Etnomüzikoloji Dergisi
Ethnomusicology Journal
Yıl / *Year:* 4 • Sayı / *Issue:* 1
(2021)

Experiencing the City from An Immigration-Based Listening: Haitian Community' Sounds in Southern Brazil

Daniel STRINGINI *

Abstract
I present on this paper Chapecó city as a complex place where musical discourses of migrants and locals have been crossed from ethnographic fieldwork and collaborations with Haitian musicians living in southern Brazil. I firstly locate how ethnomusicology field has dealt with subjects such as migration, city, sound, silence, and borders, then I present some ethnographic outcomes which suggests how migrants have settled their musical discourses up in the face of conflict situations. Conscious about Brazilian historical racism and antiblackness, I suggest that the sonic dimension of Haitian migrants has reterritorialized the city. To better understand this scenario, I advocate here for a "immigration-based listening". It takes to account the *sound praxis* concept, which encompasses the relationships among music, politics, and coexistence. In other words, this paper provides an alternative way to show Chapecó city from Haitian community musicking.

Keywords: Urban Ethnomusicology; Haitian musicians; Migration; Fieldwork; Brazilian Ethnomusicology

* *PhD student in ethnomusicology at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO), daniel.stringini@gmail.com*

Şehri "Göç Temelli Dinleme" İle Deneyimleme: Güney Brezilya'daki Hait Topluluğunun Sesleri

Özet

Bu yazıda Chapecó şehrini, etnografik saha çalışması ve Güney Brezilya'da yaşayan Haitili müzisyenlerle iş birlikleri vasıtasıyla, göçmen ve yerlilerin müzikal söylemlerinin kesiştiği karmaşık bir bölge olarak sunmaktayım. İlk önce etnomüzikoloji alanının göç, şehir, ses, sessizlik ve sınırlar gibi konuları nasıl ele aldığını saptayıp, ardından göçmenlerin çatışma durumları karşısında müzikal söylemlerini nasıl yerleştirdiklerini gösteren bazı etnografik sonuçlar ile saptamaktayım. Brezilya' nın tarihsel ırkçılığı ve siyahi karşıtlığının bilincinde olarak, Haitili göçmenlerin sonic boyutunun şehri yeniden devletleştirdiğini öne sürüyorum. Bu senaryoyu daha iyi anlamak için, burada "göçmen temelli dinlemeyi" ileri sürüyorum ki böylelikle müzik, politika ve bir arada yaşama arasındaki ilişkileri kapsayan sound praxis kavramı hesaba katılmış olur. Bir başka deyişle, bu makale Chapecó şehrini Haitili toplulukların musicking ile göstermenin alternatif bir yolunu sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kent Etnomüzikolojisi, Haitili müzisyenler, göç, saha çalışması, Brezilya Etnomüzikolojisi

This paper arose from ethnographic fieldwork among Haitian musicians living in southern Brazil. In short, I start contextualizing the sonic dimensions and shared listening experienced in Chapecó city. This include observations on recent migratory flows, how such sonic environment has been articulated from and building urban territories. To provide a broad reflection in this regard, it is crucial to deep thinking about the concepts of sound and listening, putting them among the crucial issues to understand recent migratory process in this city, since they can reveal contemporary political and social aspects (Labelle, 2018).

To think about it, I have been inspired by the paradigm of participatory ethnomusicology claimed by Araujo (2008, 2013), Cambria (2012), Dirksen (2012, 2013), Hofman (2010), and by the migration studies developed by Hemetek (2006, 2010, 2014), Pettan (2019), and Kovacic, Hofman (2019).

Together, these authors constitute the main theoretical-methodological framework of this paper. In addition, two fundamental ethnomusicological works (Averill, 1997; McAlister, 2002) about Haitian society complete the frame.

The paper is settled in two sections. In the first I present discussions about the concepts of city, urban territories, their borders, and the management of their limits. To what extent has ethnomusicology considered such concepts? How has ethnomusicology dealt with issues posed by 20th century diaspora? The criticisms made by Adelaida Reyes (2019) to studies on migrants and refugees are essential to formulate an answer to these questions, specifically regarding isolationist paradigm. In this sense, it is important to think about the broad context of the city – the encounters and tensions between the immigrant musical worlds and the local musical worlds – as an attempt to escape the limitations pointed out by the author in relation to such a paradigm.

