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"Music and Interculturality"

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On the Razor's Edge: Brazilian Ethnomusicology, Participatory Research and Popular Audiovisual Education at Baixada Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil¹

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Abstract

Considering the physical and symbolic violence imposed on peripheral populations and favela residents in Brazil, this article argues for participatory methodology, as it has been practiced in Brazilian ethnomusicology, as a feasible and transformative action. Initially, I present some landmarks of its trajectory. Then, I report initiatives which I have been developing within this perspective since 2011, producing research and extension projects with urban youth from communities subjected to violence, exploration, and inequalities, especially in the metropolitan region Baixada Fluminense (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil). In these initiatives promoted by our group Escuta Baixada ("Listen to Baixada"), using Popular Education and Popular Audiovisual production tools, we collectively construct self-representations and critical reflections of students, musicians, and other residents that evidence an awareness of physical and symbolic violence and its causes, produced by the economic elites. In addition, we verified the existence of –and became participants in– a political activism expressed as an affective and collaborative network of musical/cultural production, from which sectors of Baixada Fluminense's population fight against stigmatization and for citizenship and acknowledgement of its contributions to culture. Evaluating the results and feedback obtained by our work among the concerned populations, we consider that the use of participatory ethnomusicology in the Escuta Baixada group's work was effective in the production of relevant research/extension for Baixada dwellers' interests and necessities.

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Keywords: Participatory research, Brazilian ethnomusicology, popular education, popular audiovisual education, Baixada Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Al filo de la navaja: etnomusicología brasileña, investigación participante y educación popular audiovisual en Baixada Fluminense, Río de Janeiro, Brasil

Resumen

Frente a la violencia física y simbólica impuesta a las poblaciones urbanas faveladas y periféricas en Brasil, este artículo defiende la actuación de la etnomusicología brasileña en su vertiente dedicada a la metodología participante. Inicialmente, presento algunos marcos de su trayectoria. A continuación, me refiero a trabajos que vengo desarrollando con esta perspectiva desde 2011, produciendo investigación y extensión con jóvenes de comunidades urbanas sometidas a violencias, explotación y desigualdades, especialmente en la vasta región metropolitana de la Baixada Fluminense (Río de Janeiro). En estos trabajos realizados por nuestro grupo Escucha Baixada, mediante la utilización de herramientas de la Educación Popular y de la Educación Popular Audiovisual, construimos colectivamente autorrepresentaciones y reflexiones críticas de estudiantes, músicos y otros residentes, que evidencian un reconocimiento de la violencia física y simbólica y de sus causas, producidas por las elites económicas. Además, verificamos la existencia –y pasamos a participar, con nuestro trabajo– de un activismo político que se expresa como una red afectiva y colaborativa de producción cultural/musical, a partir de la cual sectores de la población de la Baixada luchan contra la estigmatización y por la ciudadanía y el reconocimiento de sus contribuciones a la cultura. A partir de la evaluación de nuestro trabajo y de la respuesta que ha tenido el mismo, consideramos que la etnomusicología participante en el trabajo del grupo Escucha Baixada fue eficaz para producir investigación/extensión relevante para los intereses y necesidades de los residentes de la Baixada.

Palabras clave: investigación participante, etnomusicología brasileña, educación popular, educación popular audiovisual, Baixada Fluminense, Río de Janeiro, Brasil

No fio da navalha: etnomusicologia brasileira, pesquisa participante e educação popular audiovisual na Baixada Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil

Resumo

Frente à violência física e simbólica imposta às populações urbanas faveladas e periféricas no Brasil, este artigo defende a atuação da etnomusicologia brasileira em sua vertente dedicada à metodologia participante. Inicialmente, apresento alguns marcos de sua trajetória. A seguir, relato trabalhos que venho desenvolvendo nesta perspectiva desde 2011, produzindo pesquisa e extensão com jovens de comunidades urbanas submetidas a violências, exploração e

desigualdades, especialmente na vasta região metropolitana da Baixada Fluminense (Rio de Janeiro). Nestes trabalhos realizados por nosso grupo Escuta Baixada, utilizando ferramentas da Educação Popular e de Educação Popular Audiovisual, construímos coletivamente autorrepresentações e reflexões críticas de estudantes, músicos e outros residentes, que evidenciam um reconhecimento da violência física e simbólica e de suas causas, produzidas pelas elites econômicas. Além disso, verificamos a existência –e passamos a participar, com nosso trabalho– de um ativismo político que se expressa como uma rede afetiva e colaborativa de produção cultural/musical, a partir da qual setores da população da Baixada lutam contra a estigmatização e por cidadania e reconhecimento de suas contribuições para a cultura. Avaliando os resultados e o retorno obtidos por nosso trabalho entre as populações envolvidas, consideramos que a etnomusicologia participante no trabalho do grupo Escuta Baixada foi eficaz para produzir pesquisa/extensão relevantes para os interesses e necessidades dos residentes da Baixada.

Palavras-chave: pesquisa participante, etnomusicologia brasileira, educação popular, educação popular audiovisual, Baixada Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil

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Introduction

To deal with music and interculturality from a Latin American perspective, and more specifically from a Brazilian one, is, necessarily, to deal with conflict and violence (both physical and symbolic –see Bourdieu e Passeron 1992). In this field dotted by the influence of imperialism, of which recent witnesses include the several neoliberal *coups d'état* suffered by Latin American countries after the capitalist crisis of 2008 (Honduras 2008, Paraguay 2012, Brazil 2016) (Löwy 2016, Serrano 2016), political economy intertwines itself with ethnic and racial conflicts, resulting to several epistemicides². Such violence oppresses mostly the Afro-Brazilian population (54.9% of the Brazilian population, considering self-declared Blacks and mestizos, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, see IBGE 2017) and indigenous peoples, severely decimated in the country (0.4% of the population, see IBGE 2012). In this disheartening scene, I subscribe, as a feasible and transformative action, the implementation of action research/ participatory methodologies, as they have been contemporarily developed in Brazilian ethnomusicology.

In this paper, I initially present some landmarks in the development of participatory methodologies, to show how they became established in Brazilian ethnomusicology from a commitment to the interests of the more vulnerable populations and their empowerment. Then, I present initiatives that follow this path that I have been developing since 2011 in Baixada Fluminense, a large and impoverished metropolitan area close to Rio de Janeiro. Together with youngsters from urban communities of Baixada subjected to violence, exploration and inequality, we organized the Escuta Baixada (“Listen to Baixada”) research/extension project employing ethnomusicology, Popular Education and Popular Audiovisual Education tools.

My objectives in disclosing this effort are to bring to consideration our concrete collective experience, methodology and practice in this project, with its successes and shortcomings, obstacles and benefits, as a contribution to the planning and development of similar enterprises that may eventually come to exist in this area. One important thing to keep in mind is that, as my own experience showed, in spite of eventual exaggerated appraisals one may entertain about the importance given by residents to similar efforts that intend to acknowledge oppressed peoples' cultures and values, many times the very process of building awareness and appreciation for those communities' accomplishments, interests and necessities become an initial task of the research work itself. This is just one empirical evidence of the theoretical concept mentioned above, symbolic violence. Thus, in this paper, I hope I make sufficiently explicit this inextricable relationship between theory and practice as I portray our day-to-day process and daily routine.

Following this praxis, the Escuta Baixada project intended to contribute towards the development of the concept through an empirical process that counted on some Baixada

² According to Boaventura de Souza Santos, epistemicide is “the murder of knowledge. Unequal exchanges among cultures have always implied the death of the knowledge of the subordinated culture, hence the death of the social groups that possessed it. In the most extreme cases, such as that of European expansion, epistemicide was one of the conditions of genocide” (Santos 2016: 92).

