

## **Musical Instruments' African-Based Studies: The Application of the Afro-Brazilian Knowledge to Study Non-African-based Musical Instruments**

*By Adrian Estrela Pereira<sup>\*</sup>, Ekaterina Konopleva<sup>‡</sup>, Jehan Alghneimin<sup>°</sup>,  
Nicole Kasbary<sup>•</sup> & György Mészáros<sup>♦</sup>*

*In the last two decades, the Brazilian music scenario has been marked by an increasingly academic-oriented interest in studying and applying musical knowledge stemming from African-heritage. Institutions and researchers from Salvador city hold an important role in the development and dissemination of this type of knowledge. Accordingly, this article's general aim is to discuss possible implications of the application of African-based musical knowledge in the study of non-African-based instruments, focusing on the Soteropolitan context. This paper has four specific aims to support the general purpose: 1) To present the Salvador city and the main historical and social elements related to musical contexts; 2) To present some publications which employed African-based musical knowledge for the development of musical competences related to non-African-based musical instruments; 3) To analyze these materials from a music education perspective; and 4) To integrate the examinations with broader social discussions. Pursuing these aims, the current study applies a qualitative document analysis as its methodological approach to acquire the data, examine the materials and develop the knowledge which will support the proposed reflections. Despite the municipal orientation, it is expected that the promotion of a deep understanding of a local phenomenon can influence broader sectors of music education.*

### **Introduction**

As an array of other human expressions, the artistic contexts are constantly passing through changes, adaptations, experimentations, modifications and transformations. In the music field, a myriad of possibilities may impact, by diverse means and extensions, in the update process of musical manifestations. Whilst one may compose in order to refine an instrumental technique, others may write songs to express a personal and intimate feeling; whilst one may innovate aiming for success and economic recognition, others may be inspired by the application of new possibilities provided by the latest technologies.

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<sup>\*</sup>PhD Candidate, Eötvös Loránd University, Institute of Education, Hungary.

<sup>‡</sup>Professor, Federal University of Bahia, Brazil.

<sup>°</sup>PhD Candidate, Eötvös Loránd University, Institute of Education, Hungary.

<sup>•</sup>PhD Candidate, Eötvös Loránd University, Institute of Education, Hungary.

<sup>♦</sup>Professor, Eötvös Loránd University, Institute of Education, Hungary.

Regardless of the reasons that drive music makers throughout their artistic processes, it is undeniable the fluid and changing characteristic of the music field. Parallely with the broad music field, the area of music education also undergoes its own transformation, adaptation and resignification processes. Guided by an array of possible motivations and aims, music educators, scholars, researchers and students contribute, by several means, with the dynamic process of developing, testing, updating and assessing initiatives related to teaching and learning music-related skills and competences.

In spite of the fair categorization as belonging to music education, different initiatives pursued by different individuals are guided by different motivations and expectations. As an illustration, learning how to play acoustic guitar may create countless questions and lead to several different decisions depending on the motivations, priorities and aims of the involved stakeholders: 1) students may have different aims like playing guitar solo, accompanying themselves while singing, participate in music groups, etc.; 2) teachers may choose different start points like chords and strumming, scales and fingerpicking, chords and fingerpicking, scales and picking, etc.; and 3) courses' coordinators may integrate diverse expectations in the curriculum and courses' content like preparing students for an orchestra, preparing virtuous soloists, valorizing underprivileged groups, improving students' social emotional competences, etc.

This simple example aimed neither to present every possible stakeholder of music education (parents, policy makers, business owners and music producers could also be added) nor exhaust the totality of plausible issues that could be linked to the teaching and learning processes associated with the mentioned stakeholders (students could also be interested in developing social emotional competences, for example). Based on a small excerpt of music instrument studies (only considering acoustic guitar), this illustration intends to exemplify how complex the music education field can be and how this area can incorporate perspectives and demands from various interested parties. Different perspectives, approaches, aims, genres, rhythms, materials, curriculums, discussions, histories and expectations are intrinsically connected with the music education field and with the reasons for its constant transformations and innovations.