In the second section I emphasize the extent to which participatory observation between musicians and musical ensembles revealed to me how Chapecó has been reshaped from their sonic performances. I describe my experience on taking part of two Haitian parties, including the multiple discourses and tensions surrounding them. At this point, the connections with the concept of *sound praxis* (Araujo, 2013) will be fundamental to develop the conceptual framework of "immigration-based listening". Araujo's thought allows us to understand the different discourses put into play in the city by connecting agents, institutions, musical ensembles, and sound practices. His concept also draws attention to the presence of conflict in the discourse, which will be important to highlight how the borders (thought as a conflict space) are managed in urban territories. Borders management (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013) is understood here in line with the sonic productions of immigrant groups. This part of the text is all related to how sound dimension has reshaped the relationships and territories in the city, and how it has impacted the individual and community life of my interlocutors.

Ultimately, I make considerations about how the ethnomusicological field has behaved in the face of the new impositions, the new research contexts, and the debate around public interest (Araujo, 2012). Furthermore, I propose that the "immigration-based listening" paradigm can be a powerful device for destabilize common senses about music and sound (Novak and Sakakeeny, 2015), migration (Hemetek, 2010; Reyes, 2019), cultural exchange (Zhen, 2010), borders and territories (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013) in the urban context.

The City and The Fieldwork

My engagement in this fieldwork has taken place over the past four years: first as a musician, after as a researcher and collaborator, although these roles

overlap all the time. That is, I got involved in this field from the experience of being a guest player (keyboardist) to rehearsal and performances. Later, that experience became my PhD research, currently in progress.

I was born, study, and work in the neighboring state, Rio Grande do Sul, which together with Santa Catarina and Paraná constitute the southern region of Brazil. I was approved to work as a teacher at the Chapecó Secretary of Culture. Chapecó, Santa Catarina, has about two hundred thousand inhabitants. After moved to the city and started working there, I met Haitian musicians who studied music at my workplace. Over time, I received invitations and started to participate in rehearsals, recordings, and parties, also starting to form a migrant network in the city.

This fact put me also in a migrant condition there, although in a different way from my Haitian interlocutors. My experience in Chapecó was always crossed by a strangeness feeling in the face of new situations, daily habits of an inner city, and its specific music scene. I realized myself trying to understand the sonic codes that constitute the city, and latter I also realized that seeking among my interlocutors.

Despite my university education in music, my musical practice has always been in the context of popular music. My practice with composition, improvise and experimental music, for example, has always been beyond the university, through rock bands, music for theater and cinema, and as an accompanying musician in several musical projects. I say this because meeting and playing with these Haitian musicians – who play reggae, rap creole, trap, Haitian konpa, pop, R&B – was more familiar to me than the classical music played by my colleagues at the music school in this city.

It was precisely from the immigration network that I started playing in different spaces in the city, knowing local musicians, local recording studios, and local music pubs. Playing with them, furthermore, I started to experience the city more densely. It provided me "other Chapecó worlds", what we may call "other Haitis" in the city.

I have been talking about myself as researcher, fieldworker, teacher, and musician insofar as these positions provoked and defined my entry into fieldwork, and how this affected my experience with its unique migrant urban soundscapes (Ingold, 2008).

Beyond to the working spaces in the large agribusiness companies in which several interlocutors work*, the territories in which these individuals, community, and their music are inserted are multiples: music schools, pubs, cafes, football stadium, home studios, universities, parks, parties and others. Thus, I situate the migrant sonic productions and listening considering the ways in which these territories are recomposed and rearranged (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987) in these recent migratory flows.

* *Chapecó is recognized in Brazil by the agro-industrial pole. This has taken many people to this city.*

The issues that I present here cross migration studies, urban ethnomusicology, study of borders and subjectivities. It will be through the articulation between such themes and problematics that I compose this paper. Such articulations will help me to situate the sound dimensions in this context, taking listening and sound practice immigrant as immigrant production (Mezzadra, 2012).

Migrant City and Other Labels

In the last decade Chapecó has been the destination of many migrant groups, especially from Haiti, due to the 2012 earthquake and the subsequent political and economic crises (Joseph, 2015, 2017). My interlocutors from Haiti and communities from Senegal, Dominican Republic, Congo, Mozambique, and Venezuela have been going to that city due to the expressive offer of employment by the agro-industrial pole that characterizes that region. The migrants with whom I have dialogued, however, are also living in the city as students at Federal University* and private colleges, as entrepreneurs, public agents and other types of jobs and activities.

Articulated to these work activities, there is a significant musical presence performed by these immigrants (Haitian musicians): Choirs and bands in Haitian churches, traditional bands, home studios, events and cultural productions, music teaching, beats productions, and others. In my urban trips with these musicians, I have come to realized their musical practices demarcating territories. In this sense, I establish a dialogue with the Andrew Eisenberg's ethnography (2015) to outline a "Haitian soundscape" that would demarcate migrant flows throughout the city.

