

Between Salvador and the Recôncavo baiano

Value disputes stemming from the rock bands *Cascadura* and *Escola Pública*¹

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Abstract

This article presents partial results from a comparative study involving the value disputes expressed about the rock bands *Cascadura* [Hardskin] and *Escola Pública* [Public school], which occur through various means of communication in the cities of Salvador and Cachoeira, respectively. The analysis considers the phenomenon of valuation, taking into account three major variables: the singularities of bands and musical genres, the urban scene where expressions occur, and the discursive formats from which controversies emerge. This study demonstrates the asymmetries in the ways of accessing the formats of cultural criticism as well as a tendency to seek approximations to what is considered canonical in the musical genre.

Salvador, Cachoeira, and their musicalities

I was born in Salvador, the capital of Bahia. In 2013 I moved to the Recôncavo region, and two years later, I began teaching at the Center for Arts, Humanities and Letters at the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia. I settled down in the city of São Félix do Paraguaçu, where I've been continually working and researching in the intersection of music, aesthetics, and the city, a field that isn't new to me. Since 2004, I've been an active listener and fan of rock, as well as a researcher involved with the social practices related to this genre—first in Salvador, but later in other cities where I lived, such as Belo Horizonte, Frankfurt am Main, and Vitória da Conquista, to note a few.

Without a doubt, these experiences showed me what it means to be a member of a community of listeners in various regions, acting in spaces and being affected by them at different levels of involvement. I've participated in dialogues and discussions about the main values and tensions within the peculiarities of the cultural practices and policies of these different cities. For example, there is a heavy-metal Belo Horizonte, a community built on the relationship

¹ This article is the result of the study *Cartografias do valor na música popular massiva* [cartography of value in popular music], developed with support from CNPq and with resources from the *Produtividade em Pesquisa* [Productivity in Research] – PQ scholarship. A version in Portuguese of this text was published in the book Cíntia Sanmartín Fernandes/Micael Herschmann (eds.), *Cidades Musicais. Comunicação, territorialidade e política*. Porto Alegre 2018, p. 293-315 [Jorge Cardoso Filho, *Entre Salvador e o Recôncavo Baiano: disputas valorativas a partir*].

with the sacred and with the musical movement known as Clube da Esquina, which occurs in the mediations of the neighborhood Santa Tereza. There is one side of Vitória da Conquista where traditional artists' *cantorias*, such as those of Elomar, is distinguished from the alternative attitude of the band Café com Blues and the circuits of Praça da Normal in the city center.

Thus, as the literature in the field has pointed out,² the specific cultural, economic, social, and political dynamics of each city bring nuances to their musical expressions. These nuances must be thoroughly mapped out and interpreted to understand how the vehicles that construct the city's musical identity operate. In this regard, Bahia's capital, Salvador, has been discussed as a city with a musical culture since Tomé de Sousa founded it in 1549. This discourse can also be identified in the 17th century when it acted as the colony's administrative headquarters (and the famous debates about *lundus*,³ *chulas*,⁴ and *sambas* occurred) as well as during Brazil's transition to a republic.

On the banks of the Paraguaçu River, the city of Cachoeira, in turn, developed as a crossroads between Bahia's sertão,⁵ Recôncavo, and Salvador. Cachoeira formed a junction in these commercial centers because of its sugar cane mills, which were still functioning in the 17th century. The large number of slaves, who came from various regions of Africa, as well as the cultural exchange with the indigenous Tupinambás and the Portuguese gave the city a very rich historical legacy. Later this heritage would be explored through music. Initially this would occur with the arrival of the novices and friars, especially Father Henrique José da Fonseca.⁶ In 1818 Father Henrique José da Fonseca became responsible for the devotion to Nossa Senhora da Ajuda [Our Lady of Perpetual Help], and began work with the Nossa Senhora da Ajuda Orchestra and the Festa d'Ajuda [Celebration of Perpetual Help], which takes place in the month of November in Cachoeira. In this Orchestra tradition, musicians started playing marches and *dobrados*⁷ in the city streets in an attempt to cheer up residents and raise funds for the church. Afterwards, the foundation of philharmonics and musical societies such as the Sociedade Lítero Musical Minerva and the Lyra Ceciliana Phil-

² Cf. Wai-Chung Ho, "Between globalisation and localisation: a study of Hong Kong popular music". In: *Popular Music* 22/2, 2003, 143-157; Thomas Solomon, "'Living underground is tough': authenticity and locality in the hip-hop community in Istanbul, Turkey". In: *Popular Music* 24/1, 2005, 1-20 (<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/popular-music/article/abs/living-underground-is-tough-authenticity-and-locality-in-the-hiphop-community-in-istanbul-turkey/A1976C69E98C0C06337C206CA87597B1>; Accessed 10-23-2023); Will Straw, "Scenes and Sensibilities". In: *Revista Nacional dos Programas de Pós-graduação em Comunicação (E-Compós)* 6/1, 2006 (<http://www.compos.org.br/seer/index.php/e-compos/article/view/83/83>; Accessed 10-23-2023); Jeder Janotti Júnior, *Heavy Metal com Dendê: rock pesado e mídia em tempos de globalização*. Rio de Janeiro 2004.

