6. Persistence of common traits in Afro-Brazilian musical traditions despite the diversity of social-cultural contexts

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Abstract

Due to the presence of several thousand of slaves on Brazilian territory and some "favorable" conditions, African culture has spread there in the form of, among others, a lot of music and dance traditions.

Like it happened in some other America's territories, the expression of African culture was formerly prohibited, secondly often syncretized and finally more or less admitted as a component of Brazil's culture. This multi-secular process has produced a big number of Brazilian music and dance expressions, in which the African cultural influence varies widely. Examining more accurately several of these traditions leads to conclude that, despite the existence of core shared characteristics, these African-influenced traditions exist in very different socio-cultural contexts.

From the point of view of a non-specialist public, their respective musical expressions may be considered as very different. However, a paradigmatic analysis, as we do in this paper, allows discovering that they reveal common traits in musical organization. Moreover, these characteristics seem to persist in their ontogeny, especially in the so-called *batuque*. Comparative studies show that these common traits already take part of some Central and West-African music and dance traditions, and are also found in a lot, perhaps all, Afro-Diasporic music and dance expressions.

Afro-Brazilian[1] music variety is a good entry point to question how Afro-centric permanent traits maintain in very different musical organizations, and that, despite specific social-cultural contexts.

Keywords: Brazil, music, dance, diversity, similarities, musicology

Introduction

I initially declined the proposal to participate to this book because of my own academic trajectory concerning Afro-Brazilian music. I am neither a sociologist, nor an anthropologist. I study a "limited" corpus[2] of music from musicological (especially analytical) and cognitive perspectives. Nevertheless, it appeared that such alternate viewpoints could be of interest for this book, in view of the potential generalizability of the results presented here. One of the arguments coined against my participation was the existence of major works on that topic. Among them, I want to pay tribute to the wider and consistent work about Afro-Brazilian music and dance produced by Peter Fryer in 2000.

From a French point of view (which is probably similar in some other European countries), the positive words and pictures generally associated with Brazil are "carnival", "fest", "music" and "tropical paradise" (De Seguin, 2000, p. 92)[3]. Although the richness of Brazil seems infinite in many aspects, music stays a central feature in the representations conveyed by this huge country to Europa[4]. But these representations, although sometimes exaggerated in several aspects, are nonetheless in phase with a reality: music is a very important part of the Brazilians' life. Music is everywhere, in many forms: on radio, on television, in and out of the shops, in and out of the houses, in a lot of urban and country places, etc. The relationship between Brazilian people and music is far different than that we live in Europa. For instance, when they come to play on the

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1   In this paper, the term "Afro-Brazilian" is used as a generic term in order to focus on traditions acted by communities which, generally, claim African roots. There is arbitrarily no discussion about categories such as "Afro-Brazilian" or "Afro-descendent" which have identity, social and political dimensions which go far beyond the scope of this work.

2   In comparison with a -classic- ethnographical perspective which focuses on few communities in order to make very deep studies, my own corpus could be considered as wide.

3   Translation mine.

4   In this paper, the term "Europa" refers primarily to countries which have the main historical links with Brazil (*e.g.* Portugal, Spain, France and Netherlands).

old continent, many Brazilian musicians don't understand why the public stays sit in front of them. Apart from Western Classical music (which also adopts European social codes in Brazil), dance is almost always linked to music.

Due to the presence of several thousand of slaves on Brazilian territory and some endemic conditions, African culture has spread there in the form of a lot of music and dance traditions (for example, among the most known: *samba, capoeira, côco, maracatu de baque virado*). Like it happened in some other America's territories, the expression of African culture, which was central in the survival process of these communities, was initially prohibited, then often syncretized and finally more or less admitted as a component of Brazil's culture. This multi-secular process has produced a very high number of Brazilian music and dance expressions, most of them as a cultural resistance against the oppressor, in which the African cultural influence varies widely. All these traditions, like any real tradition, are totally dynamic and adapted themselves to a lot of prejudges, persecutions, conflicts and big changes occurred in the Brazilian society. This process allowed the traditions to stay alive, even in very hard times of their existence.

From the point of view of a non-specialist public, the musical expressions of Afro-Brazilian music and dance traditions may be considered as very different. However, through careful research, it is possible to identify some Afro-Diasporic music, dances and traditions similarities. As a consequence, we can pursue answers for the following questions: are those similarities only contingent? Or could they be the expression of real common traits, even core shared characteristics? In the positive, are such characteristics claimed by concerned communities? Which are the consequences on comprehension of Afro-Diasporic music (and dance) traditions in America?

I put forth the main hypothesis that, despite specific social-cultural contexts, a persistence of common traits can be "observed" in almost all Afro-Brazilian musical traditions. On a social-cultural side, it is coined that the identity claimed by communities is not necessarily connected with the reality of the ontogenetics of their musical practices.

In order to bring some reality to this statement, a part of the diversity of Afro-Brazilian musical traditions will be exemplified. Brazil is a so huge country that, on a methodological side, it appears difficult to choose the best granularity. The corpus stays very large and hard to delimitate, but a typology will probably help to better understand some important force lines.

Brazilian traditions are living ones, in a constant dialog between old customs, practices and their day-to-day transformations. This dialog is built from agreements and fights inside and between communities, based at the same time, on collective and individual memory, and on the constant desire to maintain and renew social codes. Each community has its own identity but share values with the other communities of the same tradition, bounding dynamic limits of what is considered as taking part of the tradition, and what is not.

The paper starts with a short overview of some main features and key concepts of the Brazilian musical and dance traditions. Next, some major modalities of cultural expression are exemplified. In a third part of the paper, some characteristic features of Afro-Brazilian music are described on a more musicological plan. The last part discusses the relationship between real musical organization and claimed identity.

1. Some historical and anthropological perspectives

a. Colonization, miscegenation and cultural survival

Before the Portuguese, South-America was already discovered by very ancient communities, like Basque fishermen during the Middle-Age or Vikings (lead by Leif Erikson) 1000 years ago, perhaps even sooner by Phoenicians, 2000 years ago. But the official discovering was attributed to "European" navigators, event which triggered the colonization and the importation of millions of African slaves. Despite the importance of the event, there are few Brazilian documents linked to slavery, because they were destroyed in 1890 by order of the Brazilian government, two years before the official abolition. But the oral memory of the Brazilian people has kept a lot of deep traces of the former practices.

