Music and cultural diversity among Brazilian migrants in Madrid, Spain

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Abstract

This paper examines music-making among Brazilian migrants in Madrid, Spain. It explores how cultural diversity is mediated through music and articulated in dialogue with national stereotypes of Brazil harboured by Spaniards. Since the independence of Brazil the country's popular music has been engaged in a unique dialogue with other international styles giving rise, in the early twentieth century, to hegemonic notions of Brazil as a hybrid, happy, sensuous country represented by samba. With the country's urbanisation, the rise of new civil movements and the return to democracy in 1985, however, cultural diversity gained unprecedented attention as a wealth of previously under-represented ethnic and regional populations and their accompanying musical styles exploded onto the national scene. Such developments allowed practitioners of musical genres such as música sertaneja, forró and pagode to make claims on national and international musical styles while articulating 'rooted' identities through the manipulation of discourses and practices of 'mixing'. As Brazil suffered a series of economic crises in the 1980s, large numbers of middle class Brazilians began to migrate abroad and at the turn of the century, other previously under-represented populations were able to do the same. In order to attract a broader audience, practitioners of the rural genre, *música sertaneja* must dialogue with national stereotypes of Brazil while articulating regional and socio-economic identities. These new temporal and spatial movements and the requirements of Madrid's performance industry have given rise to a renegotiation of Brazilian transnational identity.

Keywords: Transnationalism; Popular Music; Cultural Diversity

Música e diversidade cultural entre migrantes brasileiros em Madri, Espanha

Resumo

Esta pesquisa examina o fazer musical entre migrantes brasileiros em Madri, Espanha. Aborda especificamente como a diversidade cultural se articula em diálogo com estereótipos nacionais resguardados por espanhóis. Desde que o Brasil se tornou independente, o país tem sido envolvido num dialogo único com outros gêneros internacionais, dando lugar no início do século XX a noções hegemônicas do Brasil, como um país híbrido, sensual, alegre e representado pelo samba. Estas imagens dominam a cultura brasileira em Madri. Com o desenvolvimento urbano no Brasil, o surgimento dos movimentos pelos direitos civis, o acesso a novos modos de produção e circulação musical e o retorno à democracia, em 1985, permitiram que comunidades, anteriormente marginalizadas, explodissem no cenário nacional com seus gostos e preferências musicais. Tais desenvolvimentos permitiram que praticantes de gêneros como música sertaneja, forró e pagode se deslocassem das periferias para reclamar através de um discurso e práticas de "mistura" um estilo musical nacional e internacional. Nos anos 80, o Brasil sofreu uma série de crises econômicas, obrigando uma grande quantidade de pessoas, principalmente da classe média, a deixarem o país; tal fenômeno repetiu-se na virada do século, quando outras comunidades sub-representadas fizeram o mesmo. Para conseguir um maior público em Madri, praticantes do gênero musical rural, música sertaneja, têm que dialogar com os estereótipos do Brasil, enquanto articulam várias identidades regionais e socioeconômicas. As novas mudanças temporais e espaciais e a necessidade da indústria da performance de Madri estimulam a re-negociação da identidade da comunidade transnacional brasileira.

Palavras-chave: Transnacionalismo; Música Popular; Diversidade Cultural

The university halls of residence and Brazilian cultural centre, *Casa do Brasil*, is opening its doors to a host of entrepreneurs and musicians for a repeat of the successful fêtes which have attracted an international audience to the venue. Today the diplomatically and educationally reputed institution has adorned a beach wear stall with Brazilian flags and a display of Brazilian aesthetic treatments greet entrants who may be familiar with the centre from their screenings of Brazil's world cup football matches and their well-attended *capoeira* and samba workshops. Today, however, there is a character who seems somehow out of place, framed by the flurry of green and yellow: A man in a large Stetson and a chequered rancher's shirt who I immediately recognise from his appearances with the popular *música sertaneja* duo *us Meninus du Brasil* strides passed other attendees who are paired up dancing to the *forró* music being performed, to secure a place in the queue at the *feijoada* [Brazil's national dish of beans and pork] table. I take up a space behind him and two men, one sporting a Brazilian national football team shirt with the word JESUS printed in place of the player's name and the other a white linen suit and bead necklaces, and am surprised to find that the cowboy remembers me as the gringo with an uncommon interest in Brazilian country music. 'Look at this' he says, gesturing to the other half of the duo, Nelson, who has arranged his keyboard between two Brazilian flags and is now endeavouring a contemporary *música sertaneja* hit while those arriving busy themselves buying drinks. 'When I arrived here people laughed when I spoke of *música sertaneja* and, now look, here we are telling our own story in our own way'. But Nelson has integrated into his opening number a pre-programmed samba rhythm and, to the delight of many viewers, the melody of his accordion effect, gives way to a frantic *batucada* [stadium parade samba rhythm]. I glance to the *vaqueiro* for his consent but see that, along with the rest of the queue and those previously dancing *forró*, he is happily bobbing away and, it seems, has even picked up some samba dance moves since his arrival in Madrid.