³ TN: Style of Afro-Brazilian music and dance.

⁴ TN: Style of music and dance created in Portugal.

⁵ TN: Region with rich cultural heritage located in the arid backlands of northeastern Brazil.

⁶ Cf. Jorge Ramos, *O semeador de orquestras: história de um maestro abolicionista*. Salvador 2011.

⁷ TN: Musical style with its origins in military marches.

harmonic (initially founded under the name Euterpe Ceciliana) played a role in musical education and training:

Philharmonics were of significant importance in the cultural, social, and political life of their cities and regions. They were institutions that, in addition to musical performance, represented spaces of social coexistence for the purpose of intellectual activity. Some philharmonics had libraries and lounges dedicated to poetry recitals and even choreographed dances.⁸

In mid-1970s Salvador, Brazil's developing entertainment industry established one of its main cultural products, a musical style based on reggae-samba and afro and vocal rhythms, which was consistent with the standards of international pop music at the time.⁹ Cultural critics gave this genre the pejorative label *Axé Music*,¹⁰ a pun on the local form of expression of *axé*, a term used in the Bantu language to mean 'energy'; and using the English word for music denoted the sound's global pull. Interestingly, during the 1990s the regional political power, especially the state government of Bahia, developed a series of strategies to consolidate the artists associated with Axé Music into the national music scene. The state sponsored shows and television commercials and transformed Salvador's carnival into one of the main bastions of Axé Music, which helped it gain media coverage and contributed to its visibility in several other states in Brazil.¹¹

The professionalization movement in the music industry also had an impact on Cachoeira and Recôncavo. The names of these cities were featured in songs, songs which often became national and even worldwide hits after being interpreted and composed by musicians of Brazilian Popular Music [MPB¹²] such as Caetano Veloso, Dalva Damiana, Roberto Mendes, and Edson Gomes, to name a few. The famous *sambas de roda* and the reggae movement became part of the political and cultural representations of the heroic¹³ city of Recôncavo, thus contributing to the construction of Cachoeira's identity. The municipal culture departments also incentivized (even if insufficiently) these representations to promote tourism and development in the region. The philharmonic itself also began to provide musicians for important bands in the mediatic universe, such as Harmonia do Samba, Ivete Sangalo etc. This fact demonstrates the powerful channels in the musical world of the city.

In this sense, it's important to emphasize that rock's emergence as a musical and expressive practice in these cities brings about manifestations that must

⁸ Ramos, *O sementeiro de orquestras* (see fn. 6), p. 54.

⁹ Cf. Goli Guerreiro, *A trama dos tambores: a música afro-pop de Salvador*. 2nd ed., São Paulo 2010.

¹⁰ The English word *music* was used in the original label.

¹¹ Cf. Daniela Matos, *Salvador e suas comemorações: memória e identidade em narrativas oficiais*. Cruz das Almas 2018.

¹² It should be emphasized that Brazilian Popular Music, more commonly known as MPB (música popular brasileira), is a genre that is distinct from pop music.

¹³ TN: Title given due to the region's participation in Brazil's struggle for independence.

enter into an ongoing dialogue with the scene already cemented in the urban imagination. Even considering that this emergence occurs simultaneously with the consolidation of the entertainment industry, the dissents and distributions will be a fundamental condition for the (in)existence of rock scenes.

For example, Jeder Janotti Júnior researches Salvador's heavy metal scene between the 1990s and 2000s.¹⁴ He demonstrates how headbangers and listeners of reggae, rap, and other genres managed to coexist within the cultural spaces in the coastal neighborhood of Rio Vermelho while disputing—but also negotiating—forms of resistance to what had been established in the city's cultural imagination, especially regarding Axé music's hegemony. The elements that Janotti Júnior emphasizes in order to map out this scene point to certain cultural, economic, and also political agents. These agents contribute to a circuit of culture that creates the conditions for the replication of an alternative model of musical practice and expression.

Janotti Júnior¹⁵ shows that the existence of performance spaces, such as concert halls, festivals, etc., were fundamental for the longevity of Salvador's heavy metal music scene. Festivals like *Palco do Rock*, *Garage Rock*, as well as bars in Rio Vermelho such as Idearium, Café Calypso, and Santana Rock Bar provided this necessary support. The author also notes the essential nature of record stores (*Maniac Records*); stores that specialized in the sale of rock merchandise (*Joker*, *Banzai*, and *Arkádia*, all of which were located in the city center between Rua Carlos Gomes and Politeama de Cima), as well as the existence of specialized media (such as fanzines and websites). Beyond these means of support, the author demonstrates the importance of an audience that can not only produce, but also internally consume the expressions of said musical genre. This study presents a kind of map of the urban fabric of Salvador's heavy metal scene, equipped with the pertinent social practices of entrepreneurs, critics, musicians, listeners, journalists, etc. All these aspects are traversed by the dominant logic in a city that became strongly associated with a swinging, upbeat, and percussive musicality after the rise of Axé Music.

