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From Neutrality to Praxis: The Shifting Politics of Ethnomusicology in the Contemporary World

Od nepristranosti k praksi: spremembe v naravnanosti etnomuzikologije v sodobnem svetu

Izvleček

Potem ko obdela najnovejše spremembe v para-digmah družbenih ved in premisli lastne razisko-valne izkušnje z glasbenimi skupnostmi v Braziliji, avtor predstavi štiri raziskovalne primere, v katerih odkriva dokaze za precejšnje spremembe razisko-valnih scenarijev v smeri naraščajočih, politično naravnanih zahtev, ki jih skupnosti postavljajo pred raziskovalce.

Abstract

Reflecting upon recent changes in socio-scientific paradigms and thinking over his own research ex-perience with musical communities in Brazil, the researcher presents four case studies in which he finds evidence of a considerable transformation of research scenarios toward growing and more politically charged demands placed by communi-ties upon academics.

This paper addresses the field of ethnomusicology in view of new epistemological scenarios emerging out of post-colonial situations, demanding that old roles played out through research (insider/outsider; engaged native/neutral foreign observer) be thought over carefully and replaced by new, more politically articulate ones. It will first refer to a set of assumptions and problems affecting the field's theory and practice in

the contemporary world, reflecting not only the critique of a series of modernity's illusions with the supposedly neutral character of the human sciences but also the limitations of post-modern criticisms to the latter. As argued here, and despite their certainly well-wishing intentions, such criticisms have fallen short of effectively theorizing, not to speak of counteracting, the asymmetrical power between knowledge-producing, though politically disempowered, communities and a world largely shaped by commodity forms, some of which materialized in the authority of certain academic discourses. Finally I will briefly present four distinct cases from my own research engagements in Brazil, attempting to illustrate how local community demands have affected their respective objectives and approaches, opening up potential issues on the way of a new disciplinary praxis.

It should also be warned that although these issues have been raised by a growing literature on seemingly marginal sub-areas eventually called applied,[1] collaborative and participatory research in ethnomusicology, I refrain from using any of such terms to qualify my object—the socio-political implications of face-to-face music research— as such, since in my view even those who believe in "pure" or "neutral" research are opening, intentionally or not, ways of application in and through their work, triggering such categories of distinction would just reveal a matter of degree and not really of substance.

Simultaneously I intend to highlight the political substance and epistemological consequences of new research contexts and roles as one area with potentially groundbreaking contributions toward the emergence of a more balanced social world, i.e. one in which knowledge will hopefully emerge from a truly horizontal, intercultural dialogue and not through top-to-bottom neo-colonial systems of validation. This choice is strongly rooted in my own personal experience in coordinating an academic unit that has maintained a four-year collaboration with a communitarian organization in Rio de Janeiro, attempting to devise forms of community's self-empowerment and counter-hegemonic forms of organization through music research on local social memory and sociability. During this so far stable collaboration our joint research team has experienced moments of high hopes in a new type of music (or ethnomusicological) research, despite the enormous challenges it may face under mostly adverse conditions.

Modern and Post-modern Modes of Musical Ethnographies

Assuming the risk of attempting to draw a necessarily broad characterization here, commensurate to acknowledging that there are many possible modes of doing ethnographies of musical practices, we will approach first a more conventional (meaning long legitimized, academically speaking) mode I shall call modern, as it is inspired by humanistic models consolidated in and through modernity. The researcher in this case

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[1] The term "applied" was though the one adopted in the 39th ICTM World Conference (2007) double-session in which a first draft of this paper was first presented in public, and from which a Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology was proposed and finally created. I thank Svanibor Pettan, panel co-organizer, and fellow panel members Sooi Beng Tan, Patricia Opondo, Maureen Loughran and Jennifer Newsome for the fruitful cross-cultural perspectives on our mutually distinct cases and approaches.

is usually an individual tied in some way to an academic institution, equipped with academically oriented theories, methods and research categories. He or she defines (1) research focuses and goals, as well as (2) the nature of data to be "collected", after a period of "immersion" in "another" cultural reference system, (3) "collects" the necessary data, with, to some extent, native collaboration, (4) "translates" the data (i.e., through comparisons with his/her own cultural referents), something which is eventually done with native help, and, finally (5) interpret these data in the more coherent as possible manner, generating a textual form to be published under the researcher's exclusive authorship.[2]

Contrastingly, one might place a reflexive mode (or "post-modern", if you may), in which the researcher is still an individual who (1) defines his/her initial focuses and goals but all the other subsequent steps will present differences to some degree in comparison with the previous outline. He/she (2) will define and redefine the nature of the data to be collected through a persistent dialogue, negotiation and approximation with his/her "chosen society", (3) "collect" and "translate" data with systematic native help, and finally (4) interpret them with native collaboration (collaborative editing) aimed at a publication still to be authored by the researcher his or herself, despite the fact that native voices are granted greater credit and growing complexity as compared to conventional ethnographies, as well as a relative space to diverge from or even to contradict the credited author.[3]