Such scenes of cultural communion among the diverse sectors of Madrid's Brazilian population are not limited to the relatively high profile spaces such as the *Casa do Brasil*, where a strong presence of immigrant associations, commerce, and media representatives pursue homogenous images of Brazil. In the words of one woman from Rio Grande do Sul and resident in Madrid, 'Brazil in Madrid becomes smaller than back home', the patchwork of Brazil's vast territory coming into more regular contact. Not only does the hegemonic samba often arise pulling together the diverse sectors of the community in response to prevailing stereotypes of Brazilian-ness held by Spaniards and Brazilians alike, but a number of other styles contribute to making such events palatable for the range of Brazilians present: Members of the evangelical church can be found enjoying *música sertaneja* in small bars and even hold their own country music performances; *pagode* and *música sertaneja* musicians can be found mixing in some MPB at concert halls; and bossa nova performers escape to perform some *forró* and *maracatu* at night clubs, all of whom have to perform within a spectrum of Brazilian styles radically broader than is practised among these respective communities in their home country. In this paper I suggest that dominant narratives of Brazil abroad are being increasingly challenged by the arrival of previously under-represented ethnic, racial and regional minorities in the Spanish capital. Calling on ethnographic data collected during fieldwork in Madrid, I discuss how the employment of Brazilian national stereotypes in the Spanish capital allows practitioners of the popular music genre, *música sertaneja*, to negotiate the diversity of the Brazilian transnational community.

Brazilian migrants in Spain

Traditionally one of Europe's most prolific sending states, Spain at the turn of the century became a destination for immigrants from Eastern Europe, Latin America and North Africa. Coinciding which a range of diplomatic initiatives aimed at integrating and establishing the borders of Europe, Spain was urged to implement more effective policing

of its borders as a strategic point of entry into what came to be known by academics, politicians and social commentators as 'fortress Europe' (LOSHITSKY, 2006). This development elevated migration as a primary concern for the Spanish government keen to legitimise their role in European politics while making an assertive effort to contain the country's regionalist and nationalist movements. Illustrating the predicament presented by Spain's appeal to integrated systems of external vigilance, Ryan Prout makes a poignant analogy with the reflections which emerged in response to the Iron Curtain: 'the seeming arbitrariness yet starkness of the transformation; the unilateral direction of legitimate human traffic; the subdued anger of those who live in sight of what they believe to be a better world or Eldorado where they are unable to go' (p. 724).

In a paper entitled 'We were Bossa Nova. Today we are "Sin Papeles"', Raphael Teixeira (2007) suggests that a blurring of ethnic divisions among Brazilian and other Latin American communities in Madrid has occurred due to the increasing association of labouring migrants with lack of legal status. Whereas earlier Brazilian migrants could claim legitimacy under the banner of 'tropical exuberance' and 'joie de vivre', he suggests, later arrivals became increasingly 'invisible' and were portrayed as menacing and invasive alongside other migrant demographics in the media (TEIXEIRA, 2007, p. 53). However, migrant groups in Spanish cities have responded to state and media-driven efforts to 'other' non-European Community members through appeals to local and transnational religious, entrepreneurial and state-sponsored activities to resist such 'invisibility': Asunción Merino (2004) shows how Peruvian migrants in Madrid employ *el Señor de los Milagros* [The Lord of Miracles] to create connections to a homeland and incorporate the diversity of the Peruvian community while appealing to supranational catholic identity to assert a local presence; Almeida (2008) notes how Brazilians in Barcelona negotiate Brazilian identity through use of telecommunications and employment networks; Sánchez Fuarros (2013) shows how, through linking diverse Cuban music venues, Cuban musicians in Barcelona 'map' the city and actively construct a national identity. These studies demonstrate how migrant communities in Spain negotiate and incorporate local practices and prejudices in the making of multifaceted identities.

Scholars of transnationalism have been keen to orient research on migration within theoretical frameworks which move beyond the limitations of ethnicity (GLICK-SCHILLER *et al*., 2006; VERTOVEC, 2007). Steven Vertovec employs the notion of 'super diversity' to account for 'differential immigration statuses and their concomitant entitlements and restrictions of rights, divergent labour market experiences, discrete gender and age profiles, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents' (VERTOVEC, 2007, p. 1025). He calls for social scientists and policy-makers to address the conjunction of public discourse, policy debates and academic literature with this range of variables which contribute to the making of 'communities', their composition, trajectories, interactions and public service needs. The recent arrival of socio-economically, regionally and racially diverse Brazilian immigrants who employ local stereotypes to articulate an array of concerns, urges a rethinking of the multi-dimensional conditions and processes affecting not only migrants, but also affecting societal perceptions of minorities in receiving countries (ZAPATA-BARRERO, 2009).

Estimates of the Brazilian population in Madrid range from 10,000 (National Institute of Statistics, 2007) to 23,833 (Department of Employment, Women and Immigration, 2010). Of the region of Madrid's 6.551.498 inhabitants, 1.116.284 have been born abroad and this latter more liberal estimate of Brazilian residents places them at 2.14 percent of the immigrant population –a demographic which increased notably following Spain's entry into the European Union in 1986 and drastically with the introduction of quotas to cope with the country's burgeoning construction industry at the turn of the century. Given the high rates of illegal immigration among Brazilians in the area the number could greatly exceed this: Some studies estimate that just 20 percent of

the Brazilian community in Madrid possess documents (PRADA, 2008).