Rock in the Recôncavo Baiano gained visibility, initially, in the municipality of Cruz das Almas in the mid 1970s with the band Os Rebeldes [the rebels].¹⁶ Traditionally a city known for the festivities of São João¹⁷ and for the “war of swords,”¹⁸ it still hosts—thanks to the militancy and devotion of the region's hardcore music fans—alternative shows by rock, punk, and heavy metal bands.

¹⁴ Cf. Janotti Júnior, *Heavy Metal com Dendê* (see fn. 2).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Celina Pereira, “Cena Rock independente na cidade de Cruz das Almas-Bahia”. In: Silvio Benevides/Wilson Penteado, Wilson (eds.), *Pelas lentes do Recôncavo: escritos de teoria social, artes e humanidades*. Cruz das Almas 2016, p. 31-47.

¹⁷ TN: Culturally important festival in Brazil that takes place in the month of June.

¹⁸ The war of swords is a cultural practice in which a specific type of firework is handled by “swordsmen” after the wick has been set on fire. While burning, the “swordsmen” challenge the fire, doing acrobatics and making outlines in the air. The sword is produced using bamboo, clay, wax, twine, and gunpowder composed of saltpeter, sulfur, and charcoal.

Rock bands emerged at various periods in time in cities like (in addition to Cruz das Almas) Maragóipe, Sapeaçu, and also Cachoeira.¹⁹ Specifically in Cachoeira, this circuit developed a stronger infrastructure after 2006, the year in which the Center for Arts, Humanities and Letters at the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia initiated its activities. New students in fields such as history, social communication, and museology brought new patterns of musical consumption. The alternative form of thinking common to students in the humanities was yet another contribution to the city. Bands were formed and listeners grew. These bands and their fans demanded spaces for parties and shows enlivened by alcohol and sexual diversity.

Mostly the CAHL students themselves were forced to organize these shows (*CHAOS party*, for example, which was a pun on the name of their academic institution), but a few local cultural centers either saw the university students' cultural practices as a niche to be exploited or identified with their alternative ideology. For these reasons they also planned events. Spaces such as Café com Arte, created by Polish artist Michel Bogdanowicz, and the poet Damário da Cruz's Pouso da Palavra were some of those places where fans of rock and bands could get together and jam, rehearse and put on shows. Without professional media outlets to circulate information, communication was done through posters in the city and word of mouth or digital communities in social networking sites (primarily Orkut). The sounds of rock began to form the soundscape of this heroic city on the banks of Paraguaçu. These sounds stretched the musical boundaries, sharing space with *samba de roda*, reggae, and the traditional philharmonics.

This short description of the cities and their pertinent musical, commercial, and cultural associations demonstrate the ways in which the urban fabric of the rock scene is composed of multiple and asymmetrical actions, which can (and should) be specific subjects of study. This combination of actions creates the conditions that make it possible for the scene to exist (and resist) in the face of limits and obstacles imposed during the process. How are alternative bars and hardcore music in Salvador related to the mainstream press in terms of constructing the city's musical representation? For example, why is one capital of the Northeast (Recife) more associated with rock culture than another (Salvador)? And in Cachoeira, how can rock enter into the agency of human actors operating in an urban music scene whose narrative is anchored in *samba de roda* and reggae? Since the conditions for coexistence among musical genres aren't the same in Salvador and Cachoeira—a capital and a small city—what are the limits of this relationship between globalization and location for musical expressions?

¹⁹ Adriele Strada/Karla Santana, *Rock e Metal no Recôncavo*. Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso (Bacharelado em Comunicação Social – Jornalismo), Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia. Vídeo, 47 minutos, 2016.

Concerning this process, Ho and Solomon offer insights from their studies of the dynamics of pop music in Hong Kong and rap in Istanbul, respectively.²⁰ Such insertions into a globalized culture (insertions like the musical genres Pop, Rap, and Rock) would require negotiation with local factors, therefore

The implication of globalisation for the future of international capitalism is that economic prosperity will come to reside in global networks that link local popular and international artists, or even local and multi-national music businesses, in profit-maximising webs of production and distribution.²¹

In this regard, our study's hypothesis suggests that cultural criticism, in some way, highlights the tensions between global music networks and listeners, tensions which can be found in the discourses of these listeners. These discourses sometimes evoke the global by extolling canons of music classics, and other times they evoke the local by valuing the asymmetries that must be faced to create rock in local scenes. We thus question the notion that digital communication and information technologies, by themselves, place everyone on a level playing field in terms of promoting the visibility of their respective works. Even if such technologies have had a fundamental role in transforming the music business, our viewpoint signals a necessary link in the circuit of culture²² for reconfigurations to occur.

Our approach, therefore, relates technical transformations to the cultural and sensible dynamics to which the groups are subjected, dynamics which these groups can reorganize by practicing distribution of the sensible.²³ As the subjects of empirical analysis we consider cultural criticisms put forward on the bands *Cascadura* and *Escola Pública*. These criticisms take place mainly in the scenes of Salvador and Cachoeira, respectively.