Fluminense residents' autonomous activity. Thus, the research/extension group members actively participated in all phases of research, from the problem diagnosis to the establishment of objectives and procedures, choosing certain concepts and methodologies, finally arriving to findings of interest to themselves. Such findings, contrary to traditional research procedures, could not be determined beforehand, being necessarily developed throughout the very dialogical process employed in the participative research. Therefore, the main point of the entire research/extension project is to be able to develop this kind of autonomy based on dialogue and the theory-practice relationship, so the whole process of the research/extension enterprise is directed to the participants' interests and necessities.

Thus, I discuss the process through which our group Escuta Baixada, initially, came to identify the research problem that interested them: ubiquitous prejudice and stigma imposed on Baixada Fluminense dwellers by media and outsiders that represent Baixada as a land of crime and poverty, devoid of any positive aspects, such as music and culture. From that, the group decided to employ the concepts of violence and symbolic violence as theoretical foundations. The participative methodological option was freely chosen by the group members, as they understood the degree of freedom and autonomy they would be granted following its procedures.

The main point of the paper is to demonstrate that, as a result of the entire theoretical-methodological process, our findings indicate a growing awareness, by the people involved in the experience, of a set of structural social relations that reproduce inequality and violence as the causes of their everyday problems. This awareness collectively helped to construct self-representations and critical reflections of students, musicians, and other residents, that actively confronted stigma and prejudice, claimed by most Baixada residents as two of the worst problems, through the affirmation of their own music and culture. The participation in the project made it possible, for the research members, to press politicians, promote public policies of culture, to value Baixada's positive contributions, make visible their struggles, and stimulate the newer generations.

Action research and participatory research in Latin America: Definitions and premises

In spite of their EU and US origins, action research and participatory research have a Latin American tradition developed from the highly influent works of Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda (Brandão 2006: 21). In this tradition, those research modalities are historically linked to the social movements' political struggles from the 1970s on. As such, they have (or should have) as their objective to overcome the traditional distinction between research (in which professional researchers hold the power over all planning and execution stages) and extension (in which the supposed beneficiaries of the knowledge produced by research become their passive receptors and applicators). This traditional understanding of research/extension is parallel with the also traditional dichotomy between "pure" and "applied" research, with its ideological assumptions of "neutrality" and "scientific objectivity". Such notions hide colonial knowledge production mechanisms while reproducing them, subjecting the concerned populations to the violence of a passive, dependent and subaltern application of theories and methods produced elsewhere (notably, the global North) and with other interests (especially those of exploitation). Therefore,

traditional, dichotic understandings of research/extension and pure/applied research pairs are detrimental to the active production of theorization and methods derived from the practice and experience of communities, for their exclusive interest. Thus, what is sought with participatory research modalities is the communities' autonomous activity in all phases of research, from the diagnostics of the problem to be researched, to the establishment of objectives and procedures, and arriving to findings of interest to those communities, in a direct and horizontal collaboration with academic researchers.

It is necessary to say some words about the differences –if any– between participatory and action research. According to Michel Thiollent:

[...] action research is a type of social research with an empirical basis conceived and realized in close association to an action or the resolution of a collective problem, and in which researchers and representative participants of the situation or problem are involved in a cooperative or collaborative manner³ (Thiollent 2015: 20).

Thiollent discriminates between “action research” and “participatory research”. According to him, “action research, along with participation, presupposes a form of planned action characteristically social, educational, technical or other, which is not always found in participatory research proposals”⁴ (Thiollent 2015: 13-14).

However, that distinction is not universally practiced, and frequently, participatory research is understood as a synonym for action research. This is Carlos Rodrigues Brandão's understanding, for instance. He affirms that the term “*participatory research* presents itself as an alternative for ‘participatory action’ in at least two dimensions”⁵. In the first, popular social agents are considered more than just passive beneficiaries of the research, because the research depends on the increasing active, critical participation of said actors. In the second, “the very social investigation must be integrated in popular organization trajectories”⁶ (Brandão 2006: 31). Anthon de Shutter and Boris Yoppo converge to Brandão's understanding, defining all branches that emerged in Latin America in the 1960's as variations stemming from the same model: participatory research. Such branches encompass Paulo Freire's *thematic research* (1987, 1996), Orlando Fals Borda and others' action research (*investigación acción*), militant research, and several other modalities (De Shutter e Yoppo 1983: 67-68). Thus, without pretending to dilute specific differences –in particular, the frequent use of the “participatory research” concept throughout the world in merely managerial, never transformative contexts– I believe it is appropriate to apply the expression “participatory research”, as defined by Brandão, above, to all researches mentioned in this essay.

³ [...] a pesquisa-ação é um tipo de pesquisa social com base empírica que é concebida e realizada em estreita associação com uma ação ou com a resolução de um problema coletivo e no qual os pesquisadores e os participantes representativos da situação ou do problema estão envolvidos de modo cooperativo ou participativo.

⁴ “a pesquisa-ação, além da participação, supõe uma forma de ação planejada de caráter social, educacional, técnico ou outro, que nem sempre se encontra em propostas de pesquisa participante”.

⁵ “a pesquisa participante apresenta-se como uma alternativa de ‘ação participante’ em pelo menos duas dimensões”.

⁶ “a própria investigação social deve estar integrada em trajetórias de organização popular”.

Participatory research landmarks in Brazilian ethnomusicology

In Brazil, ethnomusicology emerged during the 1980's (Sandroni 2008: 67), and, according to Elizabeth Travassos (2003: 77), with outstanding works by Kilza Setti (1985), Anthony Seeger (2015 [1987]) and Rafael de Menezes Bastos (1999). In 1996, Setti started a participatory research with the indigenous Timbira people, involving actions performed by themselves of collection, classification and archiving of their repertory (Tygel 2009: 122). Seeger, in the Postface for the Brazilian edition of the book resulting from his PhD dissertation, supports "applied" or participatory research, as he reports a call for help made to him by the Kisêdjê people in 1993, to act in their defense in a complex process of invasion of their land by white men. From then on, he declares, much of his activity falls into the category of "applied anthropology" or "applied ethnomusicology" (Seeger 2015: 272). Thus, even if Seeger's initial research with the Kisêdjê was not deliberately conceived as "applied" or participatory, it would be acceptable to mention the moment narrated by Seeger, in 1994, as one of the possible starting points of a participatory strand in Brazilian ethnomusicology, followed, two years later, by Setti's work together with the Timbira. Important as it is, the general impact of these initial landmarks of participatory research over Brazilian ethnomusicology, was however surpassed by that of Professor Samuel Araújo's work, to be mentioned in the following paragraphs.

Soon afterwards, in 2000, an important initiative for Brazilian ethnomusicology and its participatory branch occurred the "International Ethnomusicology Meeting: African and Indigenous Musics in 500 years of Brazil", held in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais state⁷), at the School of Music of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). This meeting evidenced the existence of concrete conditions for the creation of a Brazilian Association for Ethnomusicology (Associação Brasileira de Etnomusicologia/ABET), which, effectively, would be founded in the following year (2001), during the 36th World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), held in Rio de Janeiro.