Ethnographies and surveys carried out in Madrid (TÉCHIO, 2006; FERNANDEZ; NUNAN, 2008) have found a high percentage of Brazilians from the southern state of Paraná. It has also been noted that across Southern Europe, the social class of more recent Brazilian arrivals is lower than that of previous Brazilian migrants, many of whom entered the United States throughout the 1990s (PADILLA, 2005; MACHADO, 2004; FERNANDEZ; NUNAN, 2008; TÉCHIO, 2006). This has coincided with a new wave of migrants from rural areas and small towns in the south and south east of Brazil, many of whom achieved significant social ascent under president Lula's neo-liberal reforms but could not attain visas to enter the United States following the tightening of this country's borders following 9/11 (RIPOLL, 2008). During the course of interviews and the collection of life stories and press articles, I also found a high number of Brazilians from the south, south east interior and central west.

Fernandes and Nunan (2008), who conducted a survey of 404 Brazilians in Madrid in 2008, found that Brazilians had an average age of 34, were mostly single and were evenly divided in terms of sex, lending weight to the observations of previous researchers who have found that Brazilian immigrants are young to middle-age adults, largely motivated by a pursuit of broader economic and cultural horizons (PADILLA, 2005). Téchio also found that over 60 percent of her sample of Brazilians in Madrid was single (TÉCHIO, 2006, p. 12). Ripoll (2008) and Fernandes and Nunan (2008) note a peak in arrivals from the period of 2000 to 2004, coinciding with growth in the Spanish service and construction sectors and both Fernandes and Nunan (2008) and Téchio (2006) have noted a high percentage of construction and domestic service workers (52 percent and 68 percent respectively). Many Brazilians in Madrid, they note, hold less prestigious posts than those previously obtained in Brazil.

Many of my informants specified study, tourism, artistic and administrative careers as motivations which contributed to their flight from Brazil while some made the move so as to better their economic situation and a handful specified romantic interest. Arrival dates ranged from 1990 to 2011 and, while there existed an overall average of four to five years residence in Spain, there was a surge of arrivals between 2000 and 2004. Concerning work and previous education, many participants had completed a university degree or had trained at a conservatoire, and occupations in Madrid ranged from construction, service sector (bars, commerce and domestic work), professional work in teaching and marketing and jobs in the cultural sector, such as journalism and music. Very few Brazilians expressed a desire to stay in Spain. Some planned to return and many were ambiguous about return, claiming to feel 'like a tourist' in both countries. This coincides with previous studies conducted in Spain and in other countries which suggest that Brazilian immigrants are characterised by a state of 'living neither here nor there', engaging, when possible in 'yoyo migration' (i.e. going back and forth) (MARGOLIS, 1994; DUARTE, 2005).

Madrid accommodates a diverse spectrum of music-making and has embraced a number of the national and international styles which have characterised the city's heterogeneous cultural landscape since the 1990s. Numerous tourist attractions, such as concert venues, discos, open air performances and bars oriented towards tourists, students, connoisseurs of specialist genres, such as jazz and flamenco, a number of music schools and a prominent conservatory, regularly command the attention of the national and international press. Small bars, public and private community centres, local events publications, exchange of MP3s and online recordings, informal gatherings at houses and ensembles that do not maintain institutional affiliations, however, also provide a prolific source for musical activity in the city. From June 2010 to September 2011, I actively collected data resulting from ethnographic interviews and from participant observation conducted at venues where Brazilian music was performed throughout the region of Madrid.

Popular music and cultural diversity in Brazil: the case of *música sertaneja*

In his essay, 'Contributions of Popular Brazilian Music to Popular Musics of the World', Menezes Bastos suggests that contentions over the 'essence' of Brazil and over how the country should be represented abroad have arisen from two overarching facades of Brazilian society:

> O Brasil tem duas grandes faces - uma com que olha para dentro de si, para o interior; outra com a qual, mantendo-se ele mesmo, contempla o mundo, o estrangeiro, o exterior. A primeira o constitui como um vasto continente formado por miríades de instâncias particulares - locais, regionais - tidas como paroquiais. A segunda o constrói como integrante do concerto das nações, da civilização. As relações entre os Brasis em comentário são hierárquicas e dinâmicas, os integrantes do primeiro sistematicamente contestando o segundo, aspirando a conquistar o seu lugar (MENEZES BASTOS, 2007, p. 19)

Since the colonial period Brazilian music has traversed oceans engaging in international dialogue with extraordinary voracity: In step with Portuguese aesthetic currents, the *modinha*, Brazil's first popular music genre, developed racy, amorous lyrics and sychopated rhythms which appealed to European stereotypes of tropical exuberance and licentiousness; vaudevilles and operas entered post-independence Brazil creating a 'Europe in the tropics'; at the turn of the 20th century hybridised, urban genres were being sent back abroad to curious audiences enchanted by such naivety and sensuality.