On a musical plan, the "myth of the three races"[5] concerning the cultural foundation of Brazil (Freyre, [1933] 1998) is fought by all the proofs coming from the real world. Indeed, Amerindian communities and their specific cultural characteristics also influenced part of the Brazilian music, but in a very low percentage, in comparison with European and black slaves' communities. Other musical influences exist, in particular due to the Moslem occupation of Portugal (12th and 13th centuries) which let several cultural traces still present in Brazil. For example, the triangle (musical instrument) and the tradition of *desafio* (sing challenge) would have Arab origins (Fryer, 2000; Lopes, 2006).

In all the America, it is known that the kind of religion of the settlers influenced a lot the miscegenation mechanism, which has been "easier" in Brazil than in other countries. Music and dance hybridization has also benefited of that situation, allowing the creation of a huge "bio-diversity" in its music and dance constellation.

b. Movimento negro

The *movimento negro* (black movement) started, clandestinely, during the slavery period, as a matter of resistance against their white masters. One of the main actors was Zumbi dos Palmares (leader of the Quilombo dos Palmares[6]). Quilombos and guerrilla were two important ways to rebel against slavery, which was officially abolished in 1888, letting the former slaves fight against new issues: biases and social inequality. Some journals dedicated to positively promoting black life moved to a way of denouncing pains dues to racial prejudgments, leading to the creation of the Frente Negra Brasileira (Black Brazilian Front) in 1931, transformed into a political party, disappeared at the Estado Novo setting. After this period, several groups of resistance started to grow, partially influenced by political movements coming from Africa and USA and their central figures (Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela…). During the 70's and 80's was created the Movimento Negro Unificado (Unified Black Movement).

The fight has also been leaded on a legal side. After the official abolishment of slavery, black people started to live in ghettos and communities to protect themselves, some of them fighting

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5   Amerindian, African and Portuguese.
6   A *quilombo* (in *kimbundu* language: "warriors camp") is a community of freed slaves or refugees.

for, among others, equality and a better social inclusion (education, employment). Officially, the law of 1951 prohibited any kind of racial discrimination, but the punishments were not applied. 100 years after the abolishment, the Caó Law (1989) has been a major breakthrough. It defined punishment for crimes resulting from discrimination or prejudice based on race, color, ethnicity, religion or national origin. Other legal dispositives were set up, but the results were far under the expectations. In 1995, the Zumbi protest in Brasilia only counted 30 thousand marchers (1 % of Brasilia population, 0,015 % of 200 million total Brazil population). The major achievement of all these laws is a kind of growing awareness about the real situation, showing that Brazilian racial democracy is only a still living myth. On an education side, quotas were officially set up in public universities and public contests, but other candidates claimed the unconstitutionality of the law, a polemic still living. Today, black people in Brazil are still victims of several forms of racism, although the country has a big cultural and ethnical diversity.

c. Hybridity & identity

The complexity of the hybridization mechanism in relation to identity can be illustrated by three very different examples:

The first one refers to a hypothetical African purity, an idea which rose with the Movimento Negro Unificado in the 70's. At this time, several bands were created to give a musical dimension to this political movement. Among them, some are called *bloco afros* (afro-groups) and play a music heavily influenced by the *samba*, the *candomblé*, the Jamaican *reggae* and the Dominican *merengue*. On its side, the communities' discourse is focused on African purity, so much that a lot of people wear T-shirts with the inscription "100% negro" (100% black), an idea which "still persists, not only in terreiros (Motta, 2003), but also in nations of maracatu and discourses of some authorities and intellectuals" (Koslinsky, 2011, p. 54). This example is interesting because it can be seen as a kind of contradiction. On one hand, a lot of historical evidences show that Africa is not homogenous on a cultural plan and that the *nações africanas* ("black nations") on the Brazil ground were composed by people coming from different ethnical groups. On the other hand, the musical hybridity was made by exploring and valorizing the common aspects (and so, the compatibility) of some African-based music styles. Here, the homogeneity of the musical material tends to contradict the impossibility of any African purity.

The second one shows how this hybridization mechanism, on a long period of time, makes the fusion of very different cultural sources. For example, in the tradition called *carimbó* (or *curimbó*): this name comes from the Tupi language (indigenous) word *korimbó* ("stick that produces sound") designating the principal instrument, a long drum with a head very similar to Kongolese *ngoma*. Mainly located in the state of Pará (North of Brazil), this dance could have been born in the 18th century (in Africa or in Brazil), in order to help slaves to depart from their nostalgic mood. Later, European (mostly Spanish) and indigenous influences were incorporated. The dance movements would have been inherited from those of animals, especially the turkey.

The third one shows how this mechanism can express itself in the creativity of emerging bands. It is here illustrated by a performance of the band called General Frank (Recife-Pernambuco)

which played in 1998 during the festival "Pernambuco em Concerto"[7], an event promoting all forms of local culture (new artists as well as old communities' bands). In the title "A la ursa quer dinheiro", one can see many different influences: the title itself (and the chorus of the song) comes from a typical kind of *brincadeira* (game, joke) in Pernambuco: children[8] with bear masks/costumes play music and dance in the street, asking for money to everyone crossed. Following the FUNDAJ, the tradition could come from the gipsies of the Middle-Age in Europa. The song was played in the 90's. The band was organized as a rock band (revealing an urban root), but was completed by a *berimbau* (musical arc) and *alfaias* (bass drums from *maracatu de baque virado*). The last ones make a strong link with the Manguebeat musical and social movement leaded by the artist Chico Science. The song is essentially sung in rap mode. During the musical performance, *capoeira* dancers were fighting on the stage. The main rhythm pertains (between others) to *capoeira* and *coco* traditions, this last reference being emphasized by the musicians themselves. Finally, the keyboard plays with the sound and the style of a *sanfona*, a typical accordion (with piano keys) of the North-East region which plays in many music styles, and principally *forró*, during the balls. The musicians simply defined themselves as *pernambucanos* (people from the state of Pernambuco).

d. Modalities of expression

In Brazil, because of the hybridization process, music with traces of African origins is almost everywhere, every time. Nevertheless, it remains easy to find artistic forms without any trace of African culture during, for example, events like (European) classical concerts or specific (imported) kinds of European fests[9]. Moreover, it must be kept in mind that this country is still deeply racist with a big social disparity, which helps to maintain some borders between, especially, upper class (mainly white people) and lower class (mainly black people) cultures.

Walking in a Brazilian city can appear as particularly noisy for European people: music is electronically broadcasted in and out of the shops, in and out of the houses, and some artists (professional or not) use plazas and strategic locations to rehearse or earn money. Music is a very important aspect of the Brazilian culture. The majority of people did not officially study music but almost everyone is able to sing (with complete lyrics) all the songs of the popular repertoire (MPB), a feature probably linked with the -mainly- oral aspect of the Brazilian culture. Nevertheless, beyond this ubiquity of the music presence, some kinds of specific expressions can be categorized in function of associated social events.