However, this paper is concerned with a third and progressively expanding mode of musical ethnography, intensely "participatory" indeed, in which both native and academic researchers (subject positions sometimes merged in one single individual) negotiate from the start the research focuses and goals, as well as (2) the nature of the data to be gathered, (3) the type of reflection they require, highlighting community demands which may be potentially met with the research results, in which (4) natives will both gather and interpret the data, resulting in diffusion through collective author-ship in various academic and non-academic contexts (5) non-academic natives and academics of different social origins develop reflections on the dialoguing process that permeates the research, and finally (6) new focuses arisen in this reflection open new research interests and suggest new forms of diffusion beyond the conventional ones.[4]

A Brief Note on Applied Research in Social Anthropology

The term "applied", used as a diacritical sign of the anthropologist's intervention in the cultures he/she works with, can be traced to the 19th century, with British anthro-

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[2] This accounts for, broadly speaking, the model found in one of the more influential books of the 1960s in the field of ethnomu-sicology (Merriam, 1964).

[3] This model is even more liable to broader characterizations than the previous ones since its politically sensitive impulse elicits a myriad of responses in terms of research ethics, principles and procedures. But a good initial survey of such reactions, as appearing in musical ethnographies, is found in a collective publication organized by Barz and Cooley (1997).

[4] A growing number of examples can be found in the literature since at least the 1990s (e.g. Ellis, 1994; Impey, 2002; Lassiter, 1998, 2004; Cambria, 2004; Araújo et al., 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b).

pologist L. Fox Pitt-Rivers's use of the term back in 1881, while the institutionalization of an applied anthropology as a subject matter in universities came as early as the 1920s, with Radcliffe-Brown's first courses under that heading at the University of Cape Town, South Africa (for a good historical overview, see Gardner and Lewis, 1996). Its basic goals by then were to provide trained personnel to posts in the colonial administration as a way of counterweighing difficulties or even failures in public policies, in other words, political and administrative problems seen as related to ignorance of cultural differences between administrators and administrated peoples. While both the legitimacy and asymmetry of this relationship were to remain for the most part unquestioned, it opened a new job market for trained anthropologists and at least one reputed ethnomusicologist, John Blacking (see Byron 1995).

The 1930s and 40s would see an expansion of applied research in anthropology, leading to the creation, in the US, of the American Association for Applied Anthropology, in 1941, pioneering the emergence of similar organizations elsewhere (Gardner and Lewis 1996). This professional society also launched the first publication dedicated to applied research, Human Organization, which is still available until today, and, since the late1990s, in free-access online form.

However, despite its expansion and relative acceptance as an academic field, applied anthropology has always been met with a certain disdain in so-called "pure research" circles, which have mainly called the former into question for its intervention in the studied peoples and cultures. According to anthropologist Eric Wolff:

> Applied anthropology, by definition, represents a reaction against cultural relativism, since it does not regard the culture that is applying anthropology as the equal of the culture to which anthropology is to be applied (1962: 24).

In other words, cultural relativism, as much as anthropology's main currents up to the 1970s, has quite often taken as granted the non-interventionism and neutrality of anthropological methods and techniques, a modernity's fantasy timely criticized within anthropology in the 1980s.[5] On the other hand relativists were not entirely off the mark, when they criticized applied anthropologists' frequently uncritical acceptance of "modernization" or "development", two euphemisms for deferral to commodity-driven worldviews and, at its extreme, to aid counter-insurgency initiatives, as the framework of their research.

It is perhaps unnecessary to bring up here too the relative discredit surrounding applied research in the academic milieu vis-à-vis pursuing "pure research" in the social sciences. These illusions as already suggested above were to dissipate under the post-modern turn in anthropology although the latter never really challenged academic authority in assuming to full extent the debate on anthropology's interventionism in the studied cultures, since to do it in full length would probably undermine the very structures of academic work as we know it (see, for instance, Jacobs-Huey 2002).

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[5]   Among a plethora of pertinent titles, one should bear in mind a few seminal contributions by Fabian (1983), Marcus and Clifford (1984), Marcus and Fischer (1986), and Clifford (1988).