Brazil's musical exports, however, have been shot through with tensions regarding the ethnic and regional integrity of the nation's representation abroad. Brazil's most fervent nationalist movements have struggled to contain diverse elements considered undesirable both at home and on the transnational scene. It suffices to remember the terminological disputes over the more internationally acceptable *tango brasileiro* and the more indigenous *maxixe* which punctuated diplomatic and high-art circles at the end of the 19th century (MENEZES BASTOS, 1998, p. 206-207). Such tensions came to the fore throughout the second half of the 20th century as dominant national paradigms were increasingly challenged by previously under-represented ethnic and regional minorities in pursuit of civil rights and increased access to representation on national and international scenes.

Popular music has assumed a fundamental role in the articulation of culturally diverse concerns in Brazil, not only through its implication in the often violent disputes between police and civil sectors of Brazilian society over use of public space which have characterised Brazil at the turn of the century, but also in the appropriation of technologies, markets and media which culturally diverse sectors of Brazilian society have staged since the country's return to democracy (VIANNA, 2011). *Bailes funk* [funk parties] held in Rio de Janeiro's impoverished North Zone have provided perhaps the most pronounced example of the 'explosion' of cultural diversity which has served to destabilise myths of conviviality in Brazil (FILHO; HERSCHMANN, 2011; VIANNA, 1988; YÚDICE, 1994). A number of other case studies only just receiving attention from scholars, however, provide many more nuances which help to contextualise the struggles of culturally diverse Brazilians in Madrid; the southern separatist *nativismo* movement; the urban, racialised and sexualised *pagode*; the rurally-oriented *música sertaneja*; north eastern *forró* and the bahian pop phenomenon of Afro-Brazilian origin *axé music*; insights into these genres present a rich perspective on the ways disenfranchised groups have asserted claims to Brazilian-ness in Madrid through their strategic employment of Brazil's dominant global images and their appeal to articulate the unique concerns present within the Spanish capital's diverse Brazilian community. Here I focus on the case of *música sertaneja*, providing a background of how practitioners of the style have mediated their respective concerns within the political and cultural contexts which have

accompanied them in Brazil.

Eunice Durham notes that contemporary rural-urban migrants of the Brazilian south east organise around family, friends and former *conterrâneos* (fellow townsmen), evoking 'the good old days' as a means of coping with the impersonal conditions of industrial work and continuing to look back nostalgically on a past imbued with greater independence, humility and family values (DURHAM, 1984; see also REILY, 1992). With the establishment in the first half of the nineteenth century of coffee plantations and the ensuing system of indentured slavery among previously itinerant communities regulated by egalitarian popular catholic traditions, the lack of rights and possibilities of social ascent remained palpable among the rurally-oriented migrants who flooded to provide the muscle behind the south east's urban, industrial development throughout the twentieth century. Even their participation through labour in an increasingly urban-oriented nation was too superficial for the exclusionary notions of state membership which characterised twentieth century Brazilian politics; the parallel thirds and moral, family-oriented narratives of *música sertaneja* so evocative of 'life in the country' among such communities fell on deaf ears amid the incessant march forward of samba.

With the recording industry's efforts to incorporate audiences from central and central-west Brazil, while continuing the style's appeal to urban followers, however, *música sertaneja* took on a romantic format throughout the 1970s. Maintaining some rural themes familiar to the interior states and the format of the *dupla,* or duo, often consisting of family members but repressing other regional references such as the 'emotionally controlled' nasal vocal quality and the use of the viola, performers began to employ vibrato, full orchestration and electric guitars and focused more on themes of love (ULHOA, 1999). As Alexander Dent, in his ethnography of contemporary *música sertaneja* notes, however, such developments did not preclude performers' articulation of an emotional topography which celebrates the rural heritage of Brazil while critiquing the country's embrace of modernity as an urban phenomenon (DENT, 2009, p. 7-8).

Such developments reflect attempts to reclaim the stakes which *sertanejos* [*música sertaneja* practitioners] had invested in the style but which were largely denied by official narratives of state membership. While claims of vulgarity and commercialism, levelled particularly at modern *música sertaneja*, have mustered a moral panic among critics who have taken offence at increasingly eroticised, mass-mediated performances, *sertanejos* have demonstrated a comprehensive breadth in their pursuit of democratic rights, infiltrating club scenes, successfully appropriating public space, and garnering interest from a broad racial and socio-economic spectrum. With the easing of credit, declining costs of recording equipment, increasing consumer power and access to international goods among sectors of rural-urban migrants who had attained a degree of social ascent in cities, the genre became embroiled in an internationalisation of market relations which allowed its symbolic value as a 'popular' style to receive greater expression as a commodity. The style can now be found to incorporate such styles as rock, reggae, and international ballads, cornering a substantial portion of national sales while demonstrating an international, cosmopolitan reach.