So, after the music of everyday life already depicted, one can distinct several important moments in the Brazilian life: worships, carnival, *Natal* (Christmas), *festa junina* (St John the Baptist fests), balls, concert and festivals… Other specific moments are linked to religion (*e.g.* Iemanjá fest) or specific institutions (*e.g.* military music). Another kind of modality is the

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7   CD « Pernambuco em concerto », 1998, África Produções.
8   In Recife also exists a contest among adult *ursos* (groups organized around the figure of the bear).
9   *e.g.* the OktoberFest (beer festival) in Blumenau (state of Santa Catarina).

human organization, which can be separated in categories: communities, bands and orquestras, alone artists. Sometimes, a band is attached to a given community.

Here is an example to illustrate these typologies: the famous artist Carlinhos Brown was the leader of several *bloco-afros* (African blocks) located in the community of the Candeal neighborhood of the city of Salvador da Bahia (state of Bahia). The band Timbalada is one of them: it plays in the streets, on stage, on *trios elétricos*[10], mainly (but not only) during carnival period.

e. World spreading

The spreading of Brazilian music must be considered by taking into account the duration criteria. During all the modern Brazil history (about 500 years), several Brazilian music styles were exported for only a relatively short period of time. For example, as well as the Brazilian *tango*, the *maxixe* travelled to Europe and the United States in the early years of the 20th century. More recently, the *lambada* emerged in Brazil and spread in Europa for only a very short period of time.

But some music styles gained popularity for a long period of time. With no doubt, *samba* (as a generic word) stays the most famous music style known in the world and linked to Brazil. Among all its declensions, *samba batucada* (*samba* played with a percussion band) seems to have the maximum spreading in "Western" territories, including Asian countries like Japan or more recently China. In terms of long duration, some other traditions, like capoeira, are now well known in many parts of the World.

Although it may hurt some people attached to a kind of genetic "purity" (which goes against the essential principle of tradition), it can be considered that all these foreign forms of Afro-Brazilian music take part to its history and have their places in its genealogy. Nevertheless, (ethno)musicology has created the required tools to make consistent differences between all of these forms.

2. Aspects of the socio-cultural contexts diversity of Afro-Brazilian music and dance

Fryer (2000, p. 8-9) recalls that Roberts (1973) depicted African-influenced Brazilian cultural elements "in which European are absent or negligible" as "neo-African", considering that, from a certain point of view, (West-)Africa colonized Brazil. This concept of "neo-Africanity" is a very interesting perspective in terms of identity, which was formerly hidden and more recently proudly displayed by the communities' members.

The huge number of traditions is very difficult to evaluate. In the only small state of Pernambuco (98000 km2, an area similar to Portugal), more than 15 principal music and dance traditions can be found, without considering their respective declensions. But Brazil is about

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10 The carnival of Salvador da Bahia gave rise, until 1950s, to a specific -and mixed- type of artistic expression: big trucks called *trios elétricos* have a sonorized stage on top of them and ride down the streets of the city.

100 times this area, with 8.5 million of km^2. In a multimedia exhibition about Brazilian music I designed in 2005, no less than 95 essential music styles and dances were presented. I put forth the hypothesis that the real number could be far higher.

In the next part of this work are presented some examples of this diversity. In order to better understand the "big picture" of Afro-Brazilian culture, a kind of typology structures the following paragraphs. Other scholars already designed such similar typologies[11] (*e.g.* Fryer, 2000 or Tinhorão, 2006) but the one presented here reflects a specific kind of categorization which was not chosen for its consistency, but for its ability to highlight important traits of Afro-Brazilian music and dance performances. In the absolute, it is not better than the others, but in all the cases, it cannot give an accurate image of the complexity of each tradition. Beyond these arbitrary categories, it must be kept in mind that all Afro-Brazilian traditions are more or less hybrid forms, integrating influences from some West-African music, Western music, Amerindian music and more.

a. Religious dimension

Officially, Brazil has been a laic country from 1891. But religion is very important for all Brazilian people. Although Catholicism is the official Brazilian religion, many cults coexists and syncretize each other. Among them, people officially declaring to be concerned by Afro-Brazilian religions are about 0.5 % of the total population[12].

The contexts of Afro-Brazilian religious music performance can be separated into two categories (of course with some porosity). In the first one, the ritual is performed in a special, liturgical, place (*e.g. terreiros*). In this way, Afro-Brazilian "religious" music has grown in almost all places of the country, taking different names and specific declensions, like *candomblé*, *umbanda*, *xambá*, *tambor de crioula*, *tambor de mina*…

In the second one, the religious dimension is embedded, sometimes very discretely, in a complex ensemble. A lot of (not only Afro-Brazilian) traditions are concerned: for example, the groups of *afoxé* (Bahia) born in the 1920's define themselves as "street candomblé" and are categorized as "semi-religious" (Fryer, 2000, p. 24). In Pernambuco, two -very different- kinds of *maracatu* maintain a strong link with the religion: *maracatu de baque virado* is rooted in the cult of *orixás*. *Maracatu de baque solto* is said to be very influenced by Amerindian culture and maintain rituals of alcohol and sex abstinence during the carnival period.

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11 Fryer (2000, p. 9-10) distinguishes what could be quickly called « religious music », « capoeira », « work songs and venders' street cries », « dramatic dances » and « batuque / samba ». Although it is relevant on a social-cultural aspect, it is less on a musical side if it is coined that almost all of these musical expression include a form of *batuque*. Moreover, this typology is based on a "neo-African" perspective which implies a methodological issue, by inducing the risk of forgetting other cultural influences (like, for example, of Amerindians). On its own, Tinhorão (2006) adopts a chronological and evolutionist perspective which implicitly considers a genealogical perspective in form of a tree. A rhizome could be a better model.

12 Source: IBGE (2010) http://g1.globo.com/brasil/noticia/2012/06/numero-de-evangelicos-aumenta-61 -em-10-anos-aponta-ibge.html.

