwidth of this study, they can provide a complimentary narrative of how peripheral genres gain legitimacy abroad prior to doing so locally.

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Appendix A: International Sources Terms Coded

Article	Terms Coded
<p>I1: Rolling Stone, The Dominican Republic's 'Queen of Fusion Refuses to Leave Anything Unsaid</p>	<p>“Queen of fusion”; “amalgamations”; “an ornate braid”; “cutting-edge global rhythms”; “Dominican indie”</p> <p>“Black pride”; “often maligned musica urbana movement”; “Afro-descendant rhythms”; “underscored African heritage”; “radical”; “polyrhythms from Congo and Nigeria”; “hustling in deeply patriarchal Caribbean society”; “displays of Black pride”; “queer bohemian”; “historical scars of slavery”;</p> <p>“Merengue”; “merengue”;</p> <p>“Creative renaissance”; “poet, multi-instrumentalist alchemist”; “unyielding originality”; “most inventive”; “cementing her legacy”; “sonic artisan”; “innovation”; “boundary-pushing”; “curiosity flourished”; “charting new waters”; “committed to originality”; “unyielding experimentation”; “masterpiece”; “decades of investigation”; “the road less traveled”; “trailblazer”; “exposed in raw, cinematic detail”</p> <p>“Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD)”; “Jazz composed Toñe Vicioso”; “Luis Diaz”; “Jose Duluc”; “alongside Dominican icons like Fefita la Grande”; “Las Chicas del Can”</p> <p>“Audience receptive to her unyielding experimentation in Europe”; “New Orleans-based label”;</p>
<p>I2: Variety, 8 Latin Indie Artists to Watch this Hispanic Heritage Month</p>	<p>“Independent Latin Artist”; “blend”</p> <p>“Afro-Caribbean beats”</p> <p>“Fast-paced Merengue”</p> <p>“Latin Grammy winning producer”; “scored a nomination”</p>
<p>I3: Pitchfork, The Best Music by Latine and Spanish Artists in 2023</p>	<p>“Tweak beyond imagination”; “morph into”; “indie-pop landscape”;</p> <p>“Afro-dominican”; “exalting his Black identity and Indigenous roots”; “enslavement and colonialism”;</p> <p>“Curated”; “in search of boundaries to leap over”; “stunning”; “wistful”;</p> <p>“Feature from CLUBZ”</p>
<p>I5: New York Times, 8 New Songs You Should Hear Now</p>	<p>“Off-kilter sound”;</p> <p>“Texture production choices”; “her own personality”;</p> <p>“A Bit of Billie Eilish”</p>

<p>I6: Pitchfork, MULA 'Ven Vamos' Track Review</p>	<p>"Dominican Indie-pop"; "combined roots"</p> <p>"Afrobeats";</p> <p>"Boldly"</p> <p>"Merengue"; "Bachata"; "Merengue Rhythm"</p>
<p>I7: Rolling Stone, The Eclectic Sounds Blooming in the Dominican Republic's Indie Scene</p>	<p>"Glowing indie scene"; "impressive fusion"; "community of independent artists"; "exciting blends"; "eclecticism"; "experimentation"; "combining sounds"; "experiments"; "array of influences"; "indie scene";</p> <p>"Black-rooted genres"; "destigmatizing genres"; "Afro-descendant music"; "Women's issues"; "act of resistance and cry of freedom"; "female liberation"; "anthem for Dominican women"; "ancestral tradition... often ostracized"; "socio-political lens"; "A Black woman"</p> <p>"Bachata"; "merengue"; "traditional merengue"</p> <p>"Taking things to a new level"; "daring selections"; "household names"; "standout track"; "unbridled experimentation"; "major impact"; "enriched the scene"; "stunning"; "created a lane for themselves"; "stands out"; "time-warps"; "educates the listener"; "sleek"</p> <p>"Juan Luis Guerra supported";</p> <p>"Inspired by Pink Floyd"</p>
<p>I7: New York Times, In her New Show, Rita Indiana Confronts All Kinds of Ghosts</p>	<p>"Interdisciplinary abundance"; "genres into abstract shapes";</p> <p>"Cultural agitator"; "unsettles deeply entrenched cultural norms"; "queer sex scenes"; "Afro-dominican folk"; "demonic nonbinary alter ego"; "transgender protagonist"; "queer poetics"; "caribbean colonial wounds"; "cruel violence of the Atlantic slave trade";</p> <p>"Merengue"; "merengue"</p> <p>"Only Rita Indiana could"; "Almost documentarian"; "symbolic"; "constellatory style"; "literary superstar"; "far removed from convention"; "impressionistic"; "key figure"; "a lodestar"; "commitment to scrutiny";</p> <p>"Dominican Theatre group Teatro Guloya"; "Claudio Rivera"; "Olga Tañon";</p> <p>"Nominated for a Latin Grammy"; "New York University's Creative Writing in Spanish MFA"; "David Wojnarowicz"; "painter Jean-Michel Basquiat"; "Federico Garcia Lorca"; "Cultura Profetica"; "inspired by Tim Burton scores"</p>
<p>I8: Rolling Stone, Welcome to Diego Raposo's World of Daring, Demented Latin Pop</p>	<p>"Bent pop structures"; "seminal indie favorite"; "Latin indie scene"; "the Dominican underground"</p> <p>"Brilliantly strange"; "architecting a world of his own"; "deeper into his creative depths"; "unpredictable";</p> <p>"Collaborator for artists like Danny Ocean"; "version of a Kaytranada song"</p>