In view of this new context that imposes itself in the city, it is necessary to consider that Chapecó is also recognized for being a "musical city" with a larger number of musicians, with choirs, Italian choirs, with orchestras, music schools, music undergraduate course, recording studios, night live music, street music, rock bands, rap groups, pagode** groups, typical music groups and others. Regarding the choirs, for instance, there is an expressive local movement around Italian choirs that perform a standard Italian repertoire. This marks a historic migration in that region that received Italian (but also German and Polish) populations in the late 19th century. The German presence, in turn, can be heard in a specific musical genre with German influence called *"música de bandinha"*.

Thinking about the sound city in this paper, thus, means considering the broad network that crossed it and that permeates the social life of individuals and communities. Then, instead of thinking the immigrant groups according

* *Since 2014 there is a program for access to higher education for Haitian students.*
** *Subgenre of samba.*

to an isolationist paradigm, as stated by Adelaida Reyes, I will think of these "Haitian soundscape" from their relations in this territory.

I realize an immigration movement claiming that city as a migrant city. This claim coexists with other discourses enunciated by other social groups: "industrial city" (due to the agro-industrial pole), a "work city" (a city that has a large supply of jobs), a "university city", and an "indigenous city" (due to the presence of Kaingang and Guarani indigenous groups).

Through to the slogan of an industrial/work city, Chapecó presents itself from a discourse of a welcoming city, that obviously comes into tension with the real experiences of immigrant and refugee groups that come to live in it. These discourses become attractive and have encouraged many people to move to the city. Both people arriving from other countries, other Brazilian states, as well as from small cities of state of Santa Catarina. I include myself in this condition of having gone to the city due to the job.

The Kaleidoscope as A Metaphor For The City

Replacing the debate around the notion of urban ethnomusicology, Adelaida Reyes (2012) takes up and updates important points for works that intend to consider the city from its dense, complex, and contradictory context. In other words, it is not a mere background on which musical, social, and political relationship would unfold. Reyes proposes a listening to the city that considers the different combinations and variations of the parts that compose it, instead of taking the city only as isolated parts that make up this whole, as a mosaic according to her. That is why Reyes call for a city that is read/listening to not through a mosaic idea, with its inserts, but through a read/listening to that takes place through the kaleidoscope metaphor, taking more deeply into the reverberations that cross it and establish contact points (tension points). The author states: "While the object of investigation may be a small unit, its identity as urban is to be sought nonetheless not only in its internal relations but in its relations with units beyond it." (Reyes, 2012, p.202/3).

When examining the ways in which the concept of "music scene" is managed by the fields of music and reconsidering how cities are approached by researchers when studying these "scenes", Vincenzo Cambria (2017) brings the separation put by Adelaida Reyes with respect to research developed "in the city" and "of the city". Cambria states that ethnomusicology has worked at times in a more micro dimension (between communities), at other times in a more macro dimension (among issues related to Nation-State). According to him, the ethnomusicology's field has still avoided taking the city more densely. He claims:

> The dimension of the city remains somewhat neglect by us. This is not a lack of interest in urban musical cultures (on the contrary, it can be said that most ethnomusicological studies are carried out in urban contexts today). The problem is that the most ethnomusicologists are simply conducting research "in the city" and not "of the city", that is, they continue to "cut out" homogeneous and coherent communities (defined, for example, in terms of locality ethnicity, race or musical affiliation), avoiding the complexity and heterogeneity of urban life (Cambria, 2017, p13).

In this direction, his thesis (Cambria, 2012) work with the complexity of a slum area in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Throughout a participatory research the author highlights the intersections between different musical genres (*funk carioca, samba, pagode,* gospel music) and presents how much this is connected to the daily lives of the inhabitants of this area.

It is from the perspectives put forward by Reyes and Cambria that I situate, here, the context of cities in my musical ethnography. I take cities "as fundamental 'nodes' within the national and / or international networks that we study" (Cambria, 2017, p.13.). In my fieldwork I take the city as a privileged dimension of analysis in interlocutions with immigrant group. Adelaida Reyes, thinking about the broad context of cities, suggests taking them as an open system:

> Whether the primary focus be on culture (as it is in anthropology) or on social life (as it is in sociology) or on musical life (as it is in ethnomusicology), what this means is that urban life, musical or more broadly social, in its parts or what the investigator takes to be its whole, is best thought of as an open system. (REYES, 2012, p. 202)

As an "open system" it means in this paper thinking the music and sound productions of the Haitian communities in relation to the dynamics of this city in the south of Brazil. As opposed to a simplistic framework, I am interested to think about how the Haitian musicians with whom I have dialogued start to reorganize their sonic and discursive repertoires based on situations, encounters, and problems faced in these territories.