Figure 1. Ogum dance in a *candomblé* ceremony.[13]

b. Concepts of *batuque* and *batucada*

For Fryer (2000), the Portuguese term *batuque* is largely polysemous. Sometimes, it designates special kinds of worship (*e.g.* in Pará, Amazonas or Rio Grande do Sul) or practice (*e.g.* in *capoeira*). Two other meanings are of special interest for now. The term *batuque* is used to identify "a secular dance which came to Brazil from the Kongo-Angola culture area (*e.g.* in São Paulo, with the name *batuque de umbigada*). On its side, the Portuguese word *batuque* was originally a generic term for "any kind of black dance" (Fryer, 2000, p. 95), following one of the definitions collected by Andrade (1989), considering the *batuque* as "the general name of African dances" which has the more ancient definitions, in Brazil, since the 17ᵗʰ century and sooner in Portugal, where it was already prohibited.

Pereira da Costa (in De Andrade, 1989) describes several kinds of *batuque* which have in common the dance organization in a circle; this circle is composed by musicians, dancers and public members. In the Kongolese version, two or three couples (women and men) dance in the center of the circle, with little movements of feet, head and arms, and hips sway. On the Luanda version, only a mixt couple of dancers produces several dance steps, gives an *umbigada* (belly bump) to a chosen member of the circle, who replaces him/her in the center of the circle. On an anthropological point of view, the *umbigada* can be considered as a fertility dance movement. For Carneiro (1961) quoted by Tinhorão (1988), the *umbigada* ritual could be a very important -common- mark which allows to categorize music and dance traditions coming from the *batuque*.

These larger and generic definitions of the *batuque* are focused on the dance aspects. Lopes (1992:26-27) recalls that Cascudo (1980, p. 114) uses the definition of *batuque* (coined by Macedo Soares) as a "dance with tap-dancing and hand-clapping, on songs only carried by drums" when played by black people. When it is played by "more clean people"[14], "the dance uses always

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13 Source : https://snappygoat.com/l/f6243980dcb7b9e3a2b97f9c7b7f4f5625eb1aa5/Ogum.JPG
14 Translation mine. The racist posture of Soares is already noted by Lopes (1992).

viola and pandeiro"[15]. This distinction reinforces that the *batuque* is a very common form of black people expression in the 19th century composed by sing, dance and percussion, which has produced many legacies in Afro-Brazilian music.

Today, on a generic trend, *batuque* seems to be more associated with the musical part of the performance. The performers which play *batuque* are called *batuqueiros*, which is a kind of synonym of Afro-Brazilian percussionists, whatever their skin color.

The term *Batucada*, nowadays a well-known word around the world (at least, Western), comes from *batuque* + *ada* (collective form); it may literally means "all that makes *batuque*". So, all music traditions cored with Afro-Brazilian style percussions can be called *batucada*. The term designates at the same time the action, the group, the performance itself, etc. But it is important to keep in mind that in Brazil, percussion-only forms of Afro-Brazilian music are very rare. Generally, the performance also includes sing and dance. The opposite case is observable in a lot of foreign countries where the major part of groups of *batucada*, also called *batucadas,* only play Brazilian-inspired percussion.
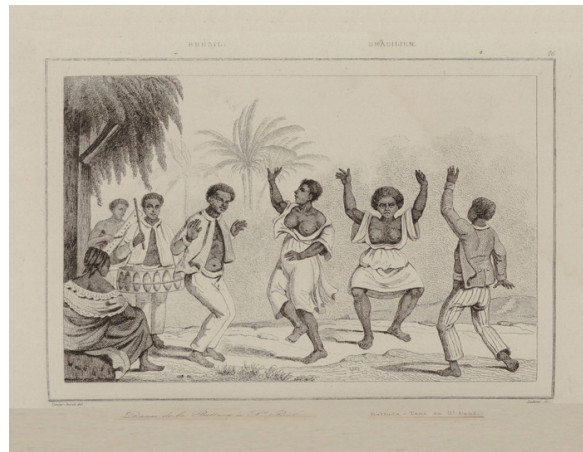

Figure 2. "Battuca dance in São Paulo" (Van der Burch, 1838).

Forms of *samba* and *coco*

Officially, in Brazilian Portuguese, the verb *sambar* means *dançar samba* (to dance samba). In the reality of the communities which use this notion, *sambar* seems to have a wider meaning like "to dance with an Afro-Brazilian style". In this paragraph, *samba* and *coco* are associated because of their strong musical similarities. *Lundu* and *maxixe* are hybrid musical expressions born in the 19th century. By mixing African *batuque* with European influences, they are the roots of the *samba* of Rio de Janeiro. Before the 1930's, this last one was, musically, very close to many forms of *coco* that we can hear today. Although it is the Brazilian music most documented by historical researches, it is not so easy to define *samba* from a musicological perspective. Samba is a polysemous term. The birth of *samba* is linked to the generic process of hybridization which

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15 Translation mine. Viola: violín; Pandeiro: small frame drum with cymbals. Both instruments were imported from Portugal.

led to the arousal of many Afro-Brazilian music and dance traditions: during the 18th century, the *batuques*[16] progressively mixed with European influences (dance forms, melodic forms, instruments…). Thus, now, there are a lot of forms of *samba*. The *Dicionário Musical Brasileiro* (De Andrade, 1989) already refers more than fifteen forms, a number today easily extendable to forty. But foreign people generally make instant links between *samba* and Rio de Janeiro. Despite the known diversity, it is still relevant, because the *samba carioca*[17] has acquired the major visibility. This paper is not the place to speak deeply about samba, the most documented Brazilian cultural complex in the literature.

The tradition of *coco* (or *côco*) takes its roots in Northern Brazil and has mainly spread in *Nordeste* (Northeast). Like many traditions, *coco* has its own creation myth, which can be heard and read here and there. For example, it is said to have African and Amerindian influences: rhythm for the first one, dance for the second one. Such a dichotomy has a great poetic and mythic value, but is far more difficult to be verified in the performance analysis. On this plan, lyrics in Portuguese and the very important presence of *zapateado* (stomping) could reveal a big Portuguese influence. It is difficult to know how and where the coco was really born, imported by an Angolan slave or created in Brazil. In this last hypothesis, it could have emerged as a kind of work song from the combined work of Amerindian and African slaves in the coconut plantations in various locations of the country. One of the first data mentioning of *coco* is dated from the second part of the 17th century[18].

The name *coco* is the word for the coconut fruit in Portuguese, which in Northeastern Brazilian slang, denotes the "head", referring to the oral aspect of the tradition, especially the improvised melodies and simple song lyrics in many forms of the tradition. A lot of different variations are known, which take various names, like *coco de usina* (firm), *coco de roda* (round coco), *coco de embolada* (improvised), *coco de praia* (beach), *coco do sertão* (hinterland), *coco de umbigada*[19] (navel). Sometimes, it includes the name of a local important instrument, like *coco de ganzá* (shaker) or *coco de zambê* (drum)[20]. Other names like *pagode*[21] can refer to a kind of *coco*. Moreover, in an identity, social and artistic process, each group creates its own version, which leads to a high number of declensions.

