

WHAT KIND OF SAMBA IS THAT? SAMBA AND BATUCADA IN BARCELONA

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ABSTRACT

This is a study about music scenes and transnationalization. I analyzed how the internationalization of Brazilian music and the arrival of Brazilian immigrants led to the creation of new sound spaces to experience music in Barcelona. Also, mapping was performed to search for music scenes of samba, samba-reggae and batucada. The research involved methodical procedures based on participant observation, interviews, audiovisual record, and radio listening. Theoretical analysis followed the principles and tools of urban, visual and media anthropology. This study is the result of an intense ethnographic work carried out between June 2017 and July 2018.

KEYWORDS

Visual and media anthropology; transnationalization; batucada; samba reggae; Barcelona.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

To move, to know, and to describe are not separate operations that follow each other in series, but rather parallel facets of the same process – that of life itself.

(Tim Ingold)

Since my first contact with Barcelona, I noticed the presence of street musicians, but I did not see any Brazilian among them. Is the rhythm of samba not appropriate for public spaces, subway stations, and streets? I started questioning myself if there was samba in Barcelona¹.

Since 2012, I have been trying to understand the multicultural universe of Rocas neighborhood (Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil), especially samba. During this period, I was guided by Mestre Zorro, a samba dancer, composer, and resident of this neighborhood. Zorro showed perfectly well the samba roots of Rio Grande do Norte. Therefore, by sharing, we built an archive of memories and interviews about the history of samba in Rocas.

This study made me reflect on the role visual and media arts play in social anthropology. How do we build something in visual and media arts with immersion? One way is to dive deeply with commitment, care, and determination to show the others a little of a person's life or culture.

This is the most appropriate methodology to build something human. If we have time to understand the time of others and their choices, we show interest in hearing their stories. This becomes a commitment to record the constructed images.

We must move ourselves and get interesting people to move us as well. Entering this imaginary world of the other, without judgments, is to modify our own perception. This commitment aims to expand the dialogues on critical methodologies by strengthening the academic field in urban, visual, and media arts anthropology (Coradini and Pavan 2018).

1. In 2014, during my first ethnographic exploration in Barcelona, I had access to important information from the immigration investigations carried out by the research groups Migracom and Grafo from UAB. These investigations took place in 1996, 2000 and 2002, and provided a starting point for reflection on sound practices in that city. The university extension program "Narratives, Memories and Itineraries" is coordinated by me and Prof. Maria Angela Pavan (Decom/UFRN). In this program, we make audiovisual productions, we started to investigate the everyday life of individuals and urban groups in the city of Natal-RN, based on their actions, gestures and voices. Voices are not expressed in unison, but reveal interactions, tensions and expressions about the city. Some of the productions are: *No mato das Mangabeiras* (2014), *Seu Pernambuco* (2014), *Mestre Zorro* (2016) and *As mulheres das Rocas são as vozes do samba* (2016).

From this perspective, I started the research, walked through the historic center of Barcelona, and discovered Brazilian bars, restaurants, and sociable places. The aim was to map Brazilian music scenes. According to Straw's approach, the initial mapping would not be the resulting map, but a way to access the scene: "the role of affinities and interconnections which, as they unfold through *time*, *mark* and *regularize* the *spatial itineraries* of *people*, *things* and *ideas*" (2006, 10). I assume the mapping reveals the scene in city spaces. Authors such as De Certeau (1994), Ingold (2015), Martín-Barbero (2004) and Careri (2017) contribute to the drifting experience (or theory of the *dérive*).

As Careri reiterates in the book *Walkscapes: el andar como práctica estética* (2017,79), walking around the city is resorting to the territory by raising non-conventional maps. Here I insist on the relevance of the drift theory, conceptualized by Guy Debord (1958, 1):

Entre los diversos procedimientos situacionistas, la deriva se presenta como una técnica de paso ininterrumpido a través de ambientes diversos. El concepto de deriva está ligado indisolublemente al reconocimiento de efectos de naturaleza psicogeográfica, y a la afirmación de un comportamiento lúdico-constructivo, lo que la opone en todos los aspectos a las nociones clásicas de viaje y de paseo.