While the more canonical, middle class Brazilian Popular Music (*música popular brasileira* or MPB) has witnessed its claim to discourses of 'mixing' as a source of national representation reduced over the last 20 years (MOEHN, 2008), a number of previously under-represented, regionally and racially specific genres such as *forró, pagode, axé music* and *música sertaneja* have been afforded new creative and commercial opportunities allowing for greater access to national and international markets. More accessible musical formats and methods of distribution, the participation of record companies with 'local' knowledge, emphasis on sentimental and quotidian lyrics, greater attention to performance, formulaic compositions and the strategic placing of the body as a means of transgressing dominant conceptions of public and private domains now constitute strategies for 'rooting' the practitioners of such styles while projecting a cosmopolitan outlook (see LEME, 2003; TROTTA; MONTEIRO, 2008).

Accelerated and syncopated rhythms which are conducive to dancing, the employment of standard instruments such as electric bass, guitar, keyboards and drums and the use of standard Portuguese provide principle premises for new 'mixtures' to occur, allowing such performers to legitimise claims to youth and modernity while adding references to 'rooted' traditions through the use of accordions, lyrics which allude to life in the interior or *baianidade* and choreographies or rhythmic accents which 'break' [*requebrar*].

Mônica Leme, tracing the tradition of Brazil's satirical, risqué, urban popular music genres which, over the past two centuries, have accentuated rhythmic syncopation and sensual dance gestures, orients this lineage within what she calls a 'wily dynamic' [*vertente maliciosa*] which has been embedded through a long process of miscegenation between the popular and the erudite, the national and the international. Such a process, she comments, has been exacerbated by marginalised populations' endeavours to articulate a popular national identity alongside international music markets while negotiating the symbolic character of 'tradition'. By conducting 'surveys' into locally anchored religious and musical traditions, she continues, actors within such populations 'become mediating agents between popular culture and industry, dislocating (or ungluing) determined existing elements in traditional contexts to then use them as superficial elements, with no religious function, in formats made for entertainment and for carnival' (LEME, 2003, p. 30).

Felipe Trotta (2009) has also noted that the tropes of youth, sex, pleasure and dance provide contemporary *forró* groups with a means of asserting the national and international value of the style through risqué choreographies. Charting the national success of performers such as the *axé music* group, *É O Tchan*, and the *forró eletrônico* group *Aviões do Forró*, Leme and Trotta note how developments in the cultural industry throughout the 1990s opened the way for these styles to employ 'modernity' and 'tradition' as discourses which have allowed such groups access to an enduring Brazilian collective memory through the transgressive qualities of the sensual body.

'Playing a bit of everything': music and cultural diversity among Brazilians in Madrid

Located at the political, economic and geographical centre of Spain, Madrid is the biggest city in the country and the third biggest in Europe. Its large immigrant population, its influences in education, politics, science, entertainment, culture, environment, media and fashion, and its position as southern Europe's major financial centre, place it as one of the world's major global cities. During the country's economic boom between 1959 and 1973, Madrid experienced unprecedented demographic and economic growth as a result of industrial development and migration from the city's surrounding rural regions. As Spain opened up to tourism throughout the 1970s and leftist political parties carried democratic reform forward following the death of Franco, in 1975, and the end of his dictatorship, the country gradually opened up to foreign political and cultural currents, becoming part of the European Union in 1986 and seeing increasing amounts of tourists and immigrants enter the city beginning around 1990.

While, in Brazil, stereotypes and their accompanying musical genres have been permitted flexibility due to increasingly dynamic grassroots and commercial developments, consumption of 'exotic' musical styles in Madrid is aimed at a much smaller market, providing a limited infrastructure for Brazilian migrant performers in the city. Much has been written of the malleable subject positionings taken up by practitioners of MPB since its canonical status has come under increasing threat in Brazil (MOEHN, 2008; 2009; ULHÔA, 1997b). In Madrid, however, the recent embrace of cosmopolitan genres has had little impact on hegemonic flows of Brazilian popular music, continuing the fixed position of such styles.

As Fabio of the successful Madrid-based *música sertaneja* duo *Fabio Goiano e Fernando* stated after choosing to include the Jorge Benjor international samba hit, *Mas*

que nada, during a performance to a mixed audience of Spaniards and Brazilians; 'We have to play this to please the Spaniards present. *Música sertaneja* is a regional style and if we don't include some samba and bossa nova, they won't think the show is authentic'. Consequently the duo punctuate their sets with samba rhythms which they program into their keyboards in order to keep attention levels up and may on occasion employ *mulatas* [mixed race carnival dancers] to appear in full attire, a move which would have seemed entirely foreign to them as practitioners of a rural genre before their arrival in the Spanish capital.

Another primary concern of the duo is the sheer diversity of the Brazilian audience who attend their performances: Whereas earlier waves of Brazilian immigrants to Madrid comprised largely of urban, middle class subjects looking to broaden cultural and educational horizons, the turn of the century saw a much broader sweep of arrivals from central southern Brazilian states such as Mato Grosso do Sul, Goiás, interior São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Paraná, many of whom display regionally, socio-economically and ethnically eclectic tastes and who have also established businesses which host Brazilian musical events throughout the Spanish capital. This presents a predicament for groups such as *Fabio Goiano e Fernando* who must cater to this diversity in order to attract a sufficiently broad audience. To illustrate these points further I here detail the proceedings of two of *Fabio's* concerts on a Friday night in central Madrid.