Coco is generally performed at traditional parties and during the Carnival period, mainly during popular fests of the littoral and the Sertão (desert zones). But it also has religious aspects, mainly rooted in the catholic tradition and in the *jurema sagrada*, a syncretism between Amerindian cults, Catholicism and Brazilian black religions (Ayala & Ayala, 2000). It is generally

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16 Groups playing *batuque*.
17 *Samba* from the town of Rio de Janeiro.
18 Source: Dicionário Cravo Albin, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco.
19 *Umbigada* is a term used in various traditions where the dancers touch their navels in a kind of fertility dance.
20 Also called *Zambê de pau furado*, played with specific drums called *pau furado* (olive-form pierced piece of wood similar to a big *conga* drum) and played horizontally like an African *ngoma*.
21 In the state of Rio de Janeiro, *pagode* is a short for *samba-pagode*, a music style very different (from a naïve perspective) from *coco* forms.

constituted by song, dance and percussive music, but can be played with other instruments, like the *sanfona* (accordion with piano keyboard). On a musical side, *coco* has a cyclic structure with a polyrhythmic structure. The singing adopts a call and response form, very common in West Africa. Some forms of *coco* are associated with the term *embolada* (entangling) referring to a particular style of singing.

Among the instruments of *coco* are the *tamancos* (wooden clogs). The *tamancos* are generally worn by performers and stroke to the floor with a lot of rhythmic combinations, which constitute the *zapateado* (stomping), a very distinctive characteristic of this music. It is said that the *zapateado* would have been used to tamp the mud floor of the houses by organizing fests with all the neighbors dancing the *coco*. The dance is often performed in pars, lines or circles.

Figure 3. *samba de coco* (group Raízes de Arcoverde).[22]

Finally, after having very quickly presented *samba* and *coco*, it is noticeable that, although it could be easy to distinguish them on a very general plan (including social contexts of performance), it is far more difficult to maintain this distinction when considering music and dance aspects.

Capoeira, maculêlê and *bate-pau*

Among all the endemic[23] Afro-Brazilian musical traditions, Capoeira is probably the most famous one in the World. Its real origins are always discussed: imported by the African slaves or designed on the Brazilian floor by a process of hybridization? In both hypotheses, there was

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22 Source : https://revistarelevo.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/022.jpg

23   If this term may have any sense in that case.

a cruel reality in relation with the slaves: even in numerical superiority, without weapons, the law against them, the discrepancy between slaves of rival ethnic groups and the complete lack of knowing about the country, discouraged them to rebel. Thus, capoeira was a way of cultural and physical resistance to their oppressors. Of course, in order to prevent hurting the slaves (and so, their ability to work) every kind of struggle was prohibited to them. So, capoeira emerged as a martial art disguised as dance. Following Porto Lussac (2013), the only Amerindian contribution to *capoeira* would have been its own name, which could come from the *tupi* language (*capoeira* = what/who doesn't exist anymore).

Capoeira is "played" in a round, two dancers at the same time. The fight/dance is not choreographed, but a lot of codes exist in terms of entry, movements… The main movement is the *ginga* (swing), a kind of dance step which prepares the assaults. The capoeira was prohibited in 1890, tolerated in 1932 and officialized in 1937. Today, three main styles of capoeira exist: *capoeira de Angola* (more ancient), *capoeira regional* and *capoeira contemporânea* (mixing both the first ones). The music of *capoeira* is generally played with instruments coming, directly or indirectly, from Africa cultures: *berimbau* (musical arc), *caxixi* (rattan shaker), *atabaque* (long drum), *agogô* (two-tones iron bell) and *reco reco* (bamboo rattle). The origin of the *pandeiro* (tambourine with small cymbals) is more obscure, because such instrument was played in many locations of the world since, at least, Antiquity. Before coming to Brazil, it could have been imported in Portugal during its Moslem occupation.

Maculêlê pertains as well to the capoeira cultural world. It is also called *dança de porrete* (dance of truncheons) because the main particularity of this dance is the usage, by each dancer, of a pair of rudimentary weapons (wood sticks, big machetes or even fire torches) stricken against to those of its opponent. It is today performed in a spectacular way, but takes an important role in *capoeira* groups, where it is also used during meetings, "baptisms" and graduations. The dance is made of rehearsed choreographies which have some similarities with *frevo* dance (Recife – Pernambuco), but also *moçambique* (São Paulo), *cana-verde* (Rio de Janeiro), *bate-pau* (Mato Grosso) or *tudundun* (Pará). Origins of *maculêlê* are somewhat obscure. It could have African and Amerindian roots, even the first ones are easier to identify. In circumstances close to those of capoeira birth, it is said that *maculêlê* could have emerged from the need of the slaves in sugar cane plantations to fight (really or virtually) against the conditions of slavery and captivity. Initially, the sticks would have been wood pieces met by chance or pieces of sugar cane. Lyrics, hard slaves' conditions, were in dialects not understandable by the masters. Music is made with the same instruments than *capoeira* but with a higher speed of play.

From a musicological perspective, despite the specificity of the *instrumentarium*, what is played in both the cases could be called a *batuque*.

Figure 4. *Maculêlê* .[24]

C. Crowning of Kongo Kings

One of the most typical Afro-Brazilian kinds of social and artistic expression is particularly interesting because, although many forms of *samba* have deep African roots, they don't show them as ostensibly as in those organized around the crowning of Kongo Kings. Moreover, the same can be said considering their relationship to religion. At last, it is noticeable that some aspects of their music encouraged some middle-class people to play this music in groups decoupled of the Afro-Brazilian traditions, a relatively rare phenomenon in Brazil.

Several very old Afro-Brazilian traditions come from a process of cultural resistance, formalized as a syncretism of Catholic tradition with -mainly Bantu- black slaves' beliefs. Despite many variations, in *congado/congada* and *maracatu nação*, each group is more or less organized as a royal court inherited from ancient rites of Crowning of Kongo Kings; these rites are attested in several parts of the country, since the beginning of colonization and probably for the first time, in 1502 in Portugal (Tinhorão, 2006). King and Queen were initially politics leaders, intercessors between the power of Colonial State and African or Afro-descendant slaves. Music production is generally organized as a *batuque*.