That the participatory research would become an important track of Brazilian ethnomusicology became evident as of the Meeting of 2000. In her chapter, significantly titled "Brazilian Ethnomusicology as Participatory Research"⁸ (Lühning 2006), included in the compilation of works selected among those presented at the meeting, Angela Lühning evaluates the event: "without realizing it, we shaped a meeting that was different from the usual scientific meeting encounter. We could describe it as a *participatory event*, reaching much further than a meeting habitually classified as intellectual, academic and/or scientific"⁹ (Lühning 2006: 37, emphasis added). Highlighting a key issue for participatory ethnomusicology, Lühning comments on the moment of the meeting in which people traditionally understood as research

⁷ When referring to a part of a proper noun, to a specific national state (e.g., Brazil) or its set of institutions, the word "State" will be capitalized in this article. When, on the other hand, "state" refers to a federative unit (e.g., Minas Gerais state), then "state" will be used instead.

⁸ "Etnomusicologia brasileira como etnomusicologia participativa".

⁹ "sem perceber, moldamos um encontro diferente do habitual encontro científico. Poderíamos descrevê-lo como um acontecimento participativo, indo muito além de um encontro normalmente classificado como intelectual, acadêmico e/ou científico".

objects become researchers: “Researchers and research subjects begin to exchange roles as the first emic researchers appear, like the Kaxinawá indian Ibã, who presented a recorded tape with songs sung by an elder of his tribe”¹⁰ (Lühning 2006: 45-46). Lühning also makes several recommendations, in this article, for Brazilian ethnomusicology to reach higher relevance, moving towards participatory research.

This meeting's participatory aspect was continued in the biannual meetings realized after ABET's foundation, in which different Afro-Brazilian, Indian, favela residents and other invited groups conducted debates and plenary sessions, discussing their knowledge and practices. The most recent of these meetings was not different, the VIII ENABET (ABET's National Meeting), that took place in 2017 at Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro/ UNIRIO, when I was a member of the ABET Board, had as its general theme “Music, Dance, Citizenship and Participation” (ABET 2017).

In the same year that ABET was founded (2001), professor Samuel Araújo created and became the coordinator of the Ethnomusicology Laboratory of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Since its creation, this laboratory has been dedicated to developing studies and works about participatory theories and methods, and it would have a large influence over several researchers, myself included. The impact of Professor Araújo's work over the entire field of Ethnomusicology has been widely acknowledged, deserving special consideration for his role in organizing the ICTM world conference. By the end of 2003, Araújo started to develop a research/ extension project at Maré, considered the largest group of *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro. This project placed in dialogue high school students who lived in Maré, and academic researchers, one of the most active being Vincenzo Cambria (2012). The group adopted the name Musicultura, and, continually doing research on Maré music and society, has produced several activities and noted academic works (Araújo et al. 2006 and 2010). This enterprise has been, in my understanding, the most important and influential participative research and extension project in Brazilian ethnomusicology.

Participatory research has, since the 2000 meeting, flourished in Brazilian ethnomusicology. Some of its initiatives, bringing together diverse peoples (indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, of urban or rural origin) and representative researchers in the field were featured in the recent book *Etnomusicologia no Brasil* (Lühning and de Tugny 2016), which I suggest to readers interested in approaching this diverse and thought-provoking field.

Popular education, the challenge of the academic text, and popular audiovisual education

Next, I discuss the initiatives I have been developing since year 2011, in the field of Brazilian participatory ethnomusicology. However, it is necessary, beforehand, to outline the Latin American stream known as Popular Education, since my work carries close relations with it.

Popular Education is a proposal of emancipatory education not limited to formal education,

¹⁰ “Os papéis entre pesquisadores e pesquisados começam a se inverter ao surgirem os primeiros pesquisadores êmicos como o índio kaxinawá Ibã que apresentou uma fita gravada com músicas cantadas por um ancião de sua aldeia”.

even though it considers the school a strategic terrain. It was historically constituted through social and popular movements' struggles in Brazil disputing an alternative model to capitalism. Thus, Popular Education is linked to the 1920s anarcho-syndicalist movements, to several literacy campaigns since then, to the Base Education Movement (MEB), among others created by Catholic Church after the II Vatican Council and its "preferential option for the poor", in 1961; to the Popular Culture Movement of Recife, Pernambuco, in 1961; to the Popular Culture Centers, connected to the Student National League (UNE), in 1962; to the Popular Education Campaign of Paraíba, in 1962; to the "40 hours of Angicos", undertaken by Paulo Freire; and to the National Literacy Plan of 1963 (Brasil 2014). In other words, Popular Education meets participatory research by way of Paulo Freire's influence (who, as a Catholic, joined the "preferential option for the poor" through his literacy praxis). In the Popular Education strand, participatory research proposes an unalienated model, in which the student collectively participates in the development of his/her own education, starting from his/her own cultural repertory and from themes of interest to his/her social group. It opposes an educational model produced elsewhere and imposed top-to-bottom, which disregards popular culture (with its contradictory development vis à vis Culture Industry) and that aims solely to meet the system's necessity of workforce reproduction.

The combination of participatory ethnomusicology and Popular Education led me to confront the problem of the medium through which academic research is generally presented: the academic text. Even starting from the assumption of a struggle for the defense of the different epistemes, which was made explicit since the start of this article, and is an essential component of ethnomusicology, I consider the academic text an important vehicle for the "reading of the world" (see Paulo Freire), especially when one considers urban peripheral or favela populations—that are my options in my activities as a researcher/extensionist. The same defense is made by anthropologist José Jorge de Carvalho, as he proposes the Meeting of Knowledges program—which supports a daring decolonization of the university, for it to embrace "traditional" knowledges, on an equal footing with legitimated Eurocentric knowledges. According to Carvalho, the interaction and complementarity between orality and writing is paramount to the project—"without falling, however, into the trap of backward, fundamentalist fantasies" (Carvalho et al. 2015: 7). In another text, Carvalho and Flórez-Flórez make even more explicit the articulation of the Meeting of Knowledges project with the Freirean practice, reaffirming its commitment to Freire's literacy proposal, although applying it to higher education (Carvalho and Flórez-Flórez 2014: 130-131). Thus, giving that Paulo Freire's focus was always the basic alphabetization and not higher learning, according to the authors, the Meeting of Knowledges is "symmetrical and complementary to Freire's proposal" (Carvalho and Flórez-Flórez 2014: 131).

Consequently, I support the academic text and its pertinence in a process aimed to ensure the autonomy of the educand. However, in spite of this medium's positive attributes, in regard to the possibilities of written language, in Brazil, the process of social exclusion produced by the extreme wealth concentration led to high levels of illiteracy (Ferraro and Kreidlow 2004: 190). According to Saviani et al. (2004: 124), the rate of analphabetism in Brazil by the end of the 20th century quadrupled, in comparison with that of the late 19th century. This adverse situation

reflects itself in the quotidian of teaching in all levels, and, after some time of struggle, led me to reconsider the intention of producing debate groups among low-income, favela and peripheral populations, focused on reading and producing academic texts. Even with the good intentions of providing a deeper foundation for them to understand their own reality, and the causes and possible solutions of their difficulties, I was faced with the prospect of a failure, as I started to encounter frustrations from the participants and problems of avoidance and absence in the projects I proposed to that end. Yet, it is important to mention that we achieved an academic production that aroused interest and was included in the proceedings of congresses, some of them international in scope (Neder et al. 2013, 2014a, and 2015), book chapters (Neder et al. 2014b) and in a top-rated international academic journal (Neder et al. 2016).