Applied Ethnomusicology in Perspective

The emergence of new scenarios of interaction between researchers and re-searched community's demands has occupied a narrow, but unquestionably grow-ing, space in ethnomusicological literature and practice. Among the several factors behind this increasing visibility, I will point out, on one hand, the anthropological critique of ethnographic practice as an instrument of neo-colonial domination in the current context of world political economy (e.g., problems posed or reawakened by the so-called post-modern anthropology such as the crises of representation, of ethnographic authority, etc.); on the other hand, it becomes more and more common the assimilation of research techniques (sometimes learned from academic research-ers) by carriers of cultural traditions, which articulate scholarship and socio-cultural activism, in order to maintain control of the reproduction or reinvention of their respective worldviews. Thus, the case studies presented in the literature may perhaps be roughly split into two main tendencies: 1- collaborative efforts developed by aca-demic researchers and/or researched community members in search of recovering and preserving the memory of tradition, which are made viable through access to archives and collections housed outside the community space, through oral his-tory, through access to and storage of iconographic, phonographic, visual or audio visual records, through the formation of musical groups, educational projects, etc.; 2- creation of community's teaching and research institutions, as well as databases maintained by the communities, with or without partnerships with governmental or third sector institutions. A common element in all of these possible situations has been the relative distancing from research models oriented toward goals defined exclusively or at least ultimately by the outside researcher (see Ellis 1994), and an epistemological turn toward perspectives in which community control over the gener-ated knowledge is always at stake—although not always congruent with mainstream academic discussions.

Beginning with the first tendency outlined above, let me remind you of an entire volume of the US-based periodical *Ethnomusicology* (1992) dedicated to the discus-sion of new arenas for ethnomusicological work outside academia; these new fields of action have been alternatively called "public sector", "applied", "active", or "practical" ethnomusicology. As stressed by the volume's editor, each one of these categories is, by definition, sensitive to public interest and to the flux of knowledge generated outside the boundaries of traditional research institutions, thus reinforcing "music producers and musical cultures in collaborative projects that present, represent and affect the cul-tural flux of music the world over" (Titon 1992: 315). Among the various contributions to this issue, I would highlight two: a- the one by Anthony Seeger (1992) on legal prob-lems regarding intellectual property in a world dominated by royalties and trademarks, and discussing the role of ethnomusicologists in the mediation process in defense of communities' rights to eventual outcomes of commercialization and diffusion of their traditions; b- the article by Daniel Sheehy emphasizing the importance of ethnomusicol-ogy "in 'feeding back' with cultural models to the community which conceived them" (Sheehy 1992: 333).

In fact, ethnomusicology has always been punctuated by collaboration between researchers or academic institutions and musical communities in specific projects of interest to those communities, such as commercial recordings, public presentations in new contexts, etc. As short-term experiences, such activities have usually depended on the establishment collective trust on the researcher, quite often stemming from a previous longer-term project with goals defined by the researcher himself (frequently a thesis or a dissertation).[6]

The second type of situation mentioned above, however, may demand from the ethnomusicologist an involvement of unpredictable duration and intensity, as well as assuming the risk of raising issues not seen as welcome in the academic sphere, such as, for example, his/her observance of interdict issues or of certain forms of knowledge diffusion. It is redundant to say this may easily jeopardize a research career evaluated by criteria such as number of publications and a production that may be judged exclusively (so one is told...) by standardized, peer-reviewed professional rules.

In contrast, one such way in which both anthropologists and now a few ethnomusicologists have developed more horizontal participative strategies in their research activity has implied the adoption of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's ideas on dialogic knowledge building. A basic distinction underlies his approach to this issue: one between a situation in which the student remains the self-conscious subject of the cognitive operations making possible the emergence of liberating knowledge, the teacher acting as a mediator of the process, and another one he termed "banking education" in which the student remains primarily as object of the teacher's knowledge transference, a knowledge produced by a distant Other, in many cases foreign or even hostile to the student's cognitive backgrounds (Freire 1970, 1996).

An interesting experience in this sense was discussed in a special 1994 issue of the journal The World of Music comprising articles on music research and the ethical concerns it raises among indigenous peoples of Australia. The general objective of all contributions was precisely to bring to the fore the new roles and new research contexts emerging at a moment in which indigenous peoples were intensifying their struggle for political and cultural autonomy, as well as for the maintenance or rescue of their ancestral territories. Although space limitation here does not allow a more encompassing appraisal of the panel, it is worth noticing the introductory piece by the late Catherine Ellis (1994). She recollects her initial involvement, as an academic researcher, with indigenous peoples and their respective musical cultures, her progressive engagement in short-term community-driven projects, and finally the creation of the Center for Aboriginal Studies of Music[7] at the University of Adelaide in 1975, resulting from a project collectively conceived by the ethnomusicologist and indigenous musicians with whom she had been working. Its aims, she continues, were to offer the world indigenous views of music-making, through continuous research and teaching of musical practices by and to both indigenous and non-indigenous community members, as well as to provide a new context for students in general to study music in general.