In the second part of this paper, I will discuss more closely an experience in the fieldwork around two parties of the Haitian community. But before that, I present two brief ethnographic episodes. The first one is about the video clip of a Haitian rapper filmed in 2018 at the local team's stadium in the city of Chapecó. This football team had, just before the video was recorded, suffered a serious plane crash that had rocked the country. The music of

rapper Malko J., a young musician from the Haitian city of Port-au-Prince, begins by mentioning the emotional support for the club through an expression that has come to be used in reference to the football club: *Força Chape! Força Chape!* (Strength Chape! Strength Chape!)* In the scenes of the music video called *Meu Desabafo* (My Unburden), the artist appears singing/performing inside this football club. The verses of the song are sung in Portuguese and in the chorus, there is a mixture between Haitian creole and Portuguese in which a well-known Haitian expression is explained in Portuguese: "when I say: *Sak Pase?* (What is happening?), you answer: *N'ap Boule* (We were hanging out)". There is also a reference to a famous Brazilian rapper, Sabotage, both in the lyrics, in the flow, as well as in the images.

The second brief ethnographic episode is about a sound car by a local seller who crosses the suburbs weekly, reverberating and announcing the sale of fish. The first time the sale of the fish is announced in Portuguese and then repeated in Haitian Creole, the official language of Haiti. I have heard that sound car for the first time coming out of a rehearsal with a Haitian rap group in one of the peripheral neighborhoods. The young Haitian musician *Black Wenzor,* from Saut-d'Eau city, called my attention to this sound car. At that time, he emphasized that as something relevant to the research.

I situate these two episodes as markers of the constitutions and reconstitutions of urban territories in these immigratory flows in that city. The football stadium is an important space for the city, and I have been suggesting that the music video by Malko J. rearrange it. I mention that recently, after recording its video, this football club created a team with immigrant and refugee players who live in the city. The sound car further reorganizes the sound landscape of the neighborhoods by incorporating the Creole language that come out of the speaker. This landscape, however, is already modified by the daily presence of that language spoken by foreigners in the streets, recording studio, churches, shops, parties, and houses.

Sounds Through the Borders

Together with these concepts of territory, sound and city as presented so far, I articulate the concept of border as developed by Sando Mezzadra and Bret Neilson (2013). Emphasizing the notion of border as being at the center of contemporary experience, they say: "We are confronted not only with a multiplication of different types of borders but also with the reemergence of the deep heterogeneity of the semantic field of the border. Symbolic, linguistic, cultural, and urban boundaries are no longer articulated in fixed ways by the geopolitical border" (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013, p.viii).

Mezzadra and Neilson taking the border as a space of dispute. This concept

* *Chape is the short name of Chapecoense (Chapecó football team)*

is taken, therefore, not only as something fixed but as an epistemology and a set of social relations: "Taking the border not only as a research ''object'' but also as an ''epistemic'' angle [...] provides productive insights on the tensions and conflicts that blur the line between inclusion and exclusion, as well as on the profoundly changing code of social inclusion in the present" (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013, p.viii). The authors link the concept of border to the broader discussion of political subjectivity, migratory regimes, and capitalism.

Based on this, I have been suggesting that the new alliances (among people, places, music) produced in this city from these recent migrations also reorganize its borders. These experiences around the sound dimension highlight how it is also an agent in this "migrant city". I emphasize that these alignments (constitutions and reconstitution of the city) are not without tension, racism and xenophobia.

Foreign Sounds in The Neighborhood and Police Presence

The first ethnographic experience that I will present more fully here was around one of the parties organized by the Haitian community in a suburban area of Chapecó at the end of 2018. Initially I would be at this party to accompany the musician Jah Rolls, a reggae musician from the Haitian city of Saut-d'Eau. Jah Rolls is a multi-instrumentalist and composer and completed a singing course at one of the city's music schools where I worked as a teacher. When I met him, he worked at a tourism company.

Although our show was canceled this night, since Jah Rolls would not be in the city, I went to the party anyway as I had arranged to meet other friends from Haiti and would take the opportunity to strengthen my interpersonal relationships on the fieldwork.

At that time, I did not know the city beyond the center. The party took place in a suburban area that only later, through research, I got to know better. On the day of this party, after a bus ride from the center to the neighborhood, and having some difficulty finding your address, I arrived at the place on the corner in the middle of the neighborhood.

Upon arrival what immediately surprised me was a samba group playing in front of the party on the other side of the sidewalk. I had seen and heard just a few groups of *samba* in Chapecó, that is a musical genre normally associated to the black history in the country. That *samba* group, or *sambistas*, that is people who make samba music in Brazil, were white, just like most of the population of the city. On the party's schedule were countless Haitian DJs and rappers, and the main attraction was the artist K-Dillak, a musician who came directly from Haiti with his tour that had crossed Brazilian cities with expressive Haitian migration. The presence of this artist underlined, therefore, the existence of an international network of concerts articulated to the Haitian diaspora in Brazil.