Thus, I started drawing a map, locating places and itineraries where Brazilian music circulated in the city. They are the following ones: Jamboree, Guzzo, Bendita Salsa, Marula Café, El Monaterio, El Rouge, Gryzzly, Ovella Negra, Diobar, Cantinho Brasileiro, Spirit Barcelona, Berimbau, Panela de Barro, and El foro Club. Most of these bars are in the central area, such as the Gothic Quarter, El Born, and Gracia. Before their shows, bars like Diobar and Bendita Salsa offer samba or forró classes with Brazilian instructors. I realized that the intention, besides teaching samba to bargoers, is inviting interested parties, Brazilians or not, to dance classes in gyms or dance studios. Hence, contacts are established and become more frequent, especially with WhatsApp groups, where learners can share news, images, and videos about dance classes.

Facebook is another social and digital tool that can revolve around music. Facebook groups are another example of deterritorialization (Castells 1996). In this case, groups such as "Brazilians in BCN," "Brazilian musicians in BCN," "Brazilian women in BCN," allow for a closer relationship and information about the events, courses, and shows of Brazilian immigrant musicians in the Catalan capital.



FIGURE 1
 Photograph:
 Grizzly Bar Poster.

At some point, I started listening to Caipirinha Libre to get more specific data about the Brazilian music scene. Caipirinha Libre is a radio show with interviews and chats broadcast live every Wednesday from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on *contrabanda.org* and on the radio station 91.4 FM. It is a radio show with DJs from Barcelona, guests, musicians, and artists who live or are visiting the city. According to the announcer, “it is a way to keep updated on Brazilian music.”

The research in Barcelona was strongly impelled by the workshop I participated with the instructor Vania Bastos. The workshop “Afro-Brazilian dance: legacy and resistance” occurred at the Civic Center Pere Vila, in October 2017. At that time, I met different professionals related to music, such as ballroom dance (gafieira and samba) instructors, capoeira dance fighters, dancers, musicians, and people interested in learning about the Brazilian culture. I was the only Brazilian student; the others were Spanish or from other countries².

2. On that occasion, I was able to participate in two workshops that provided a closer approach to the world of music in Barcelona. They were: *Escuchar voces*, *tejer networks*:

Will Straw has introduced the concept of “scene” (which is also applied to “music scene”), that refers to: (a) the recurring congregation of people in a particular place; (b) the movement of these people between this place and other spaces of congregation; (c) the streets/strips along which this movement occurs; (d) all places and activities that surround and nourish a particular cultural preference; (e) the broader and more geographically dispersed phenomena of which this movement or these preferences are local examples; or (f) the webs of microeconomy activity that foster sociability and link it to the city’s ongoing self-reproduction (Straw 2006, 6).

It is fascinating to think how the everyday sociability is built. The author Will Straw (1991, 373) makes an interesting reflection on the sociability networks formed through alternative rock and dance music in cities like Detroit, Montreal, Toronto, Los Angeles and London. For him, a “music scene” is the cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within processes of differentiation. His approach suggests understanding the “musical scene” as a much broader and more solid being.

This study is part of an ethnographic research that focused on participant observation, identification of meeting places and the audiovisual record of groups attending samba and samba-reggae classes, and presentations at events, such as carnival, popular festivals and *festas mayores* (Catalan expression meaning “big party”), like *Festa Major de la Mercè*, *Festa Major de Gràcia*, *Correfocs*, and *Festa de Santa Eulàlia*. I also recorded in-depth interviews with four black women residing in Barcelona, two of them were samba instructors (gafieira and samba rock), the other was member of the samba school *Unidos de Barcelona*. These strategies provided a unique material for reflection, due to the possibility of entering the universe of body techniques and instructors/colleagues’ techniques³. However, for the purposes of this study, I will focus on photographs taken at different stages of the research. What I present is the partial result of the research carried out during my post-doctoral time at Grafo (*Grup de Recerca em Antropologia Fonamental i Orientada*), at Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), between July 2017 and July 2018.

apuntes on feminism and popular music, with Prof. Silvia Martínez (Esmuc – UAB), in December 2017, and *Salsa en Barcelona: escenas, representaciones y personajes*, with Alba Marina González (UB), in November 2017.

3. The recorded material is still being edited. In another study, I intend to reflect on the methodical strategies approached by visual and media arts anthropologists, filmmakers, and documentary filmmakers in their interviews, as well as studies on the length of documentaries (video and sound recording).