The challenge of implementing the academic text in similar projects is aggravated by the absence of funding for scholarships directed at low-income populations who are not enrolled in a regular course of study in Brazil. Such populations need, minimally, basic funding for public transportation and food on the days of the meetings. In addition, for one to count on any other effort by participants in their free time between meetings, it is necessary to offer the money they would be able to earn doing any type of temporary job, as their family usually needs it. The initiative that I will describe below, the Escuta Baixada project, was developed with students of higher education courses in federal institutions who received a monthly scholarship of R\$ 400,00 (four hundred reais, the standard amount paid at that time for scholarships offered by research funding institutions like CAPES and CNPq¹¹). I am currently developing a research/ extension project with similar features, named Escuta Periferia Petrópolis (Listen to Periphery Petrópolis), in this city of Rio de Janeiro. As this project is directed to youngsters from several different favelas/peripheries of Petrópolis, and is not linked to any official learning education institution, I cannot offer scholarships to the participants. As a result, it would be quite unrealistic to hope for the students to read academic texts in their free time between meetings, and, further still, that the practice of textual production could become an inherent routine of the process. This possibility is not completely eliminated, and perhaps may be achieved, in the future, depending on the concrete conditions encountered in the development of the process, especially the group members' interest. Nevertheless, it is not something one can count on without due economic compensation for the youngsters involved.

The idea of looking for private/corporate funding could be suggested. However, in most cases, such donors make demands on the projects' direction. In initiatives that do not have major ideological differences with the funders, that would not be such a problem. On the other hand, in our proposal, the criteria for evaluating the results achieved are based on the degree of critical understanding attained by the participants about the reality in which they live. This kind of research/ extension can really be hindered by capitalist/charity agendas, or those based in more conformist/ traditional views of education. As a concrete example, one of the NGOs I am in contact with depends on a major international donor to develop a progressive social project with

¹¹ CAPES: Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior; CNPq: Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico.

youngsters. However, this funder demands that the NGO requires all the project's beneficiaries – favela youngsters, and most of them, understandably, with no interest in classical music– to sing in a four-part choir. Additionally, the final result must be approved by a funder-appointed expert if the NGO wishes to have its funding renewed for the next year. Thus, it is easy to see that the dependence on private funding can put the NGOs in the terrible position of promoting the very symbolic violence it purported to deconstruct. That the symbolic violence is being imposed becomes evident when we consider that more than 50% of the initial proponents quit the initiative within one month, in spite of the allowance offered.

Also regarding the issue of private funding, the dependence on it brings the risk of discontinuity and rupture of the process when the contracts are not renewed. This is, exactly, the reality of other NGOs of which I am aware. In spite of decades of progressive and transformative activity, they are about to cease their activities due to the deep and worsening economic crisis Brazil has been undergoing since 2014, and which is only aggravating. Thus, even though the route of private funding is not discarded, it must be duly examined to avoid compromising everything that has already been accomplished, despite the serious problem represented by the lack of a subsistence allowance, even a symbolic one.

Faced with the challenge represented by the academic text, I began to pay attention to the possibilities offered by audiovisual production as a form of expression and reflection on the reality experienced by peripheral and favela communities. This kind of production, promoted by the field of Popular Audiovisual Education, is becoming increasingly widespread, even in peripheral countries similar to Brazil, with harsh inequalities in income distribution. With the development of technology, cameras, microphones, video editing software and other equipment for audiovisual production has become more affordable. Concomitantly, the postmodern imagetic paradigm became ubiquitous, causing the production/consumption of sound and image to become an ordinary part of the daily existence of youth of all social classes. Such production/consumption became more popular when, more recently, smartphones became a basic possession of virtually any youth regardless of social class. Completing the production/medialization/consumption cycle, the internet enabled instant posting and sharing of audiovisuals, through social media like YouTube and Facebook (and more recently Whatsapp). All of these developments favored the adoption of the audiovisual over the academic text in our projects, and opened a new possibility of communication between subjects separated by a cultural and social barrier, i.e., the facilitator with academic formation and the young researchers of their own communities. Such a possibility, though it in no way ensures the success of initiatives hindered by all kinds of difficulties, nonetheless avoids the creation of additional complications.

Baixada Fluminense – background and conditions that prompted the Escuta Baixada project

All this, however, was not part of my life before 2007, when I was finishing my first doctorate. In that year, I became professor of Music of the Federal Center for Technologic Education (CEFET) in the city of Nilópolis, at Baixada Fluminense (in the following year,

almost all CEFETs around Brazil became Federal Institutes, and that institution became the Federal Institute of Rio de Janeiro/ IFRJ, Nilópolis campus). That experience, different from all I had already lived, would henceforth become extremely transformative for all my life, and would lead me to participatory research with peripheral populations.

Baixada Fluminense (or, simply, “Baixada”), where IFRJ/Nilópolis is located, is a large plain to the north of Rio de Janeiro located in the metropolitan area. Baixada is home to an average 3.5 million inhabitants in 13 commuter towns. Such municipalities lack basic structure, such as sanitation, and their function is to accommodate lower-income workers who mostly work in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Demographically, Baixada received many slaves and former slaves from 1870 on, when the coffee plantations in other states went into decline, and, after 1888, with the official abolition of slavery. Initially, this proletarian population settled in the city of Rio de Janeiro, to avoid transportation costs as they pursued their livelihood in the center of the city, and also along the railway that already connected Baixada to that city (Simões 2011: 102). The standard of their housing units in Downtown Rio was poor, precarious and unhealthy, consisting of collective rental houses owned by small merchants established there, called “cortiços”. With the increase in black, low-income population density in the region, successive urban reforms were implemented beginning in the late 19th century to displace that proletarian population, forcing these communities to seek their own solutions for their housing problem. This situation led many of them to settle in Baixada, a region located quite near the city and served by mass transportation (rail). In 1903, with the famous reform of Mayor Pereira Passos, and other subsequent reforms, the *cortiços* of Downtown Rio became extinct, finally pushing a considerable Black and mestizo population mass to Baixada. Later, by the 1950s, with the industrialization expansion of Southeast Brazil (especially in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro), a large Northeastern migrant population flew to those cities, escaping from the exploitation imposed by big landowners in a region submitted to absolute misery. Looking for housing they could afford, many of them ended up settling in Baixada.

This explosive combination of low income, lack of infrastructure and neglect by the State produced, since long, high rates of intentional homicide and robbery at Baixada. Extermination groups have been active in the region since at least the 1960s, committing summary executions. According to sociologist José Claudio Souza Alves, a Baixada resident and a specialist on the subject of violence there, this phenomenon might be described as a “private justice system” (merchants who hire death squads to murder small thieves), produced by “generalized perceptions of the State’s incapacity to control crime”. “An order that is structured by cultural factors that demand arbitrary actions, since the criminal justice system is perceived as prejudiced, biased, and arbitrary in the provision of justice and peace”¹². Such analyses, as stated by Alves, though correct, are limited, and we should look for “the constitution of local power and its relationships with State and federal power”¹³ (Alves 2003: 21). In other words, to speak of State negligence as an explanation for the problem of violence in Baixada is nonetheless true,

¹² “Uma ordem estruturada a partir de fatores culturais que passam a demandar atuações arbitrárias, já que o sistema de justiça criminal é tido como preconceituoso, enviesado e arbitrário na provisão de justiça e paz”.

¹³ “para a constituição do poder local e sua relação com as esferas de poder estadual e federal”.

but it is necessary to go beyond that, showing connections between the very State and the violence. For example, one can mention the paramilitary groups known as “*milícias*”, formed by active and former military police (retired or expelled) that use State resources (including weaponry and ammunition) to promote crime.