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6   I will comment a bit more on this issues when discussing my case studies further in this paper.

7   See also Jennifer Newsome's contribution to this volume for a fresh perspective on CASM's activity.

Being an initiative inspired to a great measure in Paulo Freire's pedagogical think-ing, Ellis explains how the research and teaching strategies passed through a process of systematic negotiation with indigenous community councils. This, she points out, eventually led to practices which were foreign to academic "ethics", such as interdicting speculation on and diffusion of given repertoires outside the community proper since both outcomes were considered concerning or threatening to the well-being of an entire society. In such context, as well stressed by Ellis, tradition cultivation intersperses the construction and reconstruction of indigenous identities and the struggle for rights to land, health, housing, education, etc. in the scope of the encompassing national society. This approach, as acknowledged by the late Australian ethnomusicologist, presents a series of paradoxes[8] while we, academics, keep ourselves attached to scientific paradigms and evaluation criteria still dominant in the academic field. But, she adds, overcoming such paradoxes through patient, tortuous and radical intellectual changes may lead to innovative syntheses between indigenous (or, expanding, the argument non-academic) and academic thought processes.

Thinking over my own research experience with musical traditions in Brazil, I find evident a progressive move evidencing a considerable transformation of research scenarios toward growing and more politically charged demands placed by communities upon academics, which I will attempt to illustrate below with four case studies.

New Scenarios and Roles in Samba Research

In between 1988 and 1990 I worked on my dissertation on samba in Rio de Janeiro (see Araújo 1992), focusing on the so-called samba schools, huge carnival associations, encompassing about four thousand participants each, which compete annually for prizes and attract a great deal of tourist interest around the world. Pursuing a doctoral degree abroad at the time, and consequentially constrained by the usual research limitations faced by most outside researchers, I followed some basic principles of participant obser-vation, centered on one of these associations and reflecting critically with my interlocu-tors, mostly musicians, on the role of music-making in the production of social meaning out of a myriad of interests, encompassing from worldwide TV broadcast copyrights and local organized crime activity to state propaganda and community self-esteem. In general terms, this research was conducted amidst a commercially overvalued context, generating accusations targeted at the abandonment of tradition and the selling out of community values, oftentimes, if ambiguously, vocalized by samba songwriters identi-fied with the roots of samba (*samba de raiz*).

There had even been an attempt, in between 1975 and the mid-1980s, toward em-powering traditional samba forms through the creation of a new type of samba school devoted to both research and creative activity—still existing but of little repercussion at

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8   Among these paradoxes, one may be faced with the emergence of newly empowered academic subjects (e.g. the so-called native researcher), the critical acknowledgement of community-established ethical limits to research conducts, and the relativization of traditional signposts of academic legitimacy such as peer-evaluated publications, theses, dissertations etc.

the time my fieldwork was being carried—, the Grêmio Recreativo de Arte Negra Escola de Samba Quilombo (see Cabral 1997).[9]

Wishing to work on oral histories constructed with selected samba musicians as a way of mapping out questions the available literature seemed to overlook, I opted for individuals who had maintained a relatively long involvement with samba practices, some of which expressed—not without a certain ambiguity—firm disagreement with the current scene, others accepting the changes as they may fit new conjunctures, new anxieties, both seen as legitimate as the traditional ones. While the research project remained, until its final stages, under the academic researcher's control, its pertinence to the researched communities is to this date yet to be asserted.

However, as soon as I settled back in Rio after graduation (1992), and visiting one of the people who helped me more substantially with my fieldwork, himself a respected composer and carrier of the community's social memory, I was asked to check out a novelty in his Salgueiro[10] house that had resulted, he said, from my insistent questions and his patient search for documents and records to answer them. He had transformed his home into a local reference center (or, as he called it, a small "museum"), covering up the house walls with documents on the samba school memory, an idea that had occurred to him about two years earlier, after being bothered by an insistent researcher (me) for some months in a row. After this meeting I tried to put forward a longer term research project, which should ideally be negotiated with community members, around the Freirean notion of the academic as a mediator of knowledge generated by the community, resulting in the expansion of the incipient musical memory center that had already been built. Nevertheless the aggravation of social and racial apartheid in Rio de Janeiro following still obscure facts surrounding the State government 1992 elections, with dramatic effects being felt to this day, suddenly made such enterprise, as defined by my interlocutor, "unadvisable". Eventually he felt compelled to move out of the community, of whose samba school he had been a co-founder and a respected leadership for decades, still living far away from it today.

Recently, however, relatively favorable conditions made possible, since 2006, for the university's Ethnomusicology Lab to start a new, ongoing joint project with a locally based NGO on Salgueiro's socio-musical memory, which will hopefully be able to benefit from his personal archives.