Throughout the research, several relevant questions emerged. One of them was dedicated to understanding how the internationalization of Brazilian music and the arrival of Brazilian immigrants led to the creation of new sound spaces and ways of experiencing music in Barcelona. In this study, I only describe my first contact with this “music scene” and the complex transnationalization process of samba in Barcelona, hitherto completely unknown to me.

SAMBA AND SAMBA-REGGAE

Before discussing transnationalization, it is necessary to note some aspects of samba and samba-reggae to understand the identity dimension of African origin in these musical genres and why it was brought up several times by my interlocutors.

Several studies in the fields of anthropology and sociology indicate the difficulty of specifying its origin, but everyone agrees that since the beginning, samba has remained linked to the poorest segments of society. Some authors indicate that this rhythm originates from Bahia, a region of large African descent, and expanded to Rio de Janeiro. To avoid *simplistic or reductionist views, it is noteworthy that samba is seen as a typical Brazilian expression, and that several authors have already researched this theme and its multiplicity of meanings, productions, spaces, and ways of relating it to the recording industry, such as Cavalcanti (1995), Goldwasser (1975), Lopes (1981), Tramonte (2001), Muniz Sodré (1988), Hermano Vianna (2004), Carlos Sandroni (2005), among others.*

According to *Matrizes do Samba Dossier (2014)* from Rio de Janeiro, *partido-alto, samba de terreiro, and samba-enredo* (variations of samba) appeared at the beginning of the 20th century with industrialization and growth of cities (urbanization). Black people used samba to fight against oppression and segregation. Samba schools, sociable spaces, exchanges of experience, solidarity networks, and artistic creations have also emerged over the years.

However, it was in Bahia during the 1970s that a musical phenomenon occurred with the return of *afoxé* and the creation of the first Afro-Brazilian block. According to Sigilião (2009), the Re-Africanization movement begins with *afoxés* and the emergence of Afro-Brazilian blocks in Salvador. In 1974, the pioneer Afro-Brazilian *Ilê Aiyê* block is founded, featuring a new kind of carnival music in Bahia. This block gathers themes from global black cultures and history, and it celebrates the aesthetic beauty of black people in its lyrics. It was also during this period that the musical group *Novos Baianos* was created, which, alongside the

Afro-Brazilian blocks *Ilê Aiyê* and *Filhos de Gandhi*, emphasized racial conflicts and protested against prejudice⁴.

The biggest innovation of Bahia's carnival was the electric trio of Dodô e Osmar, which appeared in 1950 and represents the beginning of street carnival. In their first performance, they used electric guitars and trucks equipped with a high-power sound system.

Samba-reggae dates to the 1970s, and it incorporates many elements from other music genres like samba, Jamaican reggae, and Candomblé rhythms. The Olodum block provides visibility to samba-reggae and Afro-Bahian percussion rhythms, which still dominate carnival to this day. It is a fusion of certain Afro-Caribbean rhythms (merengue, salsa) with a strong influence of Jamaican reggae.

SAMBA IN BARCELONA

I could not find any academic research on the dispersion of Brazilian music in Barcelona in the initial bibliographic survey. Still, I found research on salsa and Cuban music.

Alba Marinha Smeja, in her doctoral dissertation "*Salsa Nómada: Musical, available and itinerant scene of la salsa brava en Barcelona*" (2016), starts with a historical contextualization about the origin of salsa to identify the popularization of *salsa brava* in Barcelona and why it differs from other styles of salsa.

Camacho (2015) is another researcher who seeks to understand the spread of salsa to Barcelona. She says that for Spaniards there is a difference between dancing and listening to salsa music, while for Latinos these experiences coexist. Salsa dance for Latinos is *something therapeutic that heals everything emotionally*; for Spaniards, *it makes them feel good* (2015, 188). Spaniards learn how to dance salsa as an exercise, that is, the practice translates into a well-being activity. Furthermore, according to the author, couples participate in pairs, performing choreography, considering that acrobatics and partner lifting require a good physical condition of the dancers. Salsa dance is more related to feelings and emotions.

Later, I had access to ethnographies about forró and capoeira abroad. The authors Nascimento and Ortega (2018, 51), for example, seek to understand the transnationalization process of forró dancers. This is carried out by a multi-sited ethnography of forró in the cities of Lisbon,

4. For a detailed analysis of the Re-Africanization movement that took place in the 1970s and the intense musical relation between the cities Rio de Janeiro and Salvador, see: Sigilião (2009).