The precarious situation of Baixada in all aspects, especially public safety, had a major impact over our research findings. The territory's problems were explored in such a sensationalistic way by media companies, for so many years, that 100% of the Baixada dwellers that we came to interview expressed disgust toward this “Rio's most violent region” stereotype and the insistent representation of it as a poor area devoid of any positive aspect. This stigma, denouncing symbolic violence mixed with physical violence, would become later our main research problem.

Knowing very little of Baixada's territory, and imbued with the negative media representations about it, on a day in November 2007 I made my first trip to IFRJ/Nilópolis, to take charge of my office. Worried to be going through that unknown territory, I traversed the route that hundreds of thousands of Baixada inhabitants cover every day in the opposite direction. I took a bus to the famous *Central do Brasil* Station, in downtown Rio de Janeiro, and then the notorious “*trem da Central*” (Central train) (some years ago, the former State rail company Central do Brasil was privatized by the Supervia company, without any noticeable improvements). This transportation is deficient in all aspects, with repeated delays, broken trains, lack of basic comfort conditions, almost unbearable heat, and absurd overcrowding during rush hours. Following the orientation given by another passenger (that proved to be completely wrong), I got off at Pavuna station, to take a bus to Nilópolis. However, it would not be so simple: I had to take a bus, get off, walk a bit, and then take another bus, so I could arrive at IFRJ after an eventful seventy-kilometer journey.

This episode was to be very instructive for my understanding of Baixada. Later, during my ethnography, I would learn from the Baixada dwellers that the problem of overexploitation of the public transportation business by private companies that hold monopolies over Baixada is a most serious one, dramatically affecting the territory's dwellers' urban mobility and quality of life. These companies are real mafias, with tentacles that expand towards the State, as an inquiry (CPI) from the Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro has shown (Barreira 2018). With regards to musical activities, the bad service provided by these companies presents a definitive obstacle, as the people cease to participate in their neighborhoods' musical life because of the dangers they are exposed to due to the lack of reliable transportation, especially at night.

My first sensation as I walked through Baixada for the first time on that November day, was of remarkable strangeness. Spatial organization –the layout of the streets– is extremely irregular, as compared to the territories I knew from the affluent areas of Rio de Janeiro. The irregular layout suggested to me, at that point, confusion and blurred structures. As I penetrated that territory, I noticed more and more signs of confusion and strangeness. The soundscape, as I recall from that first moment, was very disturbing. I heard sounds from different sound sources and conflicting contexts, all of them in high volumes, suddenly allowing neopentecostal songs, profane sambas, funks, and forrós to coexist in the same space. Here and there, I saw old,

mistreated horses walking freely through the streets, eating garbage. In some streets, boys that should be in school closed the street crossings with old sofas and other kinds of litter, so they could use the streets as improvised soccer fields. Many motorcycles, running up and down in disorderly fashion, made a lot of noise that mixed with that of the other sound sources and contributed to the hyperactive soundscape. I noticed, in this morning of a normal workday, many idle shirtless men wearing shorts, drinking beer or *pinga*¹⁴ in *biroscas*¹⁵. Oddly, it was usual for these men to remain in the streets in front of the *biroscas*, with glasses and bottles in their hands, in cheerful chattering, transforming the streets into conviviality spaces, and transferring to drivers, in their daily rush, the sensation of being in the wrong place. Evidently, the people have no responsibility for this state of things. This is the concrete image, beyond impersonal statistical data, of the abandon of peripheries by the State and of the perverse social exclusion caused by structural unemployment inherent to the capitalist system. This situation principally affects Black population, who are the majority in Baixada subjected until today to a structural racism that has economic exploitation as its foundation.

The strangeness I felt was understandable, not only because I was, at that point, a middle-class, protected person. At that time, I was coming from around nine years of intense academic study, in which it became necessary to immerse myself completely in the university environment. It was a period of total retreat and full dedication, including around two years, since 2003, studying abroad at Brown University as part of my doctorate. As is well known, this university is one of the top US research institutions. I went to study there because I earned a very competitive scholarship from Brown. During all that time, I fully engaged in the academic opportunities offered by that institution, having been invited by ethnomusicologist Katherine Bergeron, then chair of the prestigious Music Post-Graduate Program, to present a conference about Brazilian popular music and culture. I was also invited by my supervisor, ethnomusicologist Paul Austerlitz, to share with him the teaching of a course on Introduction to Ethnomusicology. Thus, I was coming from a long period of intense dedication to prepare myself for a career as a university professor and researcher. It was understandable that my mind was completely filled with uncritical expectations and training based on a First World reality, which accounted for much of my feeling of strangeness as I traversed Baixada on my way to IFRJ in my first contact with the region.

To keep the memory of that feeling to this day, and to be able to distance myself from it with the mediation of reflexivity, is important to me, when it comes to consider the subject of education, music, and inequality. The fact that I spent those years there was very important for a radical transformation of my notion of academic work. I left aside an overvaluation of an idealized world of research in centers of excellence, and I started to value research that aims to promote real transformations in the reality of the people who need them in my country.

However, when one says “real transformations”, this is most frequently understood from the point of view of the persons who have the power to propose initiatives. Everything changes

¹⁴ A traditional Brazilian liquor made from the fermentation of cane sugar.

¹⁵ Shacks that sell cheap liquor.

when we look for a dialogue with the subjects that are the supposed beneficiaries of said transformations, trying to understand what they want to be transformed and in what way. Thus, it was this path of estrangement that took me to participatory research and to permanently search for a more relevant role as an educator.

The Escuta Baixada project – background, methodology, conceptual outline, practice

Following this path, in 2011, with my second doctorate almost finished, I decided to start a participatory research/ extension project with IFRJ students. I was teaching in the undergraduate course of Cultural Production Technology, soon afterwards transformed into a Baccalaureate, and my interest was to do some kind of work related to Baixada Fluminense's music. The first student to show interest in the research was Daniel Barros. Daniel had been frequenting my classes in several disciplines, consistently showing enthusiasm, dedication, and initiative, and when I told him that I would propose a project with those characteristics, he adhered to it immediately¹⁶. We established a dialogue about what to do, and, since the first moment, we agreed on developing a project about Baixada's music, as he is also a musician and already had an interest in participating in that scene. As a starting point, I attained two CNPQ scientific initiation scholarships, which were offered to him and to Vanderson Nunes, another student from the same course. Soon after, Daniel suggested that we included Rodrigo Caê as a volunteer in our group. Rodrigo, another student and musician in the Cultural Production course, already had experience and knowledge of Baixada's music. He was involved with a cultural center that I would later come to know, the Centro Cultural Donana. Donana is one of the most remarkable spaces of Baixada, not only for local music, but also for Brazilian reggae in general, and where Cidade Negra –a nationally renowned band to this day– was formed.

Thereafter, we started to hold weekly meetings to debate issues related to Baixada's music. As time went by, we collectively defined a name for the group, Escuta Baixada ("Listen to Baixada"), and created a YouTube channel on which to post our interviews and minidocs (Escuta Baixada 2011). The channel currently has 56 videos, among them minidocs, interviews and debates (highlighting Escuta Baixada 2013a, 2014a, and 2014b, and Cardoso et al. 2013). In the long, one-hour (average) interviews, we tried to give as much freedom as possible to each interviewee, following the "grand tour questions" ethnographic technique. According to this technique, one lets the interviewee speak at will. Then, in a later analysis, one extracts categories from the interviewee's discourse that may be subjected to closer scrutiny. In Freirean methodology, such categories are called "generative themes" (they generate debates and problematizations) that are significant to the participants' social group. This work was effectively performed, with all interviews transcribed in detail through the several years of the project's existence, and the categories/ generative themes systematically extracted from each interview. All this material waits for elaboration for the purpose of publication. Notwithstanding, the interviews were produced and delivered years ago in their entirety, through the mentioned

¹⁶ I am glad to know that the flame of that interest and dedication remained lit in Daniel, who, currently, pursues his Master's Degree at the Cultural Production Post-Graduation Program at Universidade Federal Fluminense/UFF.