Figure 1. A *música sertaneja* duo performs at *Casa Do Brasil's* Easter Fare. Photo taken by the author.

The evening starts at the local evangelical-owned radio station, *Mais Brasil FM*, where DJ Hugo Is nearing the end of one of his guests' live music performances. Hugo says that he is headed out to *El Rodeo* bar to put up some posters for one of their up-coming carnival events, one of many which they run throughout the year. The *pagode* group who have been performing are leaving to play a gig with a prominent *sertaneja* performer and I accompany Hugo to see the *sertaneja* duo from the central western Brazilian state, Goiás, *Fabio Goiano e Fernando*, which Hugo has been advertising on the show.

The small bar, located in a working-class residential neighbourhood just by the ring-road which marks central from peripheral Madrid, is buzzing with the commotion of people on their way home from work. The lassoing cowboy image is lit up outside and the TV is blaring out a Brazilian football league game interspersed with adverts for an evangelical Church. Hugo, flustered, barges through the group of men in overalls to speak with the owner about the posters. He is obviously a well-known character in the neighbourhood as people are pursuing him to discuss his choices concerning music. One man complains that the music at the *Mais Brasil* events is not representative of carnival and that in place of the *axés*, sambas, and Paraguayan music, they should be playing some traditional *marchinhas* (a style often practised during carnival in Rio de Janeiro). Hugo later laughs off the suggestion criticising such contentions from people who, in his words, 'don't want to mix' on the grounds that here in Madrid 'we play a bit of everything: *carioca funk* [a style derived from Miami Bass and freestyle, popular among Brazil's lower classes], *pagode* from São Paulo, *sertaneja* from the interior, and *axé* and samba from the north east'.

Hugo leaves me helping Fabio and his new Keyboard companion, Fernando (Fabio's brother and previous singing partner, had been detained with no papers trying to re-enter Spain) set up the sound system under the Brazilian flag in the corner. They fight for space among the empty bottles and the sound check is made difficult by the escalating noise of the clientele. Banter among the poker players, the holler of a practicing *sertaneja* player in the back room and the jokes shared by men at the bar, are making for a rowdy atmosphere. Fabio explains how the sounds emanating from *El Rodeo* are 'really modern' and connect deeply with issues facing all Brazilians in Madrid which, in his words, revolve around dancing, drinking and relationships. It's MPB, he continues, that suffers from conservatism and an elitism which does not connect with 'the masses' and whose fans are 'too demanding'. The ensuing set certainly seems eclectic. Although Fabio lamented that we lacked enough time for me to translate some Garth Brooks for the event, they managed some Simon and Garfunkel in my honour and followed with some of more danceable *música sertaneja* hits and *forró plástico* [a *forró* which makes greater use of keyboards], alongside a few *sertaneja romântica* [romantic *sertaneja*] numbers.

The latter styles, which incorporate songs such as *Saudade da minha terra* [Nostalgia for my land] or O *dia em que eu sai de casa* [The Day I Left Home] cater to the venue's older clientele who raise drinks and sway to the rhythm in response to Fabio's tuneful exclamation: '*ai que saudade*' [such longing]. Victor, a man from Rio Grande do Sul, is trying to convince the duo to demonstrate some more of the *vanerão* [Gaúcho pop music] which they had earlier performed but, Fabio has instead opted to follow the U2 hit 'With or Without You' with some contemporary *música sertaneja* and *forró* and a number of regulars from other Brazilian small businesses in the area enter to take up partners and dance.

Even though a majority of the audience is from the south and south east of Brazil the performance of north eastern styles does not bother Fabio who proclaims *forró* to be similar to *sertaneja*: A music for the masses and for 'youths' which speaks the language of the masses –women, *cachaça* [a sugar cane spirit] and night life. Some friends and family have moved to the front to try their dance moves in partners and I approach the bar to purchase one of the duo's self-recorded CDs which are being sold behind the counter. A group of men from the central-western state, Rondônia, who I had previously overheard discussing the news that the *música sertaneja* performer Alçeu Renato has been detained by immigration authorities attempting to return to Spain after visiting his son in Brazil –a significant loss for many such punters who regularly attended his shows and hired him for private parties and baptisms– take me up on the issue of musical eclecticism in Madrid: 'We listen to a massive range of music. This is the central southern way, we've always migrated, always mixed', one of them exclaims. 'The problem with other Brazilian musicians here is that they are too static, too conservative', he continues. The dance floor is filling up to the duo's interpretation of the contemporary

forró group *Aviões do Forró's* erotically charged song, *Chupa que é de uva* [Suck, it's like Grape]. 'I just want to go back to the Brazilian interior and purchase a ranch', the man explains.