Portugal and Valencia, Spain. They say that:

The circulation of this musical genre in the Iberian peninsula gains contours and particularities, given the connection of forró with Latinity cultural contexts, which brings it closer to the imaginary of the tropics and musical genres whose transnational processes were prior to forró, such as salsa, merengue and Afro-Cuban rhythms.

Therefore, we can say there are a variety of situations that show the transnational circuit of people, objects and material and immaterial cultural goods between Brazil, the United States, Japan, Portugal, Spain, among others. Capoeira, frevo, maracatu, forró, soccer and some aspects of Afro-Brazilian religions illustrate this.

Nevertheless, as said by José Ribeiro (2011) in his study on sonorities, hybridity, and miscegenation, sonorities travel with people. He also highlights the importance of perceiving this combination of sounds: the voice, speech, singing, repertoire, the prayers, the shout, protest, and silence. Within this frame of reference, they continually merge with each other or remain tense.

LEARNING SAMBA STEPS

From participating observer, I became an observing participant, both in samba and batucada classes and in parades. I was fully aware that I could only understand samba if I knew how to dance it. Thus, I dedicated myself to learning something I really wanted: samba. On Wednesday evenings I attended samba classes with the instructor Sara Palhares and on Thursdays with the instructor Rita Stylus, both from Rio de Janeiro and residents in Barcelona. On Mondays I learned to play the drum with *Batalá Batucada*. Those were intense days, and the weight of the drums bothered me a little (*surdo* – the specific name for this Brazilian instrument): my knees hurt, I realized that I had a locked hip, and I had to wear ear protection, because the sound was too loud. Gradually, I learned the choreography and how to twirl with the drumsticks. My body was finally moving to the music and my heart beat was guiding the drumming.

Nevertheless, what was taught in samba classes followed a more popular choreography. This choreography would be presented at the winter carnival celebrations (February), summer carnival (June), carnival in Sitges, Brazilian Day celebrations (September 7th) or at other local events. These parades are greatly expected, especially the costume-making and makeup part.



FIGURE 2
Photograph:
Sara Palhares.

During my dance classes, I remembered Marcel Mauss's body techniques. I knew that it was necessary to internalize the dance steps, exercise the body before class and listen to the chosen music several times to really dive into the rhythm. After so much dedication, I learned to dance samba and ended up parading at the winter carnival in Barcelona. It was an interesting experience: to observe and be observed, to photograph and be photographed, to dance samba and to teach others how to do it. As Sara Palhares said in an interview, "dance is not in our blood. We carry it in our hearts. Everything can be learned. Everyone can try a corporeal experience."

Sara Palhares affirms (2017): "dance was always part of my life. My father was the artistic director of a big disco and organized parties, it was the time of *lambada*. And when I got home, after the dance performances, I repeated like a mantra: 'I don't want to live here, I don't want to live here, I don't want to live here.'" Sara followed the path of many artists who choose to live abroad. She lived in Sweden and Japan, participated in different shows in more than 30 countries, with performances of

salsa, samba, and carnival samba. Currently, her specialty is carnival samba or *samba en los pies* (something like samba footwork)⁵.

Usually, samba dance classes are designed to three different levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. At the beginning of the class, the instructor used to talk a little about the music, asking us to focus on the movements and steps. All of this requires motor skills and a lot of training. Most students are foreigners: Cubans, Venezuelans, Romanians, Ukrainians who got to know Brazilian music through a Brazilian friend or partner, or because they already danced salsa and wanted to learn another rhythm. It was common to hear them say: “you can dance samba by yourself,” “you don’t need a partner do dance samba,” or “you need a partner to dance salsa.”

Surely, samba allows the student to dance alone – it is not necessary to create a bond with another person or be concerned with physical contact, whether he or she is dancing well or not. During the class, exercises are performed to improve the connection with the body, showing the importance of self-esteem. Generally, after classes or bar meetings, conversations about samba, lyrics and some aspects of the Brazilian culture take place, revisiting the black struggle, the relevance of ethnic reaffirmation and the African musical heritage in Brazil.

This situation illustrates what is meant by “music scene,” a movement based on activities that surround a cultural preference. Another example is what we will see next: Brazilian Day celebrations in Barcelona.



FIGURE 3
Photograph:
Author’s personal
collection.