YouTube channel. They represent, in my view, a not negligible contribution, revealing memories, oral histories, detailed analysis, problems, conflicts, and obstacles lived by a number of Baixada's significant actors, especially vis à vis the almost nonexistence of similar initiatives. The channel is a free and public archive, offered by the group Escuta Baixada to the people of this region as one of the concrete products of our activity.

The name "Escuta Baixada" ("Listen to Baixada") was chosen exactly to reflect an attentive and interested attitude on our part, toward Baixada's voices. That choice was a deliberate response from our group to the problem repeatedly brought to us by all interviewees, that the media and the people from Rio did not show any interest in knowing Baixada's diverse cultural manifestations and local creativity, thus, spreading negative and prejudicial representations about it instead.

Since the beginning of our meetings with the Escuta Baixada group, I tried to create and deliberately pose simple questions, like "what is music to you?", "what is *good music*?", "what musics do you like?", "where do you use to go to listen to music", and other in the same vein. Such questions little by little got us close to issues that would become central for the entire research, and all of them concerned different forms of violence¹⁷. As time went by, violence became a defining concept in our research, as the people of Baixada systematically put it in the first place in our ethnography and interviews. Physical violence suffered by Baixada dwellers is, mainly, that which is produced by the State, such as routine and normalized police approaches, which frequently end up in unjust detentions or even death, but also includes that provoked by *milícias*, as explained before. In addition, with its omission, the State produces periodic calamities in the Baixada territory, such as floods, which leave thousands homeless and hundreds of deaths. Along with such modalities of direct violence, the State indirectly produces all sorts of aggressions due to its structural relationships with capitalism, like, for instance, the terrible urban mass transportation, homelessness, unemployment and underemployment, among others.

In addition to all these types of physical violence, all of our field interactions revealed another kind of violence, *symbolic violence*, a concept defined by Bourdieu and Passeron as "all power that comes to impose significations and impose them as legitimate, dissimulating the power relations that are at the base of its force"¹⁸ (Bourdieu and Passeron 1992: 19). As clear examples of symbolic violence, we had many opportunities to verify that a very expressive part of the Baixada dwellers had introjected a sense of low self-worth that led them to diminish even the best things Baixada has to offer, including the music. For instance, Ras Bernardo (singer/songwriter of the band Cidade Negra's first formation), interviewed by us, was asked about the value given to the band by Baixada residents, when the group had already developed their sound, but still did not have a hit. His response was:

The majority of people here do not see what is happening here. They see the things from here [Baixada], happening there [in Rio]. It is in Rio that [the Baixada residents] will see the

¹⁷ A reality with several points of contact with that represented through Samuel Araújo, Grupo Musicultura and Vincenzo Cambria's aforementioned projects.

¹⁸ "todo poder que chega a impor significações e a impô-las como legítimas, dissimulando as relações de força que estão na base de sua força".

posters and such, so in Rio people see, as they are going to work, and such... Now, in Baixada, people don't see¹⁹ (Escuta Baixada 2012).

In other words, even if the band played around Baixada for years before attaining national success, the Baixada people did not believe in its potential until they became famous nationwide.

A similar situation happened during the extension course "Music in the School" which we offered to teachers of Nilópolis and Mesquita (Baixada) public schools. Such teachers were, for the most part, born and raised in Baixada, or longtime residents. When we asked about which Baixada musical manifestations they knew of, they would not know what to respond. Instead, they would talk about musical activities they had promoted in their schools, and which invariably concerned to broadly legitimized musics used to denote cultural capital, like, for instance, a Vinicius de Moraes Week that had been promoted recently by one of the participants.

Thus, symbolic violence is insidious, and even more revolting, as, instead of imposing itself by explicit force, it hides the oppressive power, naturalizing it, and making the very person subjected to violence to believe that he/she is the one to blame for their subjection. This happens, according to Bourdieu, because the subjects can only understand their reality through knowledge tools shared with the dominator. Such tools, having been subtly imposed by the ruling class (including and principally by way of school education), are nothing more than forms of domination, which lead to the naturalization of the relation of domination. It is easy to see that the ideological discourse (Laclau 1977: 7) is at the base of symbolic violence, and that this ideological discourse articulates both modalities of violence, physical and symbolic.

In this sense, the work we do, concisely, is to, by way of dialogic practice, in the Freirean sense, permanently problematize the easy truths disseminated through everyday discourse (where symbolic violence hides). It is those easy truths that are issued in response to the simple questions already mentioned. Observe that it is not about supplying ready answers (that would be nothing more than another indoctrination). Permanent problematization allows us to produce constant doubt, which is directly related to the central concept of "autonomy" for Paulo Freire, according to whom the permanent query for responses is the exclusive responsibility of the subject of his/her own education. For Freire, autonomy is not something to be given to someone. It has to be achieved through struggle, and this struggle is exactly the permanent problematization mentioned above.

In the following excerpt, Freire puts our discussion on symbolic violence in his own terms, and touches upon the difficulty we face as we perform this kind of work, for freedom (represented by autonomy) is, contrary to what might be expected, feared by the subject. Against this difficulty arises the "permanent query", that I named "permanent problematization", which ought to be a "responsible action of the one who takes it", a "struggle", because it is only through the permanent problematization of all that represent symbolic violence that the subject can achieve autonomy:

¹⁹ A maioria das pessoas aqui não vê o que está acontecendo aqui. Vê o daqui [da Baixada], acontecendo lá [no Rio]. No Rio é que você vai ver os cartazes [outdoors] e tal, então no Rio a gente vê, porque tá indo pro trabalho e tal... Agora, na Baixada as pessoas não veem.

The oppressed, those who introject the oppressors' "shadow" and follow their agenda, fear freedom, insofar as freedom, leading to the expulsion of that shadow, would require of them to "fill" the "void" left by expulsion with another "content" –that of their autonomy. The content of their responsibility, without which they would not be free. Freedom, which is a conquest, and not a donation, demands a permanent quest. Permanent quest that only exists in the responsible action of the one who performs it. No one has the freedom to be free: on the contrary, one fights for it precisely because one does not have it (Freire 1987: 18)²⁰.

In this sense, something that happened within the dynamics of our meetings deserves a mention. At that point, we were in the year 2014, and our research/extension project had managed to win the difficult national competition for the resources and scholarships provided by the University Extension Program (ProExt), supported by the Ministry of Education²¹. This achievement granted scholarships for six more students²², and our project obtained another extension scholarship from UNIRIO²³, resulting in a total of eight members in the group, including myself. In our now larger research/extension group's meetings, one of the participants disagreed with a criticism brought by the group on the unequal distribution of resources earmarked by the government to the affluent areas of Rio de Janeiro and for the Baixada municipalities. This member felt annoyed by the comparison in which his region seemed underestimated, and questioned what he understood as a discrimination, arguing that the project's objectives, built collaboratively, concerned the valorization of this territory. Following an old personal habit, later underpinned by the Paulo Freire's approach just outlined in the quote above, I allowed silence to take over until the group could come to some sort of problematization, which effectively happened, almost immediately. The other members of the group, also residents of the region, argued that the project's participatory objectives also concerned a critical analysis of the inequalities produced by economic exploitation, which express themselves in the evident undervaluation of the Baixada cities, this being that an important example worth mentioning. An extremely important and heated debate ensued among them, an occasion of collective illumination, that allowed me to see the process of the attainment of autonomy in an advanced degree, in which my presence started to become dispensable –the final, unstated objective of any research of this kind. Such moments started to become more and

²⁰ "Os oprimidos, que introjetam a 'sombra' dos opressores e seguem suas pautas, temem a liberdade, à medida em que esta, implicando na expulsão desta sombra, exigiria deles que 'preenchessem' o 'vazio' deixado pela expulsão, com outro 'conteúdo' –o de sua autonomia. O de sua responsabilidade, sem o que não seriam livres. A liberdade, que é uma conquista, e não uma doação, exige uma permanente busca. Busca permanente que só existe no ato responsável de quem a faz. Ninguém tem liberdade para ser livre: pelo contrário, luta por ela precisamente porque não a tem".