Cascadura and Escola Pública—conventions and singularities

The band *Cascadura*, founded in 1992 as Dr. Cascadura, began recording in 1997 and had a strong presence in the Salvador rock scene. Between 2006 and 2015 Cascadura gained greater media visibility after the release of the album *Bogary*. In 2008 the band participated in *Video Music Brasil* on MTV and with Pitty performed the song *Inside the beer bottle*²⁴ by the important underground band Úteros em Fúria [angry womb], who is from Salvador. In 2015 Cascadura

²⁰ Cf. Ho, "Between globalisation and localization" (see fn. 2); Solomon, "Living underground is though" (see fn. 2).

²¹ Ho, "Between globalisation and localization" (see fn. 2), p. 155.

²² Paul du Gay/Stuart Hall/Linda Janes/Hugh Mackay/Keith Negus, *Doing cultural studies. The Story of the Sony Walkman*. London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi 1997.

²³ Jacques Rancière, *A partilha do sensível*. 2nd ed., São Paulo 2009.

²⁴ TN: Original title in English.

announced its last show, which allowed us to evaluate a momentarily stalled trajectory.

Fábio Cascadura – vocalist, guitarist, and composer – founded the band while still in high school at the Federal Technical School of Bahia (ETFEB) in the Salvador neighborhood of Barbalho. Cascadura was created

based on a mix of a pop sound with what they called the ‘golden age of rock’. The golden age, which occurred between 1955 and 1977 [...], began to define the band that would become one of Salvador’s main rock universities[.]²⁵

For Stephen Cardoso,²⁶ vocalist Fábio Cascadura’s emphasis on the band’s origins is indicative of the desire to extrapolate the imminent regional limitations:

Cascadura is a band formed by children of the working class. This brings us to our first distinction from most Bahian rock bands at the time: traditionally, rock in Bahia was a middle-class expression. But, by ability and insistence, we penetrated this environment and stood out. First we focused on sticking to rhythm & blues and rock. The music made for Carnival did not affect our style, but it did limit us to a market. Getting noticed at the regional level in that context was difficult. The path was twofold: maintaining our presence in the city and in the state, and also seeking affirmation outside the state.²⁷

In Cascadura’s discography, it’s possible to list works such as *Dr. Cascadura #1* (1997), *Entre!* [come in!] (1999), *Vivendo em Grande Estilo* [living the big life] (2004), *Bogary* (2006), and *Aleluia* [hallelujah] (2012) that classify mostly as rock and its various subgenres (indie, hard, pop, among others). Along with classic rock instruments such as guitar, bass, and drums, Cascadura also incorporates percussion, giving its repertoire a richer rhythmic quality. The band famously integrated the Salvador rock scene. In their last album, they strongly incorporated the theme of religion (be it Catholic or African) into the musical elements and lyrics of their songs.

Escola Pública, on the other hand, was founded in 2008 in the historic city of Cachoeira, Bahia. Initially a band of students from the Center for Arts, Humanities and Letters at the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia, they performed in cities around the Recôncavo Baiano until they became better known in 2011 (during this time vast modifications to the musical circuits of culture were already occurring). In their 8 years of existence, they released two albums, the first self-titled, *Escola Pública*, and the second, *O plano Cartesiano*

²⁵ Luís César Pimentel, “É Cascadura”. In: *OutraCoisa* 4/15, 2006, 42-47, see p. 42.

²⁶ Stephen Cardoso, *Elementos de africanidade na banda Cascadura. Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso*. Cachoeira/São Félix 2015.

²⁷ Fábio Cascadura, *Entrevista concedida a Stephen Cardoso*. E-mail, 2014.

do Deus Enganador [the deceptive god's Cartesian plane], both of which were produced independently.

With the band's emergence in a university environment, the influences of the space as well as its channels led to the construction of an identity related to this environment. For this reason the band's university origins are frequently brought up when discussing its beginnings.

The band was born at UFRB. There's no denying it. We are rebel children of the academy. We sparked several artistic movements within the university and this was positive for both parties. We recorded our first album in the university studio. Our first clip got started there. In short, total symbiosis.²⁸

Many assert that Escola Pública's musicality is blended with other rhythms and mixtures, producing a style that cannot be categorized. When discussing the band, the phrase "free from the constraints of genre" is frequently mentioned. In fact, the use of instruments traditionally not linked to rock, such as the cavaquinho and the tambourine, for example, call to mind the tradition of samba. At the same time, Escola Pública calls to mind the celebrated 1970s band Novos Baianos [new Bahians]. Some have even claimed that the band may be the "novíssimos baianos do Recôncavo" [brand new Bahians from Recôncavo] (Jesus, 2016).²⁹

At this point, it's important to point out that the band does not classify itself as a rock band, rather, they put themselves in line with Brazilian Popular Music. Their performance, attitude, and practices, however, are very much anchored in what is considered rock. Then again, their music screams that the band is "free and not categorizable," so its link to a Cachoeira rock scene would be more associated with elements of circulation rather than musical composition, which the critical discourse about the band will demonstrate.

Everyday and professional value disputes

During the data-collection phase, it was noted that this cultural criticism manifested itself in two very different ways. One was widespread and everyday, expressed in dialogues between listeners either during face-to-face interactions or within debates on digital social networks. The second came through professional music criticism, which appeared in newspapers and specialized websites (even though, interestingly, some of these criticisms were produced by fans). We highlight these differences to show that both types of criticism are part of the value dispute over music and its circulation, even if these types of criticism manifest themselves in different ways: both contributed to the Salvador and Cachoeira

²⁸ Ícaro Oliveira, *Entrevista concedida a Kaio Jesus*. Video, 1 minuto, 2015.