I9: Pitchfork, 25 New and Rising Artists Shaping the Future of Music in 2023	<p>“Combining rhythmic energy”;</p> <p>“Omnivorous sensibility”; “sought-after”; “adventurous”</p> <p>“Judith Rodriguez”</p>
I10: Rolling Stone, Angel Dior, Gale, Yendry, and More Latin Acts Making It Big In 2023	<p>“Indie pop”; “slide into any genre”;</p> <p>“Inspirational earworm”;</p> <p>“Clubz”; “live shows in Miami and Mexico City”; “Collaborating with everyone from JBalvin to Damian Marley”</p>
I11: NPR, World Cafe dives into the music of the Dominican Republic	<p>“Blended it”; “fusion on full display”;</p> <p>“Beloved merengue”;</p> <p>“Innovators”</p> <p>“Juan Luis Guerra”</p>
I12: Pitchfork, Yo No Era Así Pero de Ahora en Adelante, Sí Album Review	<p>“Mix freely”; “sticky-sweet pop punk”; “Caribbean punk ethos”;</p> <p>“Caribbean roots”; “merengue”</p> <p>“Angelic”; “defiant statement”;</p> <p>“Golden Boy Danny Ocean”; “compare to Tainy’s Data”</p>

Appendix B: Dominican Sources Terms Coded

Article	Terms Coded
L1: El Caribe, "Música alternativa en RD; el secreto mejor guardado"	<p>"Género alternativo"; "Mezcla de géneros"; "Sin un género que los defina"; "mezclar jazz; folk"</p> <p>"afrocaribeño"; "afrodominicano"; "que concientiza"; "problemas sociales"; "la fuerza femenina"; "liberación personal"; "fusión afrocaribeña"</p> <p>"La bachata"; "sin dejar al lado la base dominicana"; "ritmos tradicionales"; "bachata"; "merengue"; "merengue", "la bachata"; "salsa"</p> <p>"La calidad musical"; "guarda su esencia"; "expresa de forma distinta"; "autenticidad"</p> <p>"Sonia Silvestre"; "Luis Diaz"; "Victor Victor"; "Claudio Cohen"; "Xiomara Fortuna"; "Jose Duluc"; "Roldan Marmol"; "Alex Ferreira"; "Vicente Garcia"; "Juan Tomas Garcia"</p>
L2: Diario Libre, "Artistas y Grupos Indies: La Otra Cara de la Música Dominicana"	<p>"Musica indie"; "fusiones"; "mezclar el folklore local"; "combinó generos"</p> <p>"Tambores afrodominicanos"; "fusión afrocaribeña"; "obstáculos... afrodescendientes en el país"; "movimiento artístico"; "dominado por hombres"; "afroelectronico"; "música afrodescendiente"</p> <p>"Sonidos con raíces dominicanas"; "sonidos locales nativos de la isla"; "mejor merengue"; "papá de la bachata"</p> <p>"La calidad"; "talentosos músicos"; "riqueza rítmica"; "creatividad"</p> <p>"Jose Antonio Molina"; "Rafael Solano"; "Juan Luis Guerra"; "Manuel Troncoso"; "visitaron Diario Libre"; "Centro Cultura de España en Santo Domingo"; "Rita Indiana"; "Premios indie Dominicano"; "Mejor Álbum y Canción Alternativa"; "Ganó 2 menciones"; "Mejor Album"; "Ganó mejor álbum tropical"</p> <p>"La prestigiosa revista Rolling Stone"; "Nominado al Latin Grammy"; "Amaury Guitierrez"; "Luis Fonsi"; "Christian Pagan (Ganador de American Idol)"; "Samo (Camila); "Banda Mexicana 'Do Blanco"; "Tei Shi"; "Salt Cathedral"; "Ela Minus"; "Un millón de reproducciones"; "Rock Al Parque en Bogotá"; "Visitante (Calle 13)"</p>
L3: Diario Libre, Descubre el sonido de Dahlias, novedosa propuesta musical	<p>"Fusiona una gama diversa de generos"; "alternativo"</p> <p>"Experiencia femenina"</p> <p>"Cautivadora"; "Alquimia musical única"; "virtuosismo y versatilidad"; "Creatividad"; "Atrevidas"; "Emocionar, inspirar y transformar"</p>