New Scenarios, New Roles: Gypsy Music and Dance in Rio

Back in 1995, while advising a master's thesis research at the university, the student in question mentioned his participation in private parties among calom-speaking (derived from the calom language spoken by *ciganos* in Portugal) gypsies in the neighborhood of Catumbi, Rio de Janeiro, involving what had impressed him as very peculiar music and dance styles. Having manifested my curiosity in seeing and hearing them somehow, the

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[9]   I.e., Recreational Black Art Club Quilombo (community-states founded by self-freed, formerly enslaved people during the slavery era) Samba School.
[10] Hillside community, home to one of the largest and oldest samba schools of Rio.

student showed me first a community-made video. As my curiosity grew after watching the video (both music and dance seemed just too close to long abandoned 19th-century models mentioned in the literature), and after the student's intermediation, I was invited by the community not only to participate in but also to document a 50th-year marriage anniversary party it was about to take place. Their proposal allowed me to shoot a video for research purposes as long as I returned them a master copy so they could dub it to interested community members. Among this predominantly elderly group of people, there was a generalized feeling that their identity defining traditions would disappear with them, since, in their perception, the younger generations, comprising a majority of mixed marriages with non-gypsies, tended to shy away from cultural practices marked off by social stigma. The proposed agreement between us was one which allowed documentation of music and dance, as well as of the participants and their socializing during the party, simultaneously available for academic research and for community purposes—perhaps to be taken later as a source of its own strengthening.

My first measure was a more attentive watch of the community-made video, attempting to better understand the flux of the event itself, and also of the community's possible expectations from my own video shooting. Having in mind Hugo Zemp's precepts for ethnographic video-making (Zemp 1988), I tried to adequate the documentation procedures to the existing conditions.[11] The unedited result was at some point presented to a few community members who made several comments during the show, some of which deeply emotional one due to the reassurance that only elderly people still participated, or death of some participants a few days after the party, while others expressed their happiness in face of their chance (perhaps the last one) to socialize and of the beauty of their music and dance.

This experience eventually took the course of public presentations on the research results in both national and international academic symposiums (Araújo 1996; Araújo e Guerreiro 1996), at least one of the former being attended by community members. To some extent both academics and community members felt their mutual interests in a complementary relationship; the former could undertake an exploratory study of a little known aspect of a musical practice cultivated in Brazil, while the latter could obtain a valuable record of cultural traditions seen as vital in a moment of profound transformation of their community as well as of the society-at-large in which they lived. Although occasional meetings between the researchers and community members still occur, no further research-related collaboration took place.[12]

New Scenes: The Documentation of a Brazilian Dance Drama

A master's degree advisee developed her thesis research on the use of *rabeca* (a Brazilian fiddle-type instrument) in the Cavalo Marinho dance drama, a kind of play

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[11]   Having no previous first-hand knowledge of the ritual structure of a marriage anniversary party (or even if there was any formal prescription for it), and with confirmation that the video shooting would be possible arriving a few hours from the beginning of the party, the only machine available was a home VHS camera hired at a commercial video rental store.

[12]   Quite recently gypsy communities and their culture were elected priority in terms of documentation projects funded by the Ministry of Culture.

structured on a relatively prescribed set of music-and dance, originally performed around Christmas-time. The focused group was formed by migrants from the interior of Paraíba state, in the Northeastern region, whose oldest members had been settled for about thirty years close to the state capital city of João Pessoa.

Replacing urban occupations, such as school security guards or construction workers, for their older rural ones as either cowboys or agricultural workers, its members had to adapt their cultural traditions to new situations: events unlinked to Christmas (e.g., stage shows academic congresses or in tourist venues), usually low cash payments by State agencies or commercial interests (as opposed to just food, drinking and shelter in the older rural settings) and uninformed audiences with little if any understanding of what went on in the play.

It is perhaps unnecessary to emphasize the group's difficulty and, at times, revolt in having to deal with these situations, which placed them almost invariably in a disadvantageous position to negotiate their interests (adequate conditions and payments, show time etc.) In 1997, before the CD proposal reached them, Cavalo Marinho members had decided to try a new direction through the building of a legally recognized cultural organization, with help from a university professor with a relatively long record of engagement with the *brinquedo* (lit., toy; also self-entertainment, play), a designation commonly used among the group. This association was thought as a form of making viable a series of projects, including a video documentation project by then approved by the Ministry of Culture, but waiting for more than a year for the release of the necessary financial resources.