²⁹ Kaio Jesus, *Mapas afetivos da cena rock de Cachoeira, um estudo exploratório a partir da banda Escola Pública. Relatório de pesquisa de iniciação científica*. 2016.

rock scenes by adding to the composition of the plots of symbolic narratives as well as their material infrastructures.

The discussions about both *Cascadura* and *Escola Pública* were collected between August 2015 and July 2016 with the help of the historian Stephen Cardoso as well as research fellows Kaio de Jesus and Karla Santana, who are both from the UFRB Department of Social Communication. Regarding the expression of this discourse, more widespread and everyday criticism is generated about *Escola Pública*, but *Cascadura* gains more visibility through professional channels. This scenario led to two different approaches: interviews with listeners and band members in the case of *Escola Pública*, and the review of criticisms on websites and newspapers in the case of *Cascadura*.

We map out these value disputes by turning first to *Escola Pública* and the band member Ícaro Oliveira's statement about their influences. This type of discourse is interesting because it displays the different genres that the band uses to define itself:

Some things have really made a mark on us. One name that comes up again and again is Ederaldo Gentil, who represents samba from Bahia. His music contains beautiful poetry and we think about his sound a lot. We intensify it and take it to the stage. Important rock n' roll bands, like Pink Floyd, have also affected our band. Brazilian Popular Music, Novos Baianos, Tom Zé, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil ... who's huge. [...] basically our influences come from there.³⁰

Note the movement toward valuing what is local, especially regarding the mention of Ederaldo Gentil, a Bahian samba player. (Gentil, recorded by Clara Nunes, had a rich career, having collaborated with Batatinha,³¹ to note one example.) At the same time, an extremely globalized name like Pink Floyd immediately triggers an opposition to this mainly regional makeup. Then, the band defines its beginnings with the respected names of Brazilian Popular Music, calling to mind an aspect of sophistication, as well as irreverence and good humor.

For *Cascadura*, we want to start by citing journalist Luiz César Pimentel's piece for *OutraCoisa*, the magazine created by the musician Lobão, which circulated between 2003 and 2008. Pimentel's text highlights the 2006 release of the album *Bogary*. Pimentel lays out a review in a way that is unique to the hegemonic field of cultural criticism.

January is barely over and we already have one of the best albums of the year. The phrase might seem like an exaggeration, but these words are absolutely true. Let me repeat myself in another way: you have in your hands, along with this edition of *OutraCoisa*, a record that will one day tell the story of rock in the year 2006.

³⁰ Oliveira, *Entrevista concedida a Kaio Jesus* (see fn. 28).

³¹ Important composer of Samba.

These Bahians—Fábio Cascadura, who plays the guitar, bass, and sings in “Bogary,” and Thiago Trad, who brings it all together with his drumsticks—made a “masterpiece” three years ago with *Vivendo em grande estilo*. The predicate was purposely placed in quotes because it’s borrowed from Nando Reis.

If with *Vivendo em grande estilo* the cascaduras [sic] unearthed the love of 60s/70s and southern rock—tinged with modernity—now they’ve given birth to a more hardcore album, heavy on guitar, complex, yet they haven’t forgotten their swing.

[...]

The obvious thing would be to create a comparison between the person responsible for the band’s songs, Fábio, with the great ones of pop music, such as Brian Wilson, Paul, and John. But the comparison doesn’t exist. They’re more like inspiration than counterparts. Fábio is closer to other illuminated musicians who extract timeless sounds in rhythms and choruses. Someone like Chris Bell and Alex Chilton (Big Star). Or even Roger McGuinn (The Byrds).

[...]

In *Bogary*, rock travels along well-known, pitted roads, like in the opening song, “Se alguém o ver parado” [If someone sees you standing still], the most “cascadura” of all the album’s songs with its guitars tuned low, and the vocals and all six strings attacking you during the chorus, the singer sometimes whispering, and finally a choir of children from Angola bringing the piece to an end.

Sometimes, *Bogary*’s rock explodes in a less-than-three-minute almost punk song, like the second track, “Senhor das moscas” [lord of the flies], which captivates on the first listen. Or when he blends this accelerated brutality with “oo-hoo” and a voice buried in distortion as in “Ele, o super-herói” [Him, the superhero].

Martin, ex-cascadura and currently a Pitty³² band member, backs up the guitarist in this last song and in the heavier and slower “Contra-luz” [against-light].

In line with that, leaning towards stoner and grunge, are the songs “Caim” [Cain] and “Disconsolado” [Disconsolate]. Here the singer risks high notes, calling Chris Cornell to mind.

That said, my current favorites are “Mesmo eu estando do outro lado” [Even though I’m on the other side] and “Onde aprendeu a andar” [Where did you learn to walk]. Possessors of a frightening beauty, Cascadura is in the vein of Teenage Fanclub, along with Byrds and Big Star, who were already mentioned above. Two ballads embellished by a lap steel (“Mesmo eu estando do outro lado”) in the hands of the eternal dead billie Morotó and a mellotron that emulates chords (“Onde aprendeu a andar”) strummed by andré t. The latter, another story altogether.