Congado/congada

For Lucas

> The rituals of the Reinado de Nossa Senhora do Rosário (the Reign of Our Lady of the Rosary) […] are the most representative expression of the religiousness and, more generally, of Afro-Brazilian culture in the state of Minas Gerais[25]. […] they assume local aspects, from region to region. Among them are the Kongo, Catopé, Marujos, Mozambique, Candombé and Caboclos. These groups, called *guardas* or *ternos*, are found either as independent units or as constituent parts of brotherhoods of the Rosary. Their

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24   Source : https://www.anf.org.br/os-herois-do-cotidiano/
25   Minas Gerais is located northwest from Rio de Janeiro.

participants *-congadeiros-* are usually black or black descendants who live in the poor outskirts of towns and cities in Minas Gerais, though today many white people also take part, either sharing the same devotion or the same social condition. (Lucas, 2002, p. 115) [26]

The *congado* traditions are rooted on the creation myth, "according to which an image of Our Lady of the Rosary appeared in the sea at the time of slavery, and was finally rescued by the blacks" (Lucas, 2002, p. 117), while "the white people tried unsuccessfully to rescue the image with their prayers, litanies and music" (*ibid.*). On a performance side, the royal court is composed by a queen (Our Lady of Rosary), a king, some devotional saints and African royalties. The music is mostly made of song and percussion. The drums look like Western big Renaissance drums but are described as "very old and similar to African instruments, both in function and construction" (Lucas, 2002, p.126). A very peculiar aspect of the musical tradition is operated when two groups cross: they totally avoid synchronizing each other. Each group challenges its own faith bykeeping its own rhythm stable and uninfluenced by that of the other group (Lucas *et al.*, 2012).

Figure 5. The Congo group belonging to the Arturos community.[27]

Maracatu nação

Historically, the *maracatu nação*[28] has probably the same kind of roots than many forms of *congado*, but it is specifically linked to a territory (initially, the state of Pernambuco). Then, on a social side, it shares some common points with them (*e.g.* the importance of Our Lady of Rosary) and developed peculiar characteristics.

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26 Afro-Brazilian *candombé* is different from others kinds of *candombé* which can be found in Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay. But all could have similar origins, at least African roots.

27 Source: https://www.anf.org.br/os-herois-do-cotidiano/

28 Source: Glaura Lucas. https://dro.dur.ac.uk/9257/1/9257.pdf

Maracatu nação maintains strong links with religiosity of *candomblé* or *xangô* (often called *jurema* and *umbanda* in Pernambuco) actuated in *terreiros* (hidden worship places). It is said that the tradition allowed slaves to maintain their African cults during the slavery period. The official abolition of slavery in Brazil led the tradition to take part to carnivals of Recife. During the first part of the 20th century, a process of decadence drove the tradition to almost disappear. During the 1990 decade, several groups and artists, contributed to a real revival of the tradition, which progressively acquired a visibility out of Brazil.

On a performative side, the procession of a *maracatu nação* consists of the characters of the Royal Court, who sing and dance followed by a group of *batuqueiros* (percussionists) handling their music instruments. The Royal Court is composed of a king, a queen, a prince, a princess, etc. We also find figures of "slaves". The *damas de paço* dancers have a special role, because they hold *calungas* (sacred dolls) often dressed like them. The lyrics of the *loas* (songs) generally talk about the *maracatu* itself (historic/specific moments of the community, African origins, religion, and topics sometimes more politically oriented).

In Recife and Olinda towns, one can encounter different music (and dance) groups playing on percussions a complex of entangled rhythms called *maracatu de baque virado*[29]. The older ones are generally rooted in a religious meaning; they called themselves *maracatu nação*[30] in reference to the nations of slaves. They call the other ones *grupos percussivos* (percussive groups often composed by white middle-class Brazilian people), a term which stresses the music organization, excluding dance and religious aspects. Today, inside the tradition of *maracatu nação*, several dozen communities share a common history, a same small territory but keep and develop very strong identity specificities. Groups more or less inspired by *maracatu de baque virado* can be found now in many Western countries (Europa, USA, Japan…).

Figure 6. Maracatu nação Porto Rico. [31]

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29 Literally: *maracatu* of the turned-around beat. In the same region, one can encounter groups of *maracatu de baque solto* (or *maracatu de orquestra*, and *maracatu de trombone*) but their origin, around 1930, is more obscure (probably a mix of Amerindian and African origins).

30 Literally: nation maracatu.

31   Source : https://www.anf.org.br/os-herois-do-cotidiano/

d. *Boi* related traditions

The legend of the death and resurrection of the *boi* (bull) exits in a lot of countries in the world. In Brazil, its origin is located in the North, in the middle of the 19th century[32]. Although Maranhão is today the gravitational center of the famous *bumba-meu-boi*, it is embodied in various "similar" music and dance traditions, in North, Northwest and Southwest of the country. The legend, based on the contrast between the force of the bull and the weakness of the human, is a mix of drama, tragedy, comedy and satire. Grounded on the Western story of Pai Francisco and Catirina (farm slaves), it is declined in a lot of forms by the Brazilian communities, establishing links with several African and Amerindian traditions[33]. Bueno (2001, p. 27) defines the *bumba-meu-boi* tradition as "a dramatic dance of social representation which articulates values of ethnic, culture and class"[34]. On a social-cultural aspect,

> The story of the bumba-meu-boi is strangely similar to the Brazilian society: the Amer-indians and their spiritual and religious chief, the economic model of the *fazenda* with his boss and his countrymen, the bull, professional resource for part of the population, and the cowboy job at the same time reality and ideal identity, and finally the slave family which illustrates the reality of several centuries of slavery practice. (Cousin, 2010, p. 213)[35]

Most known as *bumba-meu-boi or boi-bumbá*, the tradition has many names and variations: *pavulagem, bumbá, boi-calemba, boi-de-reis, boi-surubim, boi-zumbi, boi-janeiro, boi-estrela-do-mar, mulinha-de-ouro, folguedo-do-boi, boi-de-jacá, dança-do-boi, boi-de-mourão, boi(-de-)mamão or boizinho.*

On a performance aspect, the concerned communities are often called *bois* (bulls), which can be in competition during carnival or the *festas juninas* (Johannine Festivals). The show is conducted by the *Capitão* (Captain) and counts many characters (the bull, Francisco, Chico/Mateus, Catirina, Amo, etc.). Three categories of groups seem to reflect to the main influences of each tradition: the *boi de matraca*, considered as the most indigenous one, principally uses *maracá* (metal shaker)[36], *matraca* (wooden objects), *pandeirão* (big tambourine)[37], *tambor onça* (friction drum)[38]. The *boi de zabumba*, said the most African one, principally uses *tamborinho* (small drum), *zabumba/bumbo* (big drum), *tambor de fogo* (long drum)[39]. Its musical organization can be considered as a kind of *batuque*. The third one may have the most Western origins; called *boi de orquestra*, it uses various wind instruments (saxophone, trombone and trumpet),

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32 Other sources coin the 18th century.