O dia em que eu sai de casa by Joel and Randal Marques	
No dia em que saí de casa	The day I left home
Minha mãe me disse	My mother told me
Filho vem cá	Son, come here
Passou a mão em meus cabelos	Running her hands through my hair
Olhou em meus olhos começou falar	She looked in my eyes and told me
Por onde você for eu sigo	Wherever you go I always follow
Com meu pensamento	With my thoughts
Sempre onde estiver	Wherever I am
Em minhas orações	In my prayers
Eu vou pedir a Deus	I'll ask God
Que ilumine os passos seus	To shed light on your journey
A minha mãe naquele dia	That day my mother
Me falou do mundo como ele é	Told me what the world is like
Parece que ela conhecia	As if she knew
Cada pedra que eu iria por o pé	Every step I would take
E sempre ao lado do meu pai	And always next to my father
Da pequena cidade ela jamais saiu	She never left the town
Ela me disse assim:	She told me like this:
Meu filho vá com Deus	Son, may God accompany you
Que este mundo inteiro é seu	The whole world is yours

Chupa que é de uva by Aviões do Forró	
Vem meu cajuzinho!	Come my little cashew
Te dou muito carinho.	I'll give you lots of tenderness
Me dá seu coração!	Give me your heart
Me dá seu coração!	Give me your heart
Vem meu moranguinho!	Come my little strawberry
Te pego de jeitinho.	I'll take you in my own style
Te encho de tesão!	I'll fill you with desire
Te encho de tesão!	I'll fill you with desire
Me deixa maluca!	It drives me mad
Tira o mel da fruta.	You pull the honey from the fruit
Me mata de amor!	I'm dying of love
Me mata de amor!	I'm dying of love
Me pega no colo;	Cuddle me
Me olha nos olhos;	Look into my eyes
Me beija que é bom!	It's so nice when you kiss me
Me beija que é bom!	It's so nice when you kiss me
Na sua boca eu viro fruta.	In your mouth I turn to fruit
Chupa que é de uva!	Suck, it's like grape

Chupa! Chupa! Chupa que é de uva! Na sua boca eu viro fruta.	Suck, suck Suck, it's like grape In your mouth I turn to fruit

Many audience members are getting ready to go to the *Discoteca Texas*, the Paraguayan-owned nightclub over the road where another *sertaneja* group –*Renner e Richie*_ are playing a set featuring the genre's more romantic hits. Fabio and his keyboardist, however, invite me to accompany them to the *Kabokla* bar –a venue associated with Madrid's MPB scene which sees some of the Brazilian community's media figures and professional musicians come through its doors_ in the city centre. We pack up the keyboard and drive into the centre where the bar is in full swing accommodating a much more international audience. The audience at *El Rodeo*, consisting of a couple of Spaniards, a Paraguayan, a German and the remainder Brazilian, becomes inverted at *Kabokla*. Here a majority is Spanish, a handful is north European and North American and there is a handful of Brazilians –mainly local artists, musicians, and professional dancers. The music also takes a turn to focus on *forró pé da serra* [a more traditional *forró* which dwells more on nostalgic lyrics evocative of rurality] alongside MPB, reggae and rock.

The night provides music for the *Kabokla forró* dance teacher's students to practice their moves but ends with Jorge Benjor's *Mas que nada*, during which another Brazilian Dance teacher parts the crowd to perform the according style. Katia, the owner of *Kabokla* complains to me about how this song is over-played in Madrid, but assures me that it is better than suffering the sounds of *música sertaneja* which, she carefully points out to Fabio, is not acceptable in her bar. Fabio is well aware of this dynamic and has taken pains to adapt his set to accommodate *bossa nova*, samba, reggae, and *forró pé de serra* which are more acceptable to such a public. Fabio suggests that I accompany him to his next concert of the evening at the *Oba Ob*a bar to hear some of the more danceable *sertaneja* renditions from the charismatic José Ferretti but I decline as I have another appointment with *pagode* and *música sertaneja* performers at another centrally located venue.

Fabio first entered Europe in 2003 to search for better career opportunities. Arriving in Lisbon, where cousins of his had previously settled, he later moved on to Madrid to secure work in the construction industry and, realising that a substantial market for *música sertaneja* existed among compatriots, resumed the guitar skills which he had previously learnt from his father in his home city of Goiânia. Finding a partner to accompany him with voice and keyboards, Fabio found enough outlets for his music in Madrid to keep him occupied six nights of the week. He began to appear regularly on *Radio Mais Brasil FM* and other internet and radio transmissions and also secured slots supporting international *música sertaneja* stars such as *Rick e Renner* on their tour dates in Madrid, enabling him to leave his job in construction. Many of Fabio's performing partners were subsequently detained when trying to re-enter Spain without the required documentation but his success continued partly due to his willingness to service a range of audiences from private parties, where he could perform accompanied or solo, to nightclub slots where he could perform to more heterogeneous audiences with tastes that ranged from *pagode* to *axé music* or MPB. After returning to Brazil to visit his son, Fabio was himself detained for being without documentation on re-entry to Spain and sent back to Brazil where he has remained.