Besides the mellotron, andré t took up the bass in a few songs and, with Jô Estrada, the guitarist for most of the songs, produced *Bogary*. But andré t didn’t just sign off on the production; he constructed the album. His hand in

³² TN: Important musician of alternative music from the same era.

production is clear—he extracts the best from this broad spectrum and sends it back with crisp and strong tones.

The disc ends with Cascadura's vaudeville, "Adeus solidão" [goodbye solitude]. Here's a clue where the title came from: listen to the end. Not only for this reason, but because every second, in this case, counts.³³

The text begins with the positive valuation of the band's work and a testament to the importance of Cascadura by a recognized name in Brazilian Popular Music: singer-songwriter Nando Reis. Strategically reiterating the musician's predicate establishes the band's place of prominence for rock audiences. Structurally, the critic makes a point of comparing the newly released album with Cascadura's previous projects, then compares them to important rock artists and aligns them within several subgenres. The author emphasizes the local not by inserting the band into a hegemonic musical genre in Salvador, but by citing the city's musicians and rock bands (like Morotó,³⁴ Martin,³⁵ and André t³⁶). At the same time, the author incorporates the canonical characters of international rock showing genre's globalizing pull.

Regarding relations with the city, Escola Pública stresses again and again the importance of Cachoeira to the band's stylistic peculiarities. In their discourse, they reference prestigious musical figures in the city such as Edson Gomes and Dona Dalva. This aspect does not occur in the discourse around Cascadura.

This influence of Cachoeira is huge, you know? When you talk about music from Bahia, you immediately think of Cachoeira. When I played in Salvador, I always played with a lot of wind musicians, and there's also the influence of the philharmonics, which is incredible. All of it is scattered around ... reggae, samba de roda. It's huge. I had the opportunity to meet Dona Dalva, a wonderful, incredible person. With a fighting spirit. Reggae also has this spirit of defiance. All of it was there [...] it came to us and made us what we are today.³⁷

The fusional aspect of this discourse by Lucas Pereira, drummer of Escola Pública, demonstrates how the band incorporates and negotiates the values operating in Cachoeira and transforms them into a positive distinction for their own identity construction. When the trademarks of local genres appear in debates about

³³ Pimentel, "É Cascadura" (see fn. 25).

³⁴ Musician in the Salvador rock scene. He was a member of the band The Dead Billies and responsible for *Bonfim Hard*, a rock event that took place simultaneously with the traditional ceremony of the *Lavagem da Igreja do Bonfim* [The washing of the Church of Bonfim] in the Cidade Baixa neighborhood in Salvador.

³⁵ Martin Mendonça played in several bands in the Salvador rock scene, such as King Cobra, Mercy Killing Malefactor etc. He became widely known nationally for his collaboration with Pitty.

³⁶ Musician and producer involved with several musicians in the city, especially within alternative scenes, such as electronic music and rock.

³⁷ Lucas Pereira, *Entrevista concedida a Kaio Jesus*. Video, 1 minuto, 2015.

Cascadura, these trademarks appear as dysphoric elements, elements that listeners should not acknowledge. This phenomena is evident in the comments concerning the band's farewell show.

We highlight two comments, in this case, taken from a Facebook profile: the first is the one that makes reference to the band The Dead Billies, a very influential band in the 1990s Salvador rock scene. Both The Dead Billies and Cascadura are named as Salvador's most important rock bands, which demonstrates the affective alliances related to musical genre in that city. The second refers to Carnival and the chorus *tudo nosso, nada deles* [all ours, none of it theirs] from a song by Igor Kanário, the self-proclaimed prince of the ghetto, which is mentioned to show what Cascadura does not represent and, in this case, to express hostility toward a hit song from the 2015 Salvador Carnival.

Comment 1 – “Even knowing that everything comes to an end, I hope they keep playing. I saw when this band was born, and their music played in some of my nights during my youth in dear Soterópolis. For me, together with The Dead Billies, the best rock bands from Salvador. A pity!”

Comment 2 – “You don't know them? They sang BERE BERE BARA BARA and they were well known during carnival with TUDO NOSSO NADA DELES... but really cool is what you know”.

Regarding the formats of cultural criticism, there are similarities in content even with discourses in different formats. Both in the listeners' daily conversation, as well as in professional music criticism and interviews, certain structures of critical and value-based language are incorporated into the discursive content again and again. For example, writers and interviewees make comparisons with music icons and cite previous projects and/or associations or conflicts with musical genres. This operational grammar is evident in a comment³⁸ left by a listener about Escola Pública's music video *Socorro, meu Deus* [help me, God], in YouTube. The listener points out the possible contradiction of a fan of rock recognizing the value in the samba created by Escola Pública.³⁹

Comment 3 – OLHA QUE PARA UM OUVINTE DE ROCK, VOU DAR O BRAÇO A TORCER. MUITO BOM. MUITO BOM MESMO. TANTO A MUSICALIDADE COMO A LETRA, PARABÉNS!