Additionally, it may also be relevant for the reflections to incorporate some issues related to the impacts of broader social, political and economic structures in the music field.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the discussions should not neglect the possible functions of music education in broader social issues. The role that the music field can play in the fomentation of emancipated and democratic societies

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1. Adrian Estrela Pereira, Ekaterina Konopleva, Dung Thi Do, Irênio de Cerqueira Paes Coelho Neto, and György Mészáros, "Educação Musical Afro-Brasileira: Uma Investigação do Ijexá como Ferramenta Educacional Descolonizadora," in *10o Musicom - Encontro de Pesquisadorxs Em Comunicação e Música - Playlists Das Diversidade*, 1-15.

should be constantly and consistently considered as part of music educators' discussions and reflections.<sup>2</sup>

Embedded in these reflections, the last two decades of the Brazilian music scenario have been marked by a myriad of changes due to the expansion of African-based music education. An increasingly academic-oriented interest in studying and applying musical knowledge stemming from African-heritage sources can be noticed in Brazilian universities, congresses, conventions, journals and other formal structures. Beyond historical and ethnographic investigations linked to African-matrix music and its ascendants from ethnomusicological, philosophical and social viewpoints, it can be observed a growing interest in scrutinizing African-based music and applying the developed knowledge in the study of "non-African-based" musical instruments such as piano, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, electric bass and drum kit. Besides materials directed to musical instruments training, in recent years, the African-based knowledge has been explored as a pathway to foster the development of other musical competences (e.g., melodic solfege, improvisation, rhythmic perception, etc.) that were dominated by other kinds of materials.<sup>3</sup>

Institutions and scholars from Salvador, a Brazilian northeastern city which is identified as the world's biggest Afro-descendent city outside the African continent,<sup>4</sup> hold an important role in the research, development, assessment and dissemination of this type of knowledge. In this context, the present article has as its general aim to discuss possible intentions and implications of the examination of African-based music traditions for its application in the study of non-traditional African instruments. This paper employs critical, sociological and ethnomusicological perspectives to reflect on possible impacts of this African-orientation in the music education scenario, focusing on the publications that were developed in the Salvador city or based on the Soteropolitan<sup>5</sup> context. Likewise, this work has four specific aims to support the general purpose: 1) To present the Salvador city and the main historical and social features that can impact in musical expressions; 2) to present some recent publications that focus on the application of musical knowledge inherited from African-Brazilian traditions for the training in instruments other than the originally used in the traditional contexts; 3) to analyze these materials from a music education

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2. Patrick Schmidt, "Music Education as Transformative Practice: Creating New Frameworks for Learning Music through a Freirian Perspective," *Visions of Research in Music Education* 6 (2005): 1-14.

3. Guilherme Scott, *Universo Percussivo Baiano de Letieres Leite - Educação Musical Afro-Brasileira: Possibilidades e Movimentos* (Salvador: Federal University of Bahia, 2019).

4. Maria Estela Rocha Ramos, *Bairros Negros: Uma Lacuna nos Estudos Urbanísticos: Um Estudo Empírico-Conceitual no Bairro do Engenho Velho da Federação, Salvador (Bahia)* (Salvador: Federal University of Bahia, 2013).

5. Soteropolitan means what is relative to the Salvador city (e.g., a person who was born in Salvador is called Soteropolitan).

perspective; and 4) based on the critical paradigm's perspective, to integrate the developed analysis with broader social discussions that may affect and be affected by the music field.

Pursuing these aims, the current study applies a qualitative document analysis as its methodological approach to acquire the data, examine the materials and develop the knowledge supported by diverse written, audio and audiovisual sources. In spite of this investigation being focused in a municipal context, it is expected that a better understanding of a regional phenomenon can create effects that reverberate not only in a local music context but also in broader levels and sectors of music education, considering our current increasingly connected and globalized societies.