In the same year, 1997, I had received a proposal for an audio CD documentary related to the 500 years of cultural exchanges between Brazil and Portugal. My advisee and I presented the proposal to Cavalo Marinho members, through its acknowledged leader, Mestre Gasosa. From the beginning the negotiation was meandrous, involving a series of phone calls mediated by the university professor already mentioned. At some point there was an agreement that a contract should be made and underwritten by both the Portuguese recording company, one academic researcher (me) and the group musicians participating in the recording, in attempt to avoid previous experiences in which their rights had been, as they put it, disrespected.

The idea of a contract had, however, a series of implications which were nearly impossible to settle over the phone (see, once again, Seeger 1992). Fortunately, the negotiation was made more fluid as the university professor recalled my own period of residence, professional activity and political activism in João Pessoa between 1980 and 1985. The conditions and dates for recording were then defined, and they were made in an amiable atmosphere, the group having decided to record a representative sample of the music performed in each of the three parts of the *brinquedo* (an integral documentation would perhaps demand a longer series of CDs), something they had been regularly doing for some time in their new performance contexts (e.g., 15-minute presentations during academic conference coffee breaks).

During this process –which is still developing–the group's or, better, Mestre Gasosa's strategy, mediated by an academic, seemed to involve a constant, and often complicated, synthesis in between the evocation of a collective memory (encompass-

ing repertoires, older performance contexts and frustrating experiences with both phonographic and video-making projects) and attempts to form new references for action in a transformed world. In this framework, the CD could open (and indeed opened, not always for good) opportunities for the diffusion and continuity of their expressive work, but mainly to contribute to other forms of organization and intervention which would hopefully assure them more social control over their own creative resources.

What seemed a good prospect turned, however, into an intricate social issue. The audio CD was released under the title *Cavalo Marinho da Paraíba* (IN Susana Sardo, ed., A Viagem dos Sons Vol. 12. Vila Verde: Portugal; 1998). After the consecutive deaths of Mestre Gasosa, group leader, and fiddle player Mestre Artur da Rabeca, the group saw a dispute over name ownership to develop between Mestre Gasosa's son, Dinho (who was also a dancer with the group since childhood), and Mestre João, who played the *Mateus* character and was one of the singers, along with Gasosa in the recording. In his attempts to keep the Cavalo Marinho alive, something which involved keeping the name consecrated in the CD release and teaching younger people the songs or showing fiddle tunes to players not familiar with the repertoire, Mestre João named the group after the CD's title, which became the centerpiece of the copyright suit (see Lima 2004).[13]

Intriguingly enough, although understandably, the law suit does not involve neither the recording company nor the researcher who acted as mediator, both of which signed a contract with the musicians, signaling that the dispute remains exclusively one over name ownership, using the CD as perceived evidence of rights. So, it seems to me that this episode demonstrates that, even if not calling into question the ethics of the recording, including its diffusion and commercialization, the political implications of punctual, short-term research, even when ethically and socially responsible, does not account for the ever expanding relationships between peoples and the reified products of heir labor.

New Scenarios: Working for and with a Community at Maré

As reported elsewhere (Araújo et al. 2006) Ethnomusicology Lab of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro has established, since 2003, a partnership with CEASM (Center for the Study and Solidarity Actions of Maré), a NGO created by residents within a socio-politically disenfranchised area of Rio de Janeiro with an estimated population of about 135,000 people, comprising from relocated slum populations of Rio and unskilled migrant labor (the majority of which from northeastern Brazil), to a population of about 1,000 Angolan young students and middle-aged war refugees. High rates of unemployment and the profitability of drug-trafficking delineate the broader social

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[13] Before the CD release, Mestre Gasosa used to call his Cavalo Marinho "de Mestre Gasosa" or "de Bayeux" (an allusion to their hometown). The latter was, however, contested by another Cavalo Marinho group based in the same town. The reference to the state of Paraíba was then thought initially by researchers and musicians as a clearer marker of geographical origin, not as a trademark.

contours in the Maré area, leading to a harsh routine of police raids, corruption, drug wars on territories between factions, and traffic-dictated curfews.

Our partner organization was, by 2003, one of the highest visible community-based NGOs in Rio, with a considerable infra-structure (classrooms, well-equipped administrative offices, computer rooms, library and various types of database) and a strong focus on the preparation of Maré youngsters to the yearly admission exam in public universities (reputedly the best in Brazil and free of charge). Its main focus requires, in its representatives' perception (middle-aged, university-trained residents or former residents of Maré), that exam-centered skills be complemented with other skills that may enrich the experience of youngsters. CEASM's particular expectations from our joint project were that the formation of local youngsters to document Maré's musical output, eventually leading to the creation of a local musical reference center, might reinforce both the subjects' self-esteem and experience in another musical program or yet in other related areas such as dance, history, story-telling, etc.