The interviews also point to a band with eclectic and independent influences, whose story begins in the underground,⁴⁰ a band who maintains a presence both

³⁸ TN: The fourth comment (entire comment capitalized) reads, “Look, as a fan of rock, I have to admit, well done. Very well done. Both the sound and the lyrics. Bravo!”

³⁹ On many occasions, the band itself as well as the listeners rejected the label of rock because it refers to a closed tradition that would allow for few musical incorporations. They assert that the band shouldn't be classified, since their musical productions are so varied.

⁴⁰ TN: English term *underground* used by author.

in the Salvador and Cachoeira rock scenes. In other words, the fact that Escola Pública circulates outside of a main hub and has a wide audience appears in both everyday and professional criticisms.

Discussion of the data

In a social context in which we increasingly deal with dissensus on a daily basis—even if it be through media and information, expressive objects, and even political events and performances—the ability to understand what emerges becomes a fundamental task. The most recent troubles with connecting the fields of aesthetics and politics in contemporary culture⁴¹ are based on this constant reorganization of the forms of distribution of the sensible. This connection is considered central here, and we investigate how these sensibilities function and the way in which they replicate and/or break with their own forms of feeling and perceiving. Jacques Rancière considers that the processes of distributing the sensible imply both “the existence of something uncommon and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it”.⁴² One can thus perceive the need to identify the possible tension in the spaces and time established for the occupation of different social groups – which, on many occasions, must engage with a “smaller” place built for their respective ways of experiencing the world.

The distribution of the sensible reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed. Having a particular ‘occupation’ thereby determines the ability or inability to take charge of what is common to the community.⁴³

It is in this sense that cultural criticisms can be considered expressions of sensibility, as performances that *make politics*, since they (re)position the subjects in different processes of distribution, creating different abilities in everyday public scenes. Therefore, we seek to highlight how the discourses presented in the value disputes concerning the bands Escola Pública and Cascadura reorganize this distribution of the sensible.

At the outset, it’s necessary to question why the discourse about each of the bands emerges, primarily, in different cultural formats: the professional and the everyday. Both Salvador and Cachoeira are cities in the state of Bahia and both have strong cultural scenes, but their infrastructures are extremely different.

While Salvador is a capital with about three million inhabitants, daily newspapers, various channels of commerce, and numerous accessible cultural facil-

⁴¹ Jacques Rancière, *Políticas da Escrita*. São Paulo 1995.

⁴² Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. New York 2011, p. 12.

⁴³ Ibid.

ities, Cachoeira has just over 34 thousand inhabitants (including a vast rural area), no network of daily newspapers, and its commerce is made up of family businesses. For a city of this size, there is an intriguing variety of cultural facilities (Cineteatro Cachoeirano, Casa das Irmandades, Galeria da Fundação Hansen Bahia etc). If these facilities cannot be considered key factors to this cultural development, we can at least say that this type of circuit of culture contributes to the formation of a professional critic – considering, above all, the 10-year-old undergraduate program in social communication with a certificate of journalism within the city. In this sense, certain original asymmetries constitute the organized distribution of the sensible and many of the bands' discourses seek to reorganize this condition.

The stylistic characteristics of the bands are also important elements in the distribution of the sensible, because they show both the available space of experience (with which each will enter into dialogue) and the horizon of expectation opened by their actions and discourse. In this regard, we've shown that Cascadura is stylistically linked to the hard rock tradition while also making continual references to other subgenres of rock. Escola Pública defines itself as a Brazilian Popular Music band, which systematically combines the influences of samba, reggae, and rock. We want to highlight the specifics of these two ways of practicing the distributions of sensibility.

The constant reference to rock's subgenres is a way of reaffirming belonging to a certain tradition and, in this sense, perpetuating canons and symbols of that same tradition. Rancière draws attention to the way in which this reaffirmation of the parts pertaining to each individual can be dangerous, because it

situates bodies in their place and in their functions according to their 'properties', according to their name or absence of name [...] The principle of this being-together is simple: it gives each one his portion according to the evidence of what he is.⁴⁴

Using the available evidence, the operation only reaffirms the social arrangement – which would include the separation between axé music and rock in Salvador's music scene, for example.

The discourses expanding to other genres of Brazilian Popular Music already indicates a need for affirmation and recognition of the "Other" as a speaker, which constitutes existence itself. In this sense, there would be no repeated reinforcement based on evidence in the first place. However, if we recognize that Samba and Reggae are themselves considered alternative genres in the musicality of Cachoeira, we see a reinforcement of a peripheral tradition without space in core places of exposure – for example, there are no discourses of recognition for *música de aparelhagem*⁴⁵ or *arrocha*.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Jacques Rancière, *O desentendimento*. São Paulo 1996, p. 40.

⁴⁵ TN: Literally *sound-system music*; a peripheral style of music associated with electronic elements and light shows.

The discourses about the beginnings of Escola Pública indicate an organization of the sensible that recognizes the consolidated spaces of the “university” and other traditional institutions, thus giving the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia and local musical traditions prominent roles. Note the sense of identification with these spaces (even if they consider themselves *rebel children*), which demonstrates that, in the field of reorganizations of the sensible, what is at stake is a dynamic of appropriation of these institutional spaces (such as the university’s recording studio) and these local musical traditions (such as samba de roda and reggae). In this way, they shape their demand for inclusion and recognition of belonging to these institutionalities. There is a demand to be welcomed by them.