With about 200 people present, mostly Haitians, but also Dominicans and Senegalese, the party was violently interrupted by the local police due to alleged complaints from the neighborhood about the loudness. We later found out that the police had been called by the *sambistas* who were playing in front of the party. That *samba* played on the sidewalk by the locals resonated, and then presented other contours. It initially caused us curiosity and certain strangeness. Afterwards, it presented traces of violence.

Some people who were at the party came to me to talk about their indignations about the episode: "everything was regularized", "we have all the necessary documents", "we spent a lot of money to organize this", "it is discrimination". In this case, racism and xenophobia intersect. Beyond to the established notions, sound and music have caused dispersion, mismatch, and ruptures. Beyond the geographical limits, that episode raises questions about the lines or borders demarcated by the sound. As we were at a crossroads, at a meeting point of four streets, people were gradually dispersed in each one. Conversations fade out. The neighborhood was silent again.

Sounds and Silencing Remarking Territories

While this party brings us to a sound dimension and sound amplification in the neighborhood, it also refers to an idea of silence/silencing. And this realigns the categories of sound and silence as evidenced by David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (2015):

> To engage sound as the interrelation of materiality and metaphor is to show how deeply the apparently separate fields of perception and discourse are entwined in everyday experiences and understandings of sound, and how far they extend across physical, philosophical, and cultural contexts. (Novak, Sakakeeny, 2015)

They reiterate the interest of ethnomusicology about thinking to how the concept of sound is crossed by social, political and economic practices: "Far from being constructed against noises, echoes, and silences, the domain of sound is constituted by them" (idem). In this Haitian party, the *borderscapes* (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013) traced in this neighborhood produced tension spaces in which silence acted as a control device.

About the multiple uses of the concept of silence in the public sphere, Ana Maria Ochoa (2015) argue: "Silence is also used in political language to imply an active politics of domination and non-participation. In such use, it is understood as the opposite of 'having a voice', where voice is rendered as a sign of identity and presence of the subject [...]" (Ochoa, 2015, p.183).

In this same direction, Novak and Sakakeeny (2015) argue:

> To "hear" a person is to recognize their subjectivity, just as to "have a voice" suggests more than the ability to speak or sing [...]. Sound, then, is a substance of the world as well as a basic part of how people frame their knowledge about the world. (Novak, Sakakeeny, 2015, p.1/2).

The authors propose a perspective that takes the sound by crossing materiality and metaphor in order to "show how deeply the apparently separate fields of perception and discourse are entwined in everyday experiences and understandings of sound [...]" (p.1). In my fieldwork I have realize a metaphorical understanding of sound, that is, something that exceeds the field of sonic vibrations, and that refer to stigmas, racisms, xenophobia, and productions of subjectivities. Novak and Sakakeeny argue: "Metaphors for sound construct perceptual conditions of hearing and shape the territories and boundaries of sound in social life" (Novak, Sakakeeny, 2015, p.1).

By highlighting the borderscapes that cross these urban territories, this party had changing the daily discourses and strategies of my interlocutors around concerts, recordings, negotiations with local authorities, police, Brazilian musicians, and Brazilian music. After this party, some groups to support migrants in the city suggested that the next time we should try to take more Brazilian people to these events, as an attempt to constrain any police violence. Besides, musicians from a *konpa* band (Haitian musical genre) started to include Brazilian music in their setlist. My participation in this band as player (Brazilian, white and with symbolic capital in the city) seems strategic to me by the band' musicians.

I suggest that the sound dimension, in addition to occupying a relevant place in the social lives of my interlocutors, demarcate a political field in which issues such as difference, racism, xenophobia emerge, as well as strategies and resistance discourses. It is as if the sound dimension works as an indicator of such aspects.

Violence in Haitian Virtual Party

The insertion of Haitian music and dance ensembles in official events organized by cultural sectors of the city has also imposed new situations. Obviously, local authorities have their own interests and stigmatizing ways of looking at these migrant groups. And this is another disputed discourse from the perspective of a *sound praxis* (Araujo, 2013).

In 2020, under all the effects of the pandemic that impacted cultural activities, I participated together with a Haitian konpa band in the registration for a local public notice. They were approved and I helped them to organize an online concert. From the ethnomusicological point of view, it was important to be at that virtual event, to interact with and meet interlocutors and friends, to listen to their performances, and follow the public comments.