The Project

A first version of the project was prepared by a university-based team of two teachers, one former graduate student, and three currently enrolled graduate students. The main points of departure were: a- the positive feedback (in ethical, dynamic, and even epistemological terms) from the previous small-scale experiences in alternative modes of ethnography, with focuses jointly defined by university researchers and members of the focused societal groups, and the involvement of some of the latter in several stages of the research proper (e.g., as interviewers, "fieldworkers", "translators" of local linguistic variations, etc.); b- emphasis on whatever locally based musical resources are available; c- the considerable accumulated experience in sub-fields fields termed "applied", "advocacy", "participatory" within the social sciences, ethnomusicology included, and the increasing availability of related literature; c- the institutional support from the university and also from some of its business partners (e.g., the giant state-owned oil company) within a political context of increased awareness of the disparaging social, political and economic imbalance between the very rich and the poor in Brazil, an overall trend leading the first industrial worker ever to win presidential elections in the Americas to take office in 2003.

Intense discussions with NGO representatives (educators, historians and administrative personnel) led to the development of a one-year research project restricted to two sub-areas of Maré and involving three basic stages: 1- twice-a-week encounters with a group of 20 Maré-resident youngsters selected among second-grade student volunteers, aimed at the development of a conceptual basis as well as of research focuses and tools. Following participatory action models (but particularly the one proposed by Paulo Freire). The university researchers act in this case as mediators of discussions among the youngsters on relevant musical subjects and categories for music research; 2- the actual audio and audiovisual documentation of musical practices and interviews with representative individuals; 3- the building of a public database within Maré, located at

the NGO headquarters, and the development of outreach programs aimed at its residents and at the general public (each one involving certain specificities such as questions on the range and type of diffusion).

Picture 1. Musicultura (Maré research group members at Casa de Cultura), Baixa do Sapateiro (2006)

Picture 2. Musicultura Timbau (Maré research group members at CEASM), Morro do Timbau (2006)

Issues Emerging in Dialogic Research

As a huge number of potential research topics have emerged in the discussions in these four years, I would like to share at least a few of them here.

Differences in musical backgrounds and experience were among the most immediately self-perceived traits within the group, revealing from the start a quite significant feature of Maré: its widely diversified soundscape (to use once more composer Murray Schaffer's well-known metaphor). The most admired genres may be generally described as Brazilian popular musics (mainly Rio de Janeiro's samba and *pagode*, or the Northeastern *forró*) and international trends such as rap, rock, and reggae, but also include clusters of African pop (among Angolans), evangelical gospel songs or the local equivalent to "gangsta rap", the so-called "proibid o" (i.e., highly forbidden). It is probably redundant to say that each of these genres may be "the" exclusive pick or intersect one another in one individual's particular choice repertoire, while the main sources for musical experiences encompass radio and TV broadcasts, music recordings from both licit and illicit sources, public (e.g., religious services, funk balls [comment]) and private performances (rock rehearsals, private parties), indoor and outdoor events. Taste distinctions have shown to maintain correlations with age, religious affiliations, schooling, occupation, the proximity of the drug business putting some youngsters at social risk, and also to the period of residence within Maré.

It is relevant to notice too that the initial revelation of such differences, as it might be expected, provoked a great deal of meaningful silence (Freire 1970) during the first encounters. Little by little, however, a number of interaction strategies proposed by the university team (e.g. showing documentary videotapes recording different sound practices within the Maré area and simulated life history interviews with project participants) led the student researchers to increase their awareness of the content of each other's preferred styles. Little by little, new kinds of interaction (including musical ones) between these youngsters have started to develop, including the creation—and maintenance since then—of a politically committed Carnival group since 2005, Se Benze Que Dá (Bless It, So It Passes), an allusion to Carnival parades through the dangerous drug-traffic divides.

This leads to an issue emerging strongly in the discussions: the impact of violence (much more than hunger, or the lack of either job or leisure opportunities, which is not to say these are not strong concerns) on social life in general, but particularly on musical ones. Violence, in the discussions among youngsters, is often understood as a sub-product of drug-trafficking and/or police action. Quite significantly, the majority of examples of violence in the youngsters' accounts are illustrated with significant sounds. On the other hand, they often emphasize the term "sound" to describe local practices that might otherwise be deemed as "musical", which has led us (university and Maré researchers) to entertain on the continuity of the sound spectrum in Maré (Schaffer's soundscape, but also Araujo's acoustic labor [1992]), from gunfire, church loudspeakers and war commands to everyday speech and more or less ritualized sound performances.

Physical violence and terror notwithstanding, violence appears more often under the form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2001, Wacquant 2004). This form is spotted back-and-forth by Maré residents in their own downplay of their cultural output, perhaps as a result of years of actions aimed at what "the community lacks", in which the content provider is usually an outsider. When he/she ceases, for one reason or another, his/her collaboration with local institutions, leaves behind a sense of frustration or

simply a vacuum.