33 An African version called Buriyan was created by Black families returned to Africa, in Benin.

34 Translation mine.

35 Translation mine.

36 Depending on its shape, this instrument has Amerindian origins (shamanic usage) or African origins.

37 The Arabic origin, via the Portuguese colonization, is attested.

38 This kind of drum is known in Africa and in Europa.

39 Very similar to African *ngoma*.

cord instruments (*e.g. banjo*) and percussion instruments (drums and shakers). As usual, hybrid forms exist, mixing the three categories previously mentioned.

Figure 7. *Bumba meu boi* (São Luis do Maranhão).[40]

e. Afro-Brazilian forms of foreign music genres

Brazil has always remained an open country, what produced a lot of music blending. Here are some examples.

In the past, its close relationship with Europa (not only with Portugal) and the slaves' status limited music hybridization between the two main groups of people (*i.e.* European and African). For example, during the 18th and 19th centuries, the Royal Portuguese Court prohibited the importation, in Brazil, of foreign Art works, a rule which influenced local music composition. The *música barroca mineira* (the Baroque music of Minas Gerais) was a kind of replica of European baroque music. Adopting European social codes but staying long from a direct European influence, this music was mainly played in churches for white Brazilian people by black or mestizo musicians and integrated specific aspects (Lange, 1946 in Alge, 2017). Thus, the *música barroca mineira* is not considered as an Afro-Brazilian music, but the Afro-descendent contribution is not negligible and related by the concept of "mulatismo musical" (Reily, 2013 in Alge, 2017 p. 153). In the same way, it is also very important to remind that, during all the Brazilian history, many forms of "European music" were played on Brazilian territory by Afro-descendent people, thus feeding a systematic process of hybridization.

On the turn of 20th century[41], first "authorized" contacts were made, leading to the official birth of mixed music; *maxixe* is one of them. Appeared in 1868 in Rio de Janeiro[42], it sounds like *tango* while the dance is inherited from Afro-Brazilian *lundu* and European dances, like

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40   Source : https://alente.com.br/2017/06/30/bumba-meu-boi/ (credit: Yuri Graneiro)

41   Officially, slavery was prohibited in Brazil in 1888. In reality, it didn't completely stop.

42   Cidade Nova, a district with a big number of Afro-descendant people. In the middle of the 19th century, it was characteristically a proletarian neighborhood, with small workers' houses.

polka. Considered as "the first urban dance created in Brazil" by Oneyda Alvarenga, *maxixe* contributed to build several *samba* dance styles.

More recently, the main influences come from North-America; for example, many kinds of rock, soul, funk and rap music exist in Brazil. Some of them were hybridized with Afro-Brazilian music. Two main examples can be given. In the 1970's, funk[43] meets *samba* and produces a very recognizable -what could be called- samba-funk (*e.g.* the famous groups *Banda Black Rio* inspired by *Kool & the Gang* and *Earth Wind & Fire* bands). In the 1990's, Chico Science created in Pernambuco the *manguebeat*, an urban social movement in favor of ecology. This movement was sustained by a very powerful music constituted by a mix of hard-rock and *maracatu de baque virado*. On its side, *hip-hop* found deep similarities with *capoeira* (dance/fight tradition).

Figure 8. *Chico Science & Nação Zumbi*.[44]

3. Permanency in the performance

I coin that a musicological perspective can help to more deeply understand how African heritage influences a big part of Brazilian music. The characteristics of (West)African music which can be observed in Afro-Brazilian music are divided in two categories: on one hand, music characteristics, on the other hand, instruments characteristics.

a. Permanency in music characteristics
Waterman (1952) was the first to propose that West-Africa music could have recurrent characteristics:
- isochronous pulse
- polyrythmy and polymetry

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43 It doesn't concern what is called *funk* in the *favelas*.
44 Source : https://medium.com/@weso_ferreira/chico-science-poeta-do-mangue-parte-ii-fb8b0b813e75

+ contrametric phrasing of the melodic accents
+ responsoral alternance with tiling
+ predominance of percussion instruments

In Brazil, the presence of Waterman's characteristics is confirmed by Vatin (2005) in the music of *candomblé*. Pressing (2002) supplements the list and calls them "characteristic devices":

+ syncopation
+ overlay
+ displacement
+ off-beat phrasing
+ polyrhythm/polymeter
+ hocketing
+ heterophony
+ swing
+ speech-based rhythms
+ call-and-response

Except for hocketing, their presence is revealed, with specific declensions, by the analysis of many performances pertaining to the corpus of Afro-Brazilian music. Two peculiar characteristics (embedded non-isochronous temporal organizations) were deeply studied (Guillot, 2021): swing and time-line pattern[45] (N'Ketia, 1963). Thus, these last could reveal the influence of the *Bantu* or *Yoruba* cultures on Afro-Brazilian music (*e.g.* Kubik, 1979; Mukuna, 1979; Sandroni, 1997; Capone, 2000; Fryer, 2000; Vatin, 2005)[46]. By following the idea of Waterman and taking in account the consequences of Atlantic Trade, Kubik coins a very powerful hypothesis which has funded my own researches for years:

> Time–line patterns must have been a rather stable element in African music history […]. They were present in West Africa in the 16th century and much, much earlier. The presence or absence of one of the African time-line patterns in Afro-American music can, therefore, be considered *diagnostic*[47] for historical connections with specific African cultures. In the study of Afro-Brazilian (and indeed Afro-American music) with non-historical methods it may be rewarding even to start one's investigation by first checking for their presence in the musical samples at hand. (Kubik, 1979, pp. 18-19) [48]

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45 Time-line pattern is curiously not evocated by Pressing (2002). An increasing amount of literature seems to confirm that many forms of Afro-Diasporic music involve similar patterns in temporal organization that can be considered as fundamental traits.

46 Despite a big valorization of the yoruba culture (Carvalho, 2006), the works of Mukuna (1979) and Kubik (1979) allow to reconsider the huge importance of influence of bantu culture, although discrete, on Afro-Brazilian music.