5. Sara Palhares was one of my interviewees and, during the recording, I realized that visual and media arts provide an intense relationship, a deep look at people’s life. We need extended lens to recognize people. Hereof, I will remain committed, thoughtful and determined to tell people’s life.

Brazilian Day is a long-awaited event, in which instructors and students finally present their choreography. In fact, Brazilian Day is one of the most important events for the Brazilian Community, and it also has the presence of foreigners. Brazilian Day is an annual celebration that occurs in Poble Espanyol and other cities around the world. It is held on September 7th to celebrate Brazil's Independence Day. This festival is in its ninth edition, which since 2014 has had the "Brazilian Day Film Exhibition," at the Girona cinema in Barcelona.

Every year, festival organizers bring artists from Brazil and Brazilian artists who live in Barcelona. The lineup encompasses two rhythms: samba and forró, because they are more accepted abroad. The 2017 edition included artists such as Mariene de Castro, *Barbados Samba*, *Sapato Branco*, and the DJs *MDC Suingue* and *Massafera Soundsystem*. There were also capoeira and maculelê presentations with *Cordão de Ouro*, samba school *Unidos de Barcelona*, *Ketubara Batucada*, and *Batalá Batucada*.



FIGURE 4
Photograph:
Author's personal
collection.

In this photograph, note that the male cortsy (*mestre-sala*) and the female flag bearer (*porta-bandeira*), wearing colorful costumes, open the samba school *Unidos de Barcelona's* parade. They are very proud to promote samba abroad. Nega Luxo, the female flag bearer, affirms: "I do my best, it is a lot of responsibility to represent Brazil abroad."

This is a common practice in samba schools' parades in Rio de Janeiro: the cortsy kneels and the flag bearer dances around him. The male cortsy "protects" the lady and the flag, representing the feeling of "pride" of the school. This movement happens until others are created, innovated, and improvised.

The following photograph shows the appropriation of Brazilian culture and its legitimation supported by the *baianas*' (women from Bahia) section using the national flag. In addition, costumes, sonority, and gestures are resignified in this parade.



FIGURE 5
Photograph:
Author's personal
collection.

The names of samba schools are another *resignification* example. *Unidos de Montjuica* is a mixed name: *Montjuic* is a hill to the southwest of Barcelona, looking over the harbor; and *Barra da Tijuca* is a neighborhood in the city of Rio de Janeiro. This samba school consists of members from different nationalities. Members of *Bateria Confusa* and *Unidos de Montjuic* compose the drumming section, of which Ravi, who is Catalan, is the leader. The dancers are from different places: Venezuela, Colombia, Romania, Russia, Spain, mostly students of the Brazilian samba instructor.

In the photograph below, we see the *Unidos de Barcelona*'s drumming section with its colors, red and white. The samba school *Unidos de Barcelona* is an illustrative example of how transnational connections and musical exchange are built. The image shows the result of the relationship between Brazilians and non-Brazilians who want to experience samba.



FIGURE 6
Photograph:
Author's personal
collection.

Batucada is another musical phenomenon. What we know as samba-reggae is called batucada in Barcelona. Batucadas are percussion groups composed of 15 to 50 people who occupy and walk the city streets during the European festivals.

The *Ketubara* batucada was founded by the Brazilian and Bahian musician Alex Rosa, who promotes the event “Samba Reggae Barcelona” every year. This event gathers Batucadas from different European countries and promotes concerts, dance, and percussion workshops. The *Batalá Barcelona* batucada, on the other hand, was launched in late 2011 by Sergi Cerezo. Today it has more than 30 percussionists from different countries: Colombia, Brazil, France, Italy, United Kingdom, Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Paraguay, Finland, and Spain.

Batucada has a close relationship with samba-reggae from Bahia. After all, as the lyrics say, *Salvador não inerte/guerrilheiros da Jamaica/ Alfabeto do negão: “Bob Marley semeou/ E o reggae se espalhou/ Muzenza/ Difundi em Salvador/ se tocou/ Jamaicado está”* (literal translation: “Bob Marley sow/ And reggae was spread / Muzenza/ Spread it in Salvador/ if it is played/ it is ‘Jamaicanized’”).



FIGURE 7
Photographs:
Alex Rosa
and Batucada
Ketubara
(Facebook page
@ketubara).