The virtual concert had 20.000 views with audiences interacting from countries such as Argentina, Chile, Peru, USA, Dominican Republic, Canada, France, and Belgium, as well as Haiti and Brazil. In these senses, the pandemic of the new coronavirus has imposed other ways of "being in the field".

The band's setlist featured a repertoire of internationally recognized konpa musical groups based in countries that make up the Haitian diaspora. The performance of this band in Chapecó, thus, places the city in an international network of Haitian musicians. Together with Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) we can think how much these borders are now virtually reorganized.

There is a recurring co-participation in the organization of concerts and performances. Promotional posters, costume design for shows, beat recordings and other productions are often the result of collaborations transnational with partners and friends who are in Haiti. In view of this, I also situate how much the online dimension crosses the daily and musical life of my interlocutors.

At the invitation of the band, I wrote the call for this concert on the official website of the culture's secretary:

> On August 15th, the Haitian band *Valide Konpa* will present their work through Live Streaming, at 20 hours and 30 minutes. The band will show a repertoire based on the Konpa musical rhythm, one of the most expressive and recognized musical genres from Haiti. The band is inspired by Haitian artists such as *Carimi*, Nu Look and *Klass* and still others who develop works with Konpa music currently in places like the United States, Canada and France. The presence of this group in Chapecó thus connects Brazil to this transnational sound network. *Valide Konpa* will also present its own versions of Brazilian music and the show will be a possibility for a Brazilian audience to get to know the Haitian music produced here through this group that has been conquering space in the region. (Official website of Chapecó Secretary of Culture)*

The online concert ended successfully, however, the police approach musicians and the technical staff of the broadcast under the false allegation of a clandestine party. I present the episode around this online party articulating it, therefore, with the previous party narrated here: as much as the sound dimension (the sound as affirmation in the neighborhood and the sound as violence), and since both episodes can be heard in terms of a sound praxis (Araujo, 2013)

---

* *Website of Chapecó Secretary of Culture*
https://www.chapeco.sc.gov.br/cultura/index.php?r=evento&idevento=929

Sound Praxis and an Immigration-Based Listening

Taking the sound immigrant productions (their encounters and tensions with the local sound worlds) and taking the territories/borders that make up this city, the concept of *sound praxis* will help us to map the different discourses at play. The ethnomusicologist Samuel Araujo defines his concept of *sound praxis* as follows:

> Thus, through the category of sound praxis, I emphasize the articulation between discourses, actions and policies concerning the sound, as it is presented, often in a subtle or imperceptible way, in the daily lives of individuals (amateur or professional musicians, cultural agents, entrepreneurs, legislators), groups (collectives of musicians, audiences, professional categories), companies and institutions (for example, unions, governmental and non-governmental agencies and schools), taking as a backdrop the policy and struggles for full citizenship and power in Brazil today. (ARAUJO, 2013, p.9)

Following Samuel Araujo's clues, thinking in terms of a sound praxis implies that we explain the political dimension around these practices. Araujo calls for a broad political concept, which is "taken not only as a field of disputes over state control, but also involving struggles or micro-policies that unfold in human action modalities, such as music and the arts in general [...]". (Araujo, 2013, p.9). I approach this perspective in order to situate this urban migratory context in its micro-political actions as I have perceived them through the sound.

The concept of *sound praxis* highlights the sound production of Haitian individuals and communities, their resistance and interdictions, in this migratory context. This concept also highlights the sound as an agent in a dispute arena, in which discourses from local institutions, local musicians and ensembles, local music school, local music producers, local concert halls, local studios recording coexist in this city.

In view of this, I situate an immigration-based listening to the city as a way of dealing with the complexities of the relations in these territories. This listening can be a powerful device to destabilize the fixed understandings that one has about the immigrant' music. This listening can destabilize the common senses about the notions of insertion, assimilation, and about a certain idea of "musical dialogue". Listening to the city from these immigratory flows can emphasize other ways of coexistence and sound arrangements.

From the concept of "migratory autonomy" by Sandro Mezzadra (2012), I suggest that Haitian migrations have been produced other ways of listening to the city. According to Mezzadra, it is the affective networks that

shape migratory flows and, here, we can think, together with these affective networks, how much the sound networks participate in the composition of these recent migrations.

To think of a listening that allows us to destabilize notions in the field of music, I am thinking from the Ursula Hemetek work (2010) about the heterogeneity of migrant groups in Vienna. When referring to the changes produced by the musical performances of migrants in this city, she says that "the roots are challenged" (Hemetek, 2010, p. 138) through the practices of groups and musicians. I have seen this happening in my fieldwork: There is an imaginary around Afro-Caribbean migrant that is put into action in some stereotyped, stigmatized, and essentialist listening by different sectors of local population. On the other hand, I have realized my interlocutors crossing different cultural backgrounds and music borders faraway that imaginary. I have realized the konpa musicians approaching the new Brazilian country music *(música sertaneja),* making versions and remixes. I have realized this movement of these Haitian musicians towards these new sounds, driving away a cult/alternative audience that at first had been interested in the band.