The next sections of this investigation will be dedicated to the construction of the knowledge that will support the proposed reflections and the article's aims. Accordingly, the subsequent parts of this paper can be expected as: 1) the immediate next section will present a brief literature review about the Salvador city, focusing on features that can support the understanding of the link between this municipality and African-based music studies; 2) the following part will concentrate in introducing the main characteristics of some materials which employed African-based knowledge in the development of approaches to teaching and learning non-African-based musical instruments; 3) the next will provide a general comprehension of the methodology adopted during this article's development; 4) based on the critical paradigm perspective, the subsequent part will promote the reflections and discussions that will allow the integration of all previously presented information; and 5) the last section will present the authors' final consideration and the main conclusions of the current investigation.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Salvador City**

Founded in 1549 under the Portuguese Empire's rule, Salvador (SSA) is a city that contributed and keeps contributing to diverse aspects of the Brazilian fluid, dynamic and heterogeneous development.<sup>6</sup> Considering the Portuguese government's economic and political interests in Brazil, SSA was chosen to be the administrative, military, economic and political heart of the colony due to its geographically privileged position. Selected as the first capital of Brazil, Salvador

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6. Ramos, *Território Afrodescendente: Leitura de Cidade Através do Bairro da Liberdade, Salvador (Bahia)* (Salvador: Federal University of Bahia, 2007).

kept this position for more than two centuries (until 1763), when the administrative center was transferred to Rio de Janeiro.<sup>7</sup>

Since before its foundation, Salvador was marked by a very complex social and cultural environment. Calabrich et al. posit that the city was raised by the enslavement of Brazilian native peoples (indigenous).<sup>8</sup> However, as stated by the authors, due to the Catholic Church's interference and the resistance of the indigenous peoples, the colonizers started to import African people to work as slaves in the Brazilian territory.<sup>9</sup> Thereby, between the end of the XVI century and XIX century, African-Banto<sup>10</sup> peoples were brought to Brazil as slaves. From the beginning of the XIX century, the Portuguese colonizers started to trafficking expressive numbers of African-Sundanese<sup>11</sup> peoples (e.g., Fons, Iorubás, Jeje, etc.). Calabrich et al.<sup>12</sup> affirm that "the Sudanese were very numerous because their peoples were at war and prisoners of war were almost always sold as slaves. Thousands of people arrived in Salvador, speaking different languages and with different habits, values and religions".<sup>13</sup> However, not only enslaved Sudanese used to go to Brazil, business Sudanese individuals used to travel to SSA looking for commerce opportunities. As posited by the authors, "They were rich black merchants, who traveled mainly from Lagos, Nigeria, and came to Salvador to sell authentic African products".<sup>14</sup> The Bantos and the Sudanese are recognized as the main African peoples that formed the Brazilian society.<sup>15</sup> Concomitantly, Prandi<sup>16</sup> asserts that,

the Sudanese are the peoples located in the regions that today range from Ethiopia to Chad and from southern Egypt to Uganda in the northernmost part of Tanzania. [...]

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7. Ramos, "Bairros Negros: Uma Lacuna nos Estudos Urbanísticos: Um Estudo Empírico-Conceitual no Bairro do Engenho Velho da Federação, Salvador (Bahia)."

8. Selma Calabrich, Gerson Silva, José Francisco Izquierdo Yafiez, and José Maurício C. D. Bittencourt, *Afrobook: Mapeamento dos Ritmos Afro Baianos* (Salvador: Pracatum Escola de Música e Tecnologias, 2017).

9. Antonio Vieira, a Brazilian priest, convinced the King of Portugal to stop enslaving the Indigenous people and to import Africans from the coast.