<p>L4: Diario Libre, “Me provoca”, de Letón Pé y Diego Raposo entre los estrenos del Indie Dominicano</p>	<p>“En bachata”</p> <p>“Hermosas voces”; “Diferente”; “excelente”; “gran calidad”; “Un artista único”; “tema hermoso”; “no solo un buen cantante, un buen intérprete”; “diferente”; “un sello único”; “la calidad”</p> <p>“Influencia de Calle 13”; “fuera un éxito de J Balvin”</p>
<p>L5: Listín Diario, Grupo Dominicano Solo Fernandez realizará 13 actividades en México</p>	<p>“Una mezcla entre indie, punk y electrónica”;</p> <p>“Nadando a contracorriente”;</p> <p>“Quiebre en tendencia”; “Cautivando al público”</p> <p>“Gira en México”;</p>
<p>L6: Listín Diario, Yasser Tejada y Manerra ganan más Premios Indie Dominicano</p>	<p>“Indie”;</p> <p>“Juan Luis Guerra”; “el merengue”; “ejecutó su merengue instrumental”; “perico ripiao”;</p> <p>“Seis galardones”; “4 premios”;</p>
<p>L7: Diario Libre, Rolling Stone elige seis discos de Xiomara Fortuna y Amenazzy entre los mejores álbumes del 2021</p>	<p>“Una joya”;</p> <p>“Rolling Stone la coloco”; “Natalia Lafourcade”; “Juanes”; “Rauw Alejandro”; “Ruben Blades”; “Bomba Estereo”; “Roberto Delgado”</p>
<p>L8: Diario Libre, ‘Entre Luna y Babia’ la nueva producción de Xiomara Fortuna</p>	<p>“Temas de fusion”</p> <p>“Poetica vanguardista”; “Continua reinención”;</p> <p>“Folklore”; “Merengue”</p> <p>“Músico dominicano Isaac Hernandez”; “La Oreja Media Group”</p>

<p>L9: Listin Diario, Rice un relevo de la música alternativa</p>	<p>“La verdadera música fusionada”;</p> <p>“Tainos, afrotainos”;</p> <p>“Temática muy costumbrista”;</p> <p>“Entrevista con Listín Diario”; “Concierto con Rita Indiana”; “Admirador del trabajo de Vicente Garcia”</p>
<p>L10: Diario Libre, “Te Vamo’ a Eperá” , nuevo álbum de El Gran Poder de Diosa</p>	<p>“La fusión”; “Indie Rock”</p> <p>“Afrobeat”;</p> <p>“Merengue futurista”; “Ritmo Dominicano”; “Típico de los Bachateros Dominicanos”;</p> <p>“Rural de la bachata”; “el merengue tradicional”</p> <p>“Creatividad”; “creatividad”; “distintivo sonido”</p>
<p>L11: Listin Diario, Rita Indiana aborda la corrupción y homosexualidad en su nuevo disco</p>	<p>“Aborda asuntos sociales actuales”; “tabú hacia la homosexualidad”; “activista gay”;</p> <p>“orientación sexual”; “reconocía que era lesbiana”</p> <p>“Eduardo Cabra”</p>
<p>L12: Diario Libre, La Marimba será la invitada local de Coldplay</p>	<p>“Fusion”</p> <p>“Mujer empoderada”</p> <p>“Ritmos tradicionales”; “güira en mano”; “sazón caribeño”</p> <p>“Genuina”; “poder creativo”; “sutileza y profundidad”</p> <p>“Estadio Olimpico”</p> <p>“Coldplay”; “H.E.R.”; “Carla Morrison”; “Camila Cabello”</p>