However, I perceive this movement of them bringing them closer to local groups that are involved with Brazilian country music, *funk carioca* and other types of music also stigmatized in Brazil. And all this calls into question a certain Afro-Caribbean imagery that presents itself under other ways of interdictions.

I conclude this section by dialoguing with another work by Ursula Hemetek (2006) in which she addresses the choices and strategies taken by his migrant interlocutors. From participatory work with Roma musicians, Hemetek argue: "ethnomusicologists' mediation of cultures has paved the way and given a platform to minority musicians who are now free to choose to deny the "ethnic" stereotypes expected by the majority" (Hemetek, 2006, p.53). The broad political movement that has claimed recognition for the Roma, has opened spaces for individuals and communities to choose different political identities. Reviewing the notion of "root" linked to sound, visual and political stereotypes are in these other possibilities of coexistence, which in turn are linked to other modes of listening.

Conclusions

Thinking/listening to about the city started from what my interlocutors say and from my relationship with them. That is, both from the claims and problems pointed out by them as well as from their desires to get close to local musicians, local sounds and local spaces. I situate this as sound and affective bridges (Petan, 2010).

Something recurrently pointed out by the interlocutors refers to exclusions and discrimination. In addition to those police operations and the State violence, I also witnessed other episodes that started, for instance, from "alternative" sectors that present themselves with a discourse that is averse to violence. This puts many layers in the relationship between migrant groups and the local society. As a researcher, I am interested in being able to listen to these layers in order not to act as another silencer of the complexities and voices of this field.

In the fieldwork I have been realized intersections taking place through specific examples such as in a composition that uses elements from the *funk carioca* (funk of Rio de Janeiro) together with elements from Haitian voodoo; a Haitian *konpa* band reinterpreting Brazilian country music; musicians of Haitian reggae reinterpreting reggae music from southern Brazil; Haitian rappers collaborating with local rappers; and Haitian rappers remixing Brazilian pop songs. Connected to this, Reyes (2019) argues:

> Music goes where its creators and performers go, crossing boundaries, appropriating influences and having their own musical ideas appropriated by others, as everyone— migrants and their hosts alike—adapts to new and changing conditions. Music cross over, blend with, sample from other music, or are kept protectively hidden. (REYES, 2019, p.48)

In my dialogues in the field and trips around the city, I have heard multiple sounds practiced by Haitian musicians (Konpa, Haitian gospel, voodoo, rap, pop, jazz, rap creole). Following Reyes, I suggest that these musical constitutions are intricately linked to (re)constitutions of ways of life.

Reyes puts the words of David Milliband, president of the International Rescue Committee, in ethnomusicological terms: "Noting that 'it is crucial to bring into alignment the interests of refugees and host communities,' he underscores 'the power of effective research to define needs and to meet them with the means best suited to the needs' (2016: 23)". (Reyes, 2019, p.47). Reaffirming the importance of research that is attentive to the questions raised by the protagonists of this process with which we work, I have emphasized the relevance of research that to some extent is related to the debate around public interest. Based on considerations about how ethnomusicology has been related to the questions posed by contemporary migrations, I have tried to align my ethnographic work with critical positions around concepts that I understand as keys to thinking about my fieldwork. I have tried to make these immigrant voices and listening visible so that a fair understanding of them can produce more equitable forms of coexistence.

From my ethnographic experience as a musician, producer and researcher with Haitian communities in southern Brazil, I presented the Haitian sound productions focusing here on contact, dialogue and tension with the local society. From the concept of city, territory, and borders I situated how the sound dimension participates in the reconstitutions of spaces and constructions of affective networks in this immigratory flow. Finally, in order to highlight the sound discourses of this "migrant city", I mobilized the notion of *sound praxis,* and proposed a "immigration-based listening" as a way of listening more deeply the urban dynamics.

References

Araújo, Samuel. (2008). "From neutrality to praxis: the shifting politics of applied ethnomusicology". Muzikoloski Zbornik (Musicological Annual), v.XLVI, p.13 – 30; 2008.

Araújo, Samuel. (2012). Etnomusicologia e debate público sobre a música no Brasil hoje: polifonia ou cacofonia? Música & Cultura 6. http://musicaecultura.abetmusica.org.br/index.php/revista/article/view/161 (acessed 03.12.2020).