Symbolic violence also appears under the form of concepts made up from out-side perceptions that "freeze", so to speak, social practices, failing to recognize or, in Bourdieu's terms, misrecognizing practical strategies as categories that make no sense in the real world. This has serious implications since the on-going discussions have revealed different internal uses within Maré for established categories used in academia, side by side with frequently used, socially pertinent local categories which remain absolutely absent in scholarly studies of the masses or of the poor. That should leave us wondering about the relatively innocuousness of many labels and object-centered approaches that pervade the literature on popular music cultures in Brazil vis-à-vis a highly significant, while largely ignored, praxis emanating from stigmatized daily struggles for physical and emotional survival.

In a response to this challenge, one of the greatest achievements so far in this project has been the collective engagement of the joint research team in reconsidering older and elaborating new research categories based on the community's research experi-ence, resulting in the production of texts, some of which are already published in pres-tigious academic journals, and other forms of newly qualified actions which transcend the worn-out dichotomies between "neutrality" and "interventionism", "political" and "non-political" realms.

Picture 3. Musicultura no forum social brasileiro (Maré research group participating in the Brazilian Social Forum), Recife (2006)

Final Remarks

In conclusion, one might risk saying, as a provocation to debate, that it is impera-tive to scrutinize more carefully forms of musical research still based on the modes of ethnography made "conventional" in the colonial world, or even the so-called reflexive work done in the post-colonial context. This questionable legacy, which entails legitimiz-

ing the discourse of academic interpreters' while reducing the focused peoples' power to resist their transformation into objects, has been basically translated as (1) fetichized musical products and processes, i.e. defined and naturalized in terms of ideologies which are usually foreign to the focused communities, and (2) a slight reconfiguration of academic authority without challenging standards of authorship; and (3) public policies (e.g. on world and national heritages, research agendas, training programs etc.) which stress the hegemony of academia, attributing to its agents (i.e. researchers) the responsibility of defining, preserving, and promoting musical diversity (see, for instance, Gonçalves 1996).

As not a few of our colleagues already know, to build up a contrasting legacy constitutes an enormous challenge. Invoking Paulo Freire once again, researchers keep themselves aware that musical processes and products are permanently mediated by power relations, demanding constant action/reflection, and not allowing stable theorizations in the course of part-time interactions aimed at individual authorships in search of academic authority.

Concomitantly it becomes clear that reviewing radically the process of knowledge production requires extreme application, in the sense of politically conscious engagement, to changing public policies in favor of social movements which may be able to build a new knowledge-producing praxis. This will require, as already in practice here and there around the globe, (1) the creation of opportunities to enable communities currently marginalized from the knowledge produced on themselves to interact with and to participate not as active interlocutors in world forums, (2) the formation of joint research teams comprising natives and non-natives as well as academics and non-academic personnel, (3) new self-critical forms and uses of musical documentation, fostering public debates on the history, identity and values of peoples, (4) development of new capacities amidst communities previously deprived of access to those capacities (e.g. audiovisual documentation, idealization and management of sound archives, use of technologies etc.), and the reinforcement and/or building of diffusion centers of local knowledge and repositories through community-based organizations and institutions.

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POVZETEK

Prispevek obravnava etnomuzikološko področje v luči novih epistemoloških scenarijev, ki izhajajo iz postkolonialnih razmer in zahtevajo, da se tehtno premislijo stare raziskovalne vloge (insider/outsider; angažiran domačin/nevtralen, tuj opazovalec) ter zamenjajo z novimi, ki so politično razdelane. Avtor se najprej dotakne vrste domnev in problemov, ki zadevajo področje teorije in prakse v sodobnem svetu in ki ne odsevajo le kritike vrste modernih iluzij glede domnevno nevtralnega značaja znanosti o človeku ampak tudi omejitve postmodernih kritik, ki so naravnane proti slednjim. Pretresa dejstvo, da navkljub njihovim dobrim nameram – te in take kritike zaostajajo na področju učinkovite teorije, da ne govorimo o aktivnem preseganju asimetričnih sil med politično razlaščenimi skupnostmi, ki proizvajajo znanje, in svetom, ki ga oblikujejo blagovne forme in ki se včasih uresničujejo v okviru avtoritete nekaterih akademskih diskurzov. In končno, avtor predstavi štiri primere, ki zadevajo njegova raziskovalna prizadevanja v Braziliji in ki skušajo ponazoriti, kako so zahteve lokalnih skupnosti vplivale na njih cilje in pristope, in s tem odpira možna vprašanja na poti k novi disciplinarni praksi.