47 Italic in the original text.

48 Kubik proposal includes a real phylogenetic dimension.

For now, from a synchronic perspective, their presence is attested in all Afro-Brazilian music and Afro-diasporic music I could analyze, without exception. Moreover, from a diachronic perspective, analyses show also their presence in older performances dating from the beginning of Brazilian recorded music (Guillot, 2011), which tends to confirm the Kubik "phylogenetic" hypothesis.

b. Permanency in music instruments characteristics

An organological analysis of the instruments played in Afro-Brazilian traditions allows identifying several instruments categories which can be related to an African origin. Two categories are particularly visible: bells and drums.

- The presence of bells (generally with external beater) is often a trace of worship link. In some traditions, like *candomblé* or *xambá*, the bell has a central role. In some other traditions (like *samba* or *maracatu de baque virado*), their musical function is no longer directly linked to religion. But the organization of their musical phrases recalls clearly their initial function (Guillot, 2021). *Agogô* is a Brazilian instrument very similar to African *agogo* and *gankogui*. This last one has probably given its name to the Brazilian *gan* used in *candomblé*.

- Although some drums are known to exist in some Amerindian communities, their use remains the main known trace of African origin. Sometimes, the drums are similar to European ones, but I put forth the hypothesis that a lot of those instruments (especially, military drum) initially come from -or, at least, were influenced by- African culture.

Nevertheless, it seems that some very typical categories of African instruments are not really present in Afro-Brazilian musical traditions (Fryer, 2000). For example, only one African specific cordophone[49] instrument still exists: the *berimbau* (musical arc) is used in capoeira. But the "pluriarc" family (several bows) has no representative in Brazil and all the cordophones (guitars and violins) seem to have mainly Portuguese and Spanish origins. As well, unlike in some other South-American countries, melodic percussion instruments don't exist in Brazil: it is the case for lamellaphones' family (metallic/wooden blades) in which we find well-known instruments like *mbira*, *marimbula*, *sanza* or *kalimba*. The same case can be observed with the xylophones' family (like *marimba*).

c. Toward a model of the permanency's characteristics?

The quick presentation of some main "trends" in Afro-Brazilian music and dance traditions showed the presence, in many of them, of the Afro-Brazilian *batuque*. This specific (and specifically acculturate) modality of African -sing, percussion and dance- cultural expression, and all of its variations, is perhaps a mark of the permanency of African roots. From my point of view, form variations of the *batuque* can sometimes admit a unique instrument (*e.g.* a *pandeiro*), but playing a music material including the "characteristic devices" already mentioned.

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49 Cord-based instrument.

4. Music genetics vs. claimed identity

A not so much discussed topic concerns the difference between the ontogenetic musical traces (which allow knowing more on the ontogenetic of a tradition) and the identity claimed by the members of the communities. The spotting of one of several "characteristic devices" (Pressing, 2002), which could be qualified as "mèmes" in a memetic approach, help coining hypotheses on former cultural contacts and influences (enculturation processes). By adding a part of objectification, this perspective can contribute to reinforce or relativize discourses of communities' members. Here are two examples showing such discrepancies.

- Fethxá presents itself as an Amerindian (Native Brazilian) musical group pertaining to the Fulni-o tribe from Aguas Belas, about 300 Km off the coast in Pernambuco State. The group performs the tribe's cultural traditions through a rich performance of dance and music. The group's name Fethxá means Sun in the tribe's native language, Yathe, which is still spoken by the Fulni-o Indians nowadays. Fethxá plays a rhythm called *samba de coco* which, as we saw sooner, is a blending of Amerindian, African and European musical cultures. On a larger plan, several traditions claim Amerindian roots, but the analysis of the music and dance performances leads to prove that the reality is somehow different. Examining the big picture, the real Amerindian contribution to the music and dance is probably less important than it is generally claimed by some communities.

- In a previous paper (Guillot, 2015), I showed that *bantu* musical influence is very important in the *maracatu de baque virado*, although this tradition generally claims its legacy from *Yoruba* culture. On an organological point of view, Guerra-Peixe (1955/1980) described an *instrumentarium* made with drums (with a design mainly inherited from European military drums), cylindrical shakers (probably more Amerindian-descendent than Afro-Descendent) and a big bell stricken with a wooden stick (very similar to the Ghanean *gongue* and *gankogui*). In the end of 20th century, the two main -concurrent- communities introduced "new" instruments claimed to having taking part to the tradition history: *abê/agbê* (hollow gourd covered with a loose netting beads, shells, or seeds[50]) and *timbau* (said to be the modern version of *atabaque*, a core instrument of the *candomblé*).

These examples show a well-known process: identity is a matter of self-construction with a kind of political project, not necessarily related with the reality of the ontological process.

Conclusion

As I already mentioned in the introduction, the huge diversity briefly presented above could let guess that it goes the same way in matter of musical and dance organization. The reality remains far from this intuition.

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50 Instrument of the *xekéré* family (*sèkèrè* in Yoruba), based on a dried calabash fruit.

Because of the hybridization mechanism, African legacy is present in a lot of music and dance traditions, not only those especially categorized as "Afro-Brazilian". Some examples of this diversity have been given, recalling their modalities of expression, the specific conditions of Brazil colonization, the question of identity and the diffusion out of its frontiers. Although the expression "Afro-Brazilian music" keeps some didactic relevance in order to identify strong differences between music corpuses, it appears that all is a matter of hybridity and ratio of the respective influences (among African, Amerindian, European and other less important ones).

A special focus was made on several categories of socio-cultural contexts, like the religious dimension, the *batuque/batucada* phenomenon (and their attractiveness for some white middle-class Brazilian an non-Brazilian people), the crowning of Kongo Kings, the *boi* related traditions and some specific ones linked to recent musical blends, moreover by absorption of foreign music.

The examples related in this paper give only a very short sample of the many traditions linked with Afro-Brazilian communities. But, despite a huge diversity of performance modalities and socio-cultural contexts, core-shared musical characteristics still exist from, probably, several centuries. The permanence of these characteristics makes them real markers of African roots. Thus, it seems that, despite the important diversity, the observed similarities are not only contingent. On one hand, these common traits shape the modalities of performance of the traditions depicted sooner but are not systematically claimed as African roots by the concerned communities. On the other hand, some claimed cultural roots are contradicted by the analysis of the musical material: the identity claimed by communities is not necessarily connected with the reality of the ontogenetics of their musical practices.

All those results lead to show that Brazilian culture (especially music and dance) is deeply shaped by some core-shared African characteristics. A final hypothesis is formulated: if this phenomenon may be observed in all Afro-Diasporic music and dance traditions, thus it may have important consequences on the understanding of other aspects of America's culture.

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