Ariza (2006) says that *Olodum* and *Muzenza* blocks developed an Afro-Bahian rhythmic fusion with reggae, known as samba-reggae. However, there is no consensus regarding its origin and rhythmic structure. Neguinho do Samba (member of *Ilê Aiyê*, who joined *Olodum* in 1983) is mentioned as the man who invented this rhythm.

This innovation is also attributed to *Muzenza* block, for being the first to assert direct relations with Bob Marley. *Muzenza* emerges in 1987, after the success they had with the song “Faraó” in the carnival parade. Thus, as claimed by Ariza (2006, 307), this block remained linked to the rhythm of the large percussive blocks, unlike axé-music and others, which reached the large musical market.

The *Olodum* block was one of the first blocks in the 1980s, and it is also the most successful. *Olodum* introduced different rhythmic structures, which are basically a rhythmic variation of *samba de roda*. In 1990, this block performed a song with Paul Simon, achieving worldwide fame. The group participated in Michael Jackson’s song “They Don’t Care About Us.” In 1996, the video clip of the song was filmed and directed by Spike Lee.

Nevertheless, Goli Guerreiro (2000) points out in her book “A trama dos tambores, a cena afro-pop de Salvador,” that samba-reggae

practice, a local musical practice, is part of a globalization that favors an ethnic musicality. To simplify, this practice fits perfectly, as it has several African sounds and a blending of Brazilian and Caribbean rhythms. According to Guerreiro (2000), samba-reggae is not a worldwide success, as artists hardly support themselves in foreign markets continually, and, in most cases, perform for audiences composed of Brazilians living abroad.

I partially agree with the author, when she says that the spread of samba-reggae abroad is due to major international concert tours since the 1990s. However, this musical phenomenon had strong impact abroad and blended with other Brazilian, Caribbean, and Spanish rhythms, placing black music in a prominent position.

Within this context, the dispersion of samba and samba-reggae is developed by the immigration of artists who decide to live abroad. It emerges from the complex cultural networks that have been established between Brazilians and non-Brazilians. This suggests that the expansion of these practices is associated with a system of affection, sociability and lifestyles, in addition to the market and consumer dynamic processes.

As Will Straw (1991) often reiterated, musical scenes are not restricted to geographical locations. My observations suggest there is a social interaction between rehearsals, classes, and participation in events. Being part of the scene means not only developing knowledge about music, but also building emotional relationships. In other words, these social practices influence the transnationalization processes of social life. Samba, samba-reggae, and batucada support our reflection on the connections between identities, migration, local and global, inclusion and exclusion.

Another point to be considered is the variety of batucada styles widespread. They are diversified according to the rhythms played and the use of instruments (drum, tambourine, *surdo*, *agogô*, *tamborim*). Most of its members are neither professional nor have a musical education, but they see an opportunity of musical learning, associated with the possibility of expanding their bonds of friendship. Batucada allows all professionals and students to participate in festivals and events throughout Europe, and even in Brazil. Their visit to Brazil, especially Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and Recife is greatly expected.

Batucada became important in local celebrations, such as *festas maiores*, *Fiesta de Santa Eulália*, *Correfocs*, and carnival. We can observe the presence of batucada groups at *Festa de La Mercè* in the

photographs below. This celebration lasts about five days and is a festival honoring Our Lady of Grace (*Mare de Déu de la Mercè*), patron saint of the archdiocese of Barcelona. It was officially introduced in 1902, celebrating the end of summer and welcoming the cooler autumn months. As we may note in the following photographs, the drumming sections *Unidos de Montijuca* and *Batucada Ketubara* participate in the *Festa Major de La Mercè*.



FIGURE 8
Photograph:
Author's personal
collection.



FIGURE 9
Photograph:
Author's personal
collection.

Popular festivals in Barcelona maintain a sense of community; usually occurring on the streets and other public spaces. Batucadas participate in these local cultural practices. There is a particularly strong presence of Brazilian music elements – samba, samba-reggae, samba schools – that blend with the local culture and neighborhood festivals.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that Brazilian and Spanish groups are transforming the music consumption practices that characterized them previously. Some Brazilians are “Spanishizing,” appropriating the local festivals (*Sant Joan, La Mercè*); while some Spaniards are “Brazilianizing” (with samba-reggae and batucadas). This blending of rhythms creates new sound spaces and new ways of experiencing Brazilian music abroad, as it is illustrated in the poster below.