²¹ The research/extension group Escuta Baixada would also win the next year's competition (2015), having, as its members, along with Daniel Barros, who remained as a volunteer with without receiving any funding, students from different UNIRIO courses: Amanda Pereira Weber, Juliana Gomes Barreto Nogueira, Kamila Eulalio Abreu, Luísa Moreira, Monique Baptista de Paula Barros, and Luiz Carlos de Souza. After that, ProExt, this important Ministry of Education program, the most important government initiative in favor of the society/university integration, and which attended the most forgotten pockets of the country, was discontinued by the illegitimate government that took the power after the destitution of elected President Dilma Rousseff in May 12, 2016.

²² Daniel Barros Gonçalves Pereira, Rodrigo Jeferson Caetano, Priscilla da Silveira Campos de Oliveira, Daniela de Souza França, Maria Clara de Matos Coelho, and Maurício Silvano dos Santos Flora.

²³ Won by student Rui Pereira Kopp.

more frequent, confirming that we had made the right theoretical and methodological options.

Another finding that deserves mention, relative to this methodology based on simple, apparently naive questions (in the present case, “what is samba?”), lead us to understand a divergent notion of the samba genre that, in our reading, pointed to a critical “native” analysis of the process of cultural appropriation. In response to that question, for Baixada musicians and appreciators of the local *pagode*²⁴ genre with whom we talked to, “samba”, instead of referring to the *sambistas de raiz*²⁵, relates to the genre that is pejoratively known as *pagodinho romântico*, which has a strong commercial appeal. These *pagodeiros*, when asked by us, then, about how they classified the samba produced by Nelson Cavaquinho, Wilson Batista, i.e., the samba generally understood as “*de raiz*” (grassroot) or “true”, they responded, to our immense surprise: “samba Zona Sul” (referring to the most affluent region of Rio de Janeiro).

This interpretation, by a segment of the Baixada people, exactly that part of the people that is most lacking in economic and cultural capital, which equates “*pagodinho romântico*” to “samba”, while “true samba” is understood by this population as “samba Zona Sul”, was regarded by our group to have important implications. Such suggestions would clash with the perceptions of those who have had access to cultural capital and know the importance of the samba history and tradition, so this issue must be examined further.

As is commonly acknowledged, the idea of “tradition” is often appropriated and colonized by the dominant classes, which empty it out of its conflictive meanings, infusing inoffensive contents that legitimize these same classes. The case of samba is exemplary and largely studied in the ethno/musico/anthropological literature (see, for instance, Giacomini 2006, Sandroni 2001, Vianna 1995, Menezes Bastos 2007 y 2008). According to such studies, samba no longer represents *exclusively* a genre made by and for a marginalized Black population, in conflict with dominant society, but instead largely became accepted by this same society as a symbol, exactly, of an alleged “racial democracy”. However, this colonization of Black music by an alien ideology was rejected by the very Black population. This affirmation is evidenced by the abandonment of samba by large sectors of the Black community, and the massive popularity of *funk carioca* among them, to the distaste of those who justly revere samba as an important sign of Black resistance, but who did not understand the dynamics of rejection just outlined. A similar situation happened with jazz in the United States, once more provoking passionate clashes between jazz and funk music lovers²⁶. As we see, then, the understanding of “samba” as “*pagodinho romântico*”, and of “samba de raiz” as “samba Zona Sul” demonstrates a critical awareness regarding the process of colonization of samba by a racial ideology that tries to hide Black exploitation as it conceals class conflicts. This critical awareness evidences, once more,

²⁴ Derogatorily known as “*pagodinho romântico*” (“romantic little pagode”), pagode is an extremely popular sub-genre of samba that has been a best-seller for several years, much to the disgust of the lovers of that which is considered “true samba”, made by names like Cartola and Nelson Cavaquinho. “*Pagodinho romântico*” also differs from the “true pagode”, performed by groups like Cacique de Ramos, which is revered by purists.

²⁵ “Root samba musicians/songwriters”, i.e., grassroot practitioners.

²⁶ Eric Hobsbawm (1993) analyses the contradictions implicated in the embrace, by Black bebop musicians, of “orthodox”, “respectable”, “art” patterns, in search of legitimization. Samuel Araújo discusses these same phenomena from Eric Hobsbawm’s concept of the “social use of the past” (Araújo 2006: 65).

the possibilities of the employed methodology.

Deconstructing identity homogeneity: Baixada's collaborative cultural network

Along with other kinds of prejudice, as mentioned in the Introduction, Baixada dwellers frequently complain that outsiders (especially the media and the people from the richer areas of the city of Rio de Janeiro) generally misrepresent their cultural richness and social inequalities in terms of a shallow homogeneity and low-level sameness. Such prejudices were turned explicit by our participative ethnography, as were their lack of basis in reality. Taking solely IFRJ as an example, its students are highly stratified in terms of their social classes, ranging from youngsters in extremely precarious situations, to those of the middle-class who come from very far, from the cities of Rio de Janeiro or Niterói, attracted by the quality of IFRJ's courses. To this social complexity, one may add the cultural one: it is possible to feel a marked heterogeneity among the students concerning their contradictory participation in different cultural circles, choices of music genres, socialization spaces, entertainment, and so on. Thus, since the start of the research, we did not look for any sign of "coherence", be it in terms of musical preferences, conceptualization or behavior linked to any stereotype one may have about Baixada. From a poststructuralist theoretical frame of reference (Kristeva 1969, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1980, 1989, 1998a, and 1998b), we discarded any essentialist conception of difference (be it based on class, genre, sexuality, race, and so on) in favor of a notion of a *subject in process*, continually deconstructed/ reconstructed intertextually by language and discourse. Consequently, our notion of agency is never unitary, cohesive, nor coherent; much on the contrary, it is very problematic, contradictory, subject to the action of the ideological discourse and of the affective memory, and of the roles inherited from the family and the neighborhood. The confluence of such notion of subject and agency yields an active construction of multiple, dynamic, decentered meanings and identities.

As our research widened its scope throughout Baixada, it provided an exemplary empirical confirmation of this complex identity construction, showing a collaborative and affective network that unifies a large quantity of cultural activists in the fight against Baixada's stigmatization and precarization. As we explored the music of the region, we got in touch with many musicians, cultural producers, cultural animators, video makers, artists of different disciplines, poets, songwriters, and so on. All of them had specific cultural and identity traits, which, in other realities, create separations among them (for instance, heavy metal rockers who have conflicts with, or do not speak to, "*pagodeiros*" or "*funkeiros*", and vice versa). However, in Baixada, they interact normally, forming a collaborative network dedicated to Baixada's affirmation. For some of those cultural agents, this network is a kind of political activism.