However, if we look at the comments on the music video *Socorro, meu Deus* and observe a viewer’s reservations about the ability of a rock listener to recognize the value of one of Escola Pública’s sambas, we can see that the behavior of listeners of different genres establish demarcations. Therefore, we see no demand for acceptance, but the establishment of distinctions—a process that is renewed again and again in the dynamics of reorganization of the sensible.

In the case of Cascadura, reorganizing this distribution is considered necessary because carnival music is presented as an obstacle for wider public visibility. In this sense, a movement toward welcoming and belonging could not be claimed as legitimate. A reorganization will be necessary to redistribute the visibility regimes in this scenario. Interestingly, the strategy of the band’s discourses about their origins is not to confront the local musicalities directly, but rather strengthen their visibility in a national context—which would promote a process of recognition from the outside in, or in more accurate terms, from a national underground scene to a local one.

The debate that emerged on digital social networks when the band announced their farewell show displays the tension this strategy produced. Members of the Salvador rock scene lamented the end of rock in Salvador while other users commented ironically that they had never heard of the band. In other words, although the strategy succeeded in reaching a segment of listeners outside the state, it wasn’t enough to significantly expand its audience in Salvador.

⁴⁶ TN: Peripheral style of music and dance with its roots in Bahia.

The pertinence of a few concepts (underground, mainstream, and canon)

Our research problem arises at the intersection of the sensible dimension of experience, the judgment of taste, and the constructions of hegemony – connecting ethical, aesthetic, and political elements⁴⁷ of cultural criticism about music. The judgements formulated are understood as material expressions of experience, and the formats these judgements have acquired in contemporary culture have varied between the most traditional types of academic and journalistic criticism as well as the discourse of the fan, who leaves his or her comments on various social networks as demonstrated by Cardoso Filho (2013).⁴⁸

In this regard, our evidence indicates that value disputes in this field become drivers of reorganization of the distribution of the sensible⁴⁹ and of the visibility regimes of cultural practices existing in the respective cities. Thus, both in Salvador and in Cachoeira, we can affirm that the development of rock music scenes negotiate with an established (at least, provisionally) and instituted zone of cultural circuits. The valuation practices of the Salvador and Cachoeira rock scenes, therefore, seek to destabilize these institutionalities and promote forms of sensible engagement pertaining to rock.

Consequently, this process seems to point to the relevance of the discussion about canons in contemporary culture, since the stabilities, even if temporary, establish parameters that are recognized as acceptable to a given community. Therefore, it still seems pertinent to discuss the extent to which this process reinforces the dynamics of constructing canons, of what is worth remembering, of what we may forget. It would be even more interesting to consider the main ways in which cultural criticisms have formulated dissensus according to Rancière's broad categories of political action and police action.⁵⁰

The study also reveals, through the urban variable, that there is still a fundamental distinction between cultural and symbolic processes that occur in large metropolises and small cities, such as Salvador and Cachoeira. If, broadly speaking, we can affirm that the line between the underground and the mainstream is blurred in a context of globalized capitalism and digital communication technologies, a more specific consideration of the cases reveals how such distinctions can be instructive on a local level.

The Salvador rock scene, even if it is a niche, gains visibility through global discourses. In many ways, the professional parameters of journalistic criticism shape this scene and thus provide more support for its circulation. The Cachoeira rock scene, on the other hand, is materialized in everyday practices; the para-

⁴⁷ Dilvan Azevedo/Jorge Cardoso Filho, "Da sedução do argumento: dimensões (est)éticas da crítica midiática". In: Edson Dalmonete (ed.), *Teoria e Prática da Crítica de Mídia*. Salvador 2013, p. 35-52; Rancière, *A partilha do sensível* (see fn. 23).

⁴⁸ Jorge Cardoso Filho, *Práticas de escuta do Rock: experiência estética, mediações e materialidades da comunicação*. Salvador 2013.

⁴⁹ Cf. Rancière, *A partilha do sensível* (see fn. 23); Rancière, *O desentendimento* (see fn. 44).

⁵⁰ Rancière, *O desentendimento* (see fn. 44).

meters of another nature (its economically peripheral condition, for example) constrain its circulation, and overcoming these parameters becomes fundamental to its (re)existence.

Both the contradictions and the strengths of these scenarios over urban space become a variable in this study because they point to the different circuits of culture in which such criticisms will be incorporated—logics of production, consumption, circulation, and representation.⁵¹ The study reveals, therefore, an analytical utility in the distinctions of the forms of wide and segmented circulation, especially when an urban variable is present. With regard specifically to the field of representation of these musical scenes, we should point out that it is within cultural criticisms that we find the hubs in which the genealogical and identity narratives of musical cities are shaped.

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⁵¹ Cf. du Gay et al., *Doing cultural studies* (see fn. 22); Micael Herschmann, *Indústria da music@ em transição*. São Paulo 2010.

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