Fabio displayed tremendous pride in his status as Madrid's *música sertaneja* performer *par excellence*. His 'easy-going' approach was not only displayed in his informal approach (he often performs at short notice dressed simply in a t-shirt, jeans and

cowboy boots), but also in his taste for 'humble' songs about drinking, romantic travails and the family. Saddened by the divides that exist between members of the Brazilian community in Madrid and the predicaments faced by undocumented migrants, he finds solace in playing the well-known *sertaneja* hits that remind his audiences of home and make people dance. Due to the instability of the legal status of many of his compatriots he performs with a number of different partners and the progress of such collaborations is often keenly followed by fans who learn of the fissures or friendships that develop among performers through social networks.

Asked about his approach to the variety of venues available to *sertaneja* performers in Madrid, Fabio elaborated on the genre's reception in the Spanish capital:

> Fabio: Earlier on I didn't play in that many bars. It's not that I didn't exist, I already existed but the music has more force than before. When I arrived here to speak to people who sang *sertaneja*, people laughed at me, they paid me little attention and, now look, here we are telling our own story in our own way. I've always conquered people in my own way; Why can't I conquer them here in Spain as well? And always singing in the small bars, people always liked that. And when one thought the opposite, word of mouth would allow the *sertanejo* to conquer but in a very humble and simple way, you know? Always with.... how can I say, always relaxed.
>
> Gabril: Can you tell me more about the '*sertaneja* way'?
>
> Fabio: The way of speaking eye to eye. Like, how can I say? You may be in a bar and someone says, 'hey, pick up the guitar, let's have a *cachaça*, a *caipirinha*'? This is the most humble way of living life, you know? It was with this way that people have taken to me. For me to be able to represent my musical rhythm here in Spain is an enormous pleasure. There are many songs that speak of mothers who have died, who are dearly missed. One may remember the mother, the son, who maybe is in Brazil, you know? There's a song that I do, *O dia em que eu sai de casa,* that is about immigrants from Brazil; in it when the people are leaving home, the mother says to her son; 'go and look for your life/I will always be with you'. When I sing this people cry, you know, because they remember their mothers a lot. This is one of the ones that, when I sing it, people go crazy.

While Fabio concentrates on playing more romantic *sertaneja* for older crowds and some of the genre's more danceable numbers for 'the youth' in Madrid's peripheral Brazilian bars, his repertoire has to be much more dynamic in larger, central venues where he comes into regular contact with the 'more conservative' performers of MPB and samba and also performers of *axé* and *pagode* –musics that are not to his taste. To cater to such audiences he relies on the adaptability of fellow musicians who often have a range of styles programmed into keyboards and can switch from *pagode* to *sertaneja* to Latin classics at the click of a button: Fabio, for example, had to work in tandem with the keyboardist from *Swingue Novo* in order to perfect the accordion effect necessary to accommodate the *sertaneja* style. Another affective strategy when approaching such audiences is to play the *bailão* (big party) style which allows for crossover between such styles through its use of accelerated and syncopated rhythms and is highly conducive to dancing. When asked about his approach to the eclectic platforms provided by the *Oba Oba* bar, responded with the following:

> I sing everything there: *Oba Oba* is a place where many Spaniards... You've got that mix of audiences: As many Spaniards as Brazilians who have been here a long time. Young Brazilians. And one has to sing a bit of everything to agree with everyone. It's very complicated to sing the whole night. Sometimes you can play MPB and people don't like it. Sometimes you can play *sertaneja* and people say 'ah no, I don't like *sertaneja*, I like MPB or something more relaxed. It's complicated speaking to the people there but we do it with a lot of gusto with tenderness.

Conclusion

The historical development of popular Brazilian music has established a set of enduring stereotypes on the international scene. With the increased diversification of Brazilian emigrants from the 1990s onwards, however, such stereotypes have been vigorously challenged by previously under-represented sectors of Brazilian society who have been able to make claims on national and international markets through new forms of creativity and the establishment of more effective commercial networks. As Spain has witnessed increasing flows of non-EU migrants pass its borders, regionally, racially and socio-economically diverse Brazilian migrants have employed existing stereotypes as a platform from which to launch a multitude of identities in attempts to avoid 'invisibility'.

Unprecedented access to new forms of cultural representation under the banner of multiculturalism has opened up a more strategic position for interest groups previously marginalised by Brazil's nationally inclusive yet economically and culturally unequal development. As George Yúdice notes in his study of contemporary civil movements in Brazil, struggles for inclusion in national culture have now shifted from discourses of what was traditionally deemed properly political to a culturally mediated politics of interpretability, agency and representability, employing culture as a resource for previously subordinate groups to tactically intervene in opinion formation and decision making (YUDICE, 2003, p. 164). Performers of the *música sertaneja* genre in Madrid adopt the strategy of 'playing a bit of everything' in order to attract a sufficiently broad audience of Spaniards and Brazilians. While the decline of dominant national stereotypes in Brazil has coincided with a fortification of the boundaries of the diverse identities present in the country, music-making among the Brazilian community in Madrid brings such stereotypes to the fore employing them as strategic launch pads from which such identities may be articulated.

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