To get a better understanding about this network, we give voice to Dani Francisco and Giordana Moreira, cultural producers who, at the time of the interview, were partners at the cultural production agency Terreiro de Ideias. Giordana conceived *Roque Pense*, a Baixada rock festival dedicated to feminine empowerment²⁷. For Dani:

²⁷ See <http://www.roquepense.com.br/>

That discourse, “Hey, Baixada is bad, there’s only assassins there, there’s only violence, drug traffickers... In short, all that low self-esteem that we were used to see, to listen, and to think... What is fed to us by the local public powers [in cultural production terms] is really lame, much too stigmatized. [...] When you have an enormous richness of sound experiences in Baixada and that are not perceived, yes? And we go on spreading [a new attitude], this gang, we get to know more people, we go on building respect for what the other is doing, like Giordana was already doing a while back, and so many others we come across in our path, yes?”²⁸ (Escuta Baixada 2013c).

Likewise, Giordana highlights the importance of this network to make the Roque Pense rock festival happen:

And so Roque Pense was born, with a very simple proposal of doing rock, of making fanzine, of producing things we already used to produce, but with the intention of including feminine participation. So we made this fanzine, workshops, the circuit, we borrowed the equipment, the people from Rádio Rua helped, the people from [Cineclub] Buraco do Getúlio, then each one came with a proposal. VJ Paulo China presented a research on women in rock, Felipe Sans, a.k.a. Samura, who was beginning to a deejay, proposed to deejay songs limited to all-female bands. So, each one was coming together with an idea. Marcio Bertonna, from [Cineclub] Buraco Cavernoso, who does streaming, who produces Web TV shows, also came with an idea which soon became the Roque Pense Radio Web, which is a TV show in radio format broadcast by the internet. In short, it was this network with people we already knew and already worked with at Baixada, we came together around this idea²⁹ (Escuta Baixada 2013c).

Dani, on her turn, talks about the political meaning of this network:

This *political activism*, yes? I have a friend who goes like this, “Gee! Everybody I know from Baixada is not just an artist, a producer, he/she is an artist *and* an activist, a producer *and* an activist!” You never see anybody from Baixada who is like this, “oh, I am just a filmmaker”, no, you see “I am a filmmaker but I produce, I create, I fought against someone, I left here, I went there, I worked on the streets”. Because there is this resistance thing, of having to claim your own ground (Escuta Baixada 2013c).

²⁸ Aquele discurso de “Pô a Baixada é ruim, só tem matador, só tem violência, os núcleos de droga. Enfim, toda aquela baixa autoestima que a gente tava acostumado a ver, ouvir e pensar... O que nos é oferecido pelos poderes públicos locais [em termos de produções culturais] é muito tosco mesmo, é muito estigmatizado. [...] Quando você tem uma riqueza de experiências sonoras enormes na Baixada e que não são vistas, né? E a gente vai se contaminando, essa gangue, a gente vai se conhecendo, criando respeito pelo que o outro faz, como a Giordana que já fazia desde lá trás e tantos outros que a gente vai se cruzando no caminho, né?”

²⁹ E aí assim nasceu o Roque Pense, com uma proposta assim bem simples de fazer rock, fazer fanzine, produzir coisas que a gente já produzia, só que com a proposta de ter a participação feminina. Então a gente fez esse fanzine, fez oficinas, fez o circuito, que pegou emprestado os equipamentos, o pessoal da Rádio Rua ajudou, do [Cineclub] Buraco do Getúlio, aí cada um veio chegando com uma proposta. O VJ Paulo China fez projeção com uma pesquisa sobre o registro das mulheres no rock, o Samura, Felipe Sans, que tava começando a discotecar, propôs em discotecar músicas só de bandas que tinham mulheres. Então cada um foi juntando com uma ideia. O Marcio Bertonna, do [Cineclub] Buraco Cavernoso, que faz streaming [transmissão ao vivo pela internet], faz programa de Web TV, também chegou com uma ideia de transmitir, que logo virou a Roque Pense Rádio Web, que é um programa de TV em formato de rádio transmitido pela web. Enfim, na verdade foi essa rede que a gente já conhecia e já trabalhava na Baixada, foi juntando em cima dessa ideia.

In fact, we confirmed the existence, in Baixada, of a permanent cross-action by diverse professionals giving support to their partners' activities, in cineclubs, bands, recordings, festivals, among others, independently of musical genres, cultural groups or tribes. There is much more in different depositions, which cannot be narrated here due to lack of space, but they are available in the aforementioned YouTube channel.

Thus, our research led us to learn of an extremely diversified network, which has as its evident objective the political activism mentioned by Dani Francisco, and which is dedicated to the strengthening of Baixada's collective and individual cultural initiatives. Such actions have to tackle the region's problems of stigmatization and impoverishment, attracting little private investments in this sector, and scarce stimulation by the public sector.

Ethnography and interviews showed that this political activism spills over to include affective aspects (see a small summary of depositions that evidence this association in Escuta Baixada 2014b, especially from 04min58s), as declares Marcelo Peregrino, musician, songwriter and partner in the record label Pirão Discos, specialized in Baixada artists, and which develops a decentralized, independent form of distribution of the label's CDs:

This network you mentioned, that includes Bigode's [Bar], [Cineclub] Mate com Angu, [Cineclube] Buraco do Getúlio, you may also name [Cultural Center] Enraizados, I must cite [Cultural Center] Donana and other places more that we go on finding. Yes... It exists, exists! It is key, man, in the construction of this moment of sharing. In fact, what is generating all this, what is binding together all this vibe is talent and kinship. There is a very affective network. There is no [official] document [to organize this network]. No! All is consensual, everybody is acting together. [...] This network exists and it feeds on... a lot of talent and kinship. [...] It is beautiful. The scene is beautiful. I can risk saying that this, maybe, is the best moment of Baixada's culture. And only because of the work effort and affinity that exists (Escuta Baixada 2013b).

Conclusion

As was said in the beginning, the aim of this article is to show how ethnomusicological participatory methodology became a feasible and transformative action vis-à-vis the physical and symbolic violence imposed on Baixada Fluminense's peripheral populations and favela residents. As a concept, participatory research was demonstrated to have a history, in Latin America, derived from the social movements' political struggles from the 1970s on. In this Latin American branch of participatory methodology, the traditional distinctions between research/extension and "pure" and "applied" research have been challenged, in order to put the populations in active control of the whole process, from the research design to the final analysis and interpretation of data. Accordingly, we discussed how participatory methodologies have been employed in Brazilian ethnomusicology, so as to bring people traditionally understood as research objects to become researchers.

As the whole Escuta Baixada research/extension enterprise is put at the service of the participants' interests and necessities, the findings of interest to them are related to a better assessment of their reality, allowing a systemic understanding of the causes of their everyday problems. Instead of blaming some isolated, local factor for their difficulties, the participants

became aware of a more complex set of structural social relations that, ultimately, reproduce inequality and violence. This way, they became able to direct their efforts to effectively transform their existence. Therefore, the main results of our process were that the participants confronted stigma and prejudice through the affirmation of their own music and culture, as opposed to denying them in favor of dominant paradigms. As a consequence, participation in the project, that attracted members of the above mentioned network of music and culture in Baixada Fluminense, proved to be an important way for artists and cultural producers to strengthen their role in society, press politicians to promote public policies of culture, organize the population, promote awareness of Baixada's positive contributions, develop visibility for their struggles, and pass the message on to new generations.

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