Averill, Gage. (1997). A day for the hunter, a day for the prey: popular music and power in Haiti. Chicago (EUA), The University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Cambria, Vincenzo. (2012) Music and Violence in Rio de Janeiro: a participatory study in Urban Ethnomusicology. Middeltown. Wesleyan University, Middletown.

Cambria, Vincenzo. (2008) "Diferença: uma questão (re) corrente na pesquisa etnomusicológica". Revista Música e Cultura, v.3, 2008.

Deleuze, Gilles; Guattari, Félix. (1987) A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalisma-And Schizophrenia. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dirksen, Rebecca. (2012). "Reconsidering Theory and Practice In Ethnomusicology: Applying, Advocating, And Engaging Beyond Academia". Ethnomusicology Review. V. 17, P. 1-35

Dirksen, Rebecca. (2013). "Surviving Material Poverty by Employing Cultural Wealth: Putting Music in Service Of Community In Haiti", Yearbook For Traditional Music, Vol. 45, P. (43 – 57).

Eisenberg, Andrew. (2015) Space. Em: Novak, David; Sakakeeny, Matt (Eds.). Keywords in Sound. Duke University Press, USA.

Hemetek, Ursula. (2006). "Applied Ethnomusicology in The Process of The Political Recognition of A Minority: A Case Study of The Austrian Roma". Yearbook for Traditional Music, Vol. 38, Pp. 35-57.

Hemetek, Ursula. (2010) "Mundos Musicais Inesperados De Viena: Imigração E Música". Em: Côrtereal, Maria De São José (Org.), Revista Migrações – Número Temático Música E Migração, Outubro, N.7, Lisboa: ACIDI, Pp.119-146.

Hemetek, Ursula Et Al., Eds. Music and Minorities Around The World: Research, Documentation And Interdisciplinary Study. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.

Hofman, Ana. (2010). "Maintaining The Distance, Othering The Subaltern: Rethinking Ethnomusicologists' Engagement In Advocacy And Social Justice". in Applied Ethnomusicology: Historical And Contemporary Approaches, edited By Klisala Harison, Elizabeth Mackinlay and Svanibor Pettan. Newcastle Upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishers, P.22–35.

Ingold, Tim. Against Soundscape. (2008). "Autumn Leaves: Sound and The Environment In Artistic Practice". In: Carlyle, Angus (Ed.), Paris: Double Entendre, P.10-13.

Joseph, Handerson. (2015). "Diáspora: Sentidos Sociais E Mobilidades Haitianas. Horizontes Antropológicos", Porto Alegre, Ano 21, N. 43, P. 51-78, Jan./Jun. 2015.

Joseph, Handerson. (2017). "Diáspora. NEIBURG, Federico (Org). Conversas Etnográficas Haitianas". Rio De Janeiro: Papéis Selvagens Edições, 2017, Pp.190-215.

Kovacic; Mojca; Hofman, Ana. (2019). "Music, Migration And Minorities: Perspectives .....And Reflections". Musicological Annual, V.2, Pp.5-17.

Labelle, Brandon. (2018). Sonic Agency: Sound and Emergent Forms of Resistance. London: Goldsmiths Press.

Mcallister, Elizabeth. (2002). Rara!: Vodou, Power, And Performance In Haiti And Its ... Diaspora. Berkeley (EUA), University Of California Press.

Mezzadra, Sandro; Neilson, Bret. (2013). Borders as Method, Or the Multiplication Of Labor, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2013.

Musicultura, Grupo. (2010). "Sound Praxis: Music, Politics, And Violence in Brazil", in Music and Conflict, J. Morgan O'Connell And S. El-Shawan Castelo Branco, Eds. Urbana: University Of Illinois Press, 217–231.

Ochoa, Ana Maria. (2015). Silence. Em: Novak, David; Sakakeeny, Matt (Eds.). Keywords In Sound. Duke University Press, USA, 2015.

Pettan, Svanibor. (2010), "Applied Ethnomusicology: Bridging Research and Action, Music And Arts in Action, V.2, N.2, P.90-93.

_____. (2019). "Sounds of Minorities In National Contexts: Ten Research Models", Musicological Annual. V.2, 41-64.

Reyes, Adelaida. (2012). "Urban Ethnomusicology: A Brief History of An Idea", Urban People, Lidé Mêsta 14, 2, P.193-206.

Reyes, Adelaida. (2019). "The Beneficence And The Tyranny Of Paradigms: Khun, Ethnomusicology And Migration", in Ethnomusicology Matters: Influencing Social And Political Realities.Hemetek, Ursula; Kölbl, Marko; Sağlam, Hande (Eds.). Böhlau Verlag Gmbh & Co. KG, P.33-53.