10. Banto is an oversimplified categorization based on language roots. Around four hundred African ethnic groups are considered Banto

11. Sudanese is an oversimplified categorization based on language roots. Even though they are from different ethnic groups, a myriad of sub-Saharan ethnicities are grouped as Sudanese (e.g., Iorubás, Fons, Fulanis, Jeje, Mandinga etc.).

12. Here and ahead: authors' translation

13. Calabrich, Silva, Yafiez, and Bittencourt, *Afrobook: Mapeamento dos Ritmos Afro Baianos*, 2017, 26.

14. Ibid.

15. Bruno Nigri, *O Samba no Terreiro: Música, Corpo e Linguagem Como Prática Cultural – Apontamentos para o Campo do Lazer* (Mestrado em Lazer, Belo Horizonte: Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 2014).

16. Here and ahead: authors' translation.

below, the central Sudanese group, formed by numerous linguistic and cultural groups that made up different ethnic groups that supplied Brazil with slaves, especially those located in the Gulf of Guinea region and which, in Brazil, we know by the generic names of Nagôs or Yorubás (but comprising several peoples of the Yoruba language and culture, including the Oyó, Ijexá, Ketu, Ijebu, Egbá, Ifé, Oxogbô, etc.). [...] The Bantu, peoples of Southern Africa, extending to the south, just below the Sudanese limits, comprising the lands that stretch from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean to the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>17</sup>

Considering these expressive “immigration” processes, the African heritage became a very significant part of the Soteropolitan culture. Outside the African continent, Salvador is the city with the biggest Black population in the world.<sup>18</sup> According to Guerreiro, in 2017, 85% of Salvador’s population was formed by pardos<sup>19</sup> and blacks.<sup>20</sup> By different means, the countless African ethnicities that arrived in Salvador reinvented themselves into new forms of organization to incorporate the traditions of different peoples.<sup>21</sup> For the music field, one of the most important arrangements is related to the Afro-Brazilian religions known as Candomblé. Pereira et al.<sup>22</sup> posit that Candomblé “should not be understood as referring to a specific religion, but as a categorization of different Afro-Brazilian religions that share certain characteristics”.<sup>23</sup> Concomitantly, Cardoso asserts that “Candomblé is a generic term used to describe some Afro-Brazilian religions that share certain characteristics, such as the phenomenon of possession”.<sup>24</sup> These multiple religions also share the relevance of percussive music in their ceremonies. The music played in these ceremonies is one of the main sources that have been used to develop materials and initiatives related to music education, as it will be described in the next section.

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17. R. Prandi, “De Africano a Afro-Brasileiro: Etnia, Identidade, Religião,” *Revista Usp* 46 (2000): 53.

18. Ramos, *Bairros Negros: Uma Lacuna nos Estudos Urbanísticos: Um Estudo Empírico-Conceitual no Bairro do Engenho Velho da Federação, Salvador (Bahia)*, 2013.

19. Broadly speaking, Pardo is a term used in Brazil to classify light-skinned African-descendant people. In Brazil, the ethnic classification is based on self-identification.

20. Goli Guerreiro, “Prefácio do Afrobook,” in *Afrobook: Mapeamento dos Ritmos Afro Baianos* (eds.) Selma Calabrich et al. (Salvador: Pracatum Escola de Música e Tecnologias, 2017), 17-18.

21. Adrian Estrela Pereira and Ekaterina Konopleva, “O Ritmo Ijexá ao Piano: Aspectos Interpretativos,” in *XIV ENECULT (Encontro de Estudos Multidisciplinares em Cultura, Salvador, 2018)*, 1-14.

22. Here and ahead: authors’ translation

23. “Educação Musical Afro-Brasileira: Uma Investigação do Ijexá como Ferramenta Educacional Descolonizadora,” 7.

24. Ângelo Nonato Natale Cardoso, *A Linguagem dos Tambores* (Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2006), 394.

## The Soteropolitan Publications

As cited above, this section will be dedicated to the presentation of some