FIGURE 10
Photograph: *Festa La Mercè's* poster⁶.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As Hannerz (1996, 6) indicates, the term transnational is “more humble, and often a more adequate label for phenomena that can be of quite variable scale and distribution” than the term global, which sounds too all-inclusive and decontextualized.

In the late 1990s, this author already reflected on transnational cultural flows, and how people, products, and materials could challenge the traditional concepts of space and time. Brazilian immigrants are inserted in this context of searching for alternative destinations, and new manners of experiencing music and dance.

6. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3eeuCsd>

Moreover, Brazilian singers and musicians began to spread their musical production in European international festivals from the 1990s, mainly in France, Spain, Portugal, and Germany.

When samba-reggae and batucada are mentioned, the international concert tours and the increase in the recording industry favored the Brazilian music internationalization at a certain point⁷.

The concert tours were largely responsible for disclosing Brazilian music in Barcelona, along with promoting a musical dialogue with other genres, such as jazz, rock, Latin, and Caribbean music.

I have noticed that Brazilian immigrants in Barcelona who participate in festivals in public (Carnival, Brazilian Day) or private (bars and restaurants) places are interested in the Brazilian culture dispersion. Most of my interviewees had already had some contact with Brazilian cultural elements (capoeira, music, dance, Afro-Brazilian religion) before residing abroad.

Unfortunately, I could not find additional data on Brazilian immigrants to complement my observations. Even so, interviews and informal conversations with my interlocutors show three migration flows of Brazilians to Barcelona.

In the late 1980s, in the 1990s, and as of 2005, immigrants arrived looking for work and quality of life, including musicians, artists, capoeira dance fighters, handypersons, house cleaners, hairdressers, lawyers, and so forth. They were seeking legal status to have a regular income. Hence, they created different types of network. When migrating, you have to connect yourself with the destination country and feel welcomed.

Thus, this approach made me wonder: how do samba and Brazilians connected with their music in Barcelona circulate around the city creating sociable spaces and cooperation between Brazilians and non-Brazilians?

Fernando Ruiz Morales (2014, 317), when analyzing the flamenco heritage in Belgium, says that:

Cualquier expresión musical “local” (asociada a un grupo o territorio específicos que son referentes inexcusables de tal música) está allí donde hay aficionados, artistas, eventos, público y demás usuarios. Y ello ocurre en lugares del mundo donde los emigrantes la han llevado o donde personas en principio ajenas a esta cultura local, que han conocido por diversos canales, han decidido sumarse.

7. It is important to think about the recording industry to understand how music transnationalization occurs and how the culture industry operates in this process. More information about this subject may be found in Canclini (1990) and Ortiz (1989).

The author continues the reflection:

El flamenco constituye un código que otorga un marco de referencia para los artistas que intervienen en él. Pero esto no implica que compartan significados ni pautas de acción. Los artistas allí residentes se posicionan de diferente manera ante ese código, y articulan diversidad de trayectorias y respuestas. Sus posicionamientos no derivan solo de las estrategias individuales, sino que están mediatizados por factores estructurales.

Thereby, Brazilian musicians, samba and batucada players develop dialogues, sociable places, new sound spaces and new ways of experiencing Brazilian music abroad (dance classes, rehearsals, carnival, Brazilian Day, workshops, festivals, informal meetings). In other words, these are networks that are built and encourage affection and commitment among people. The transnationalization of samba, samba-reggae, and batucada, coupled with other Brazilian culture practices, emerge in the 1990s, when Brazilian immigrants began to arrive in the country. Moreover, for these rhythms to spread, they also contributed to the dispersion of forró, capoeira, maracatu, frevo, and Afro-Brazilian religions in Europe.

This music dispersion occurs due to the existence of a complex social connectedness that have been established over the years between Brazilians and non-Brazilians. Therefore, the dispersion of these practices is associated with a tight market and a culture industry in which Brazilians participate in a competitive way, as well as with an intense system of affections, sociability, and lifestyles.

According to Born (2011), music can be traversed by wider social identity formations, from the most concrete and intimate to the most abstract of collectivities, and it may reproduce or generate extant identity formations, purely fantasized identifications or emergent identity formations.

TRANSLATION

Maria Alice Sabino



FIGURE 11
Photograph:
Author's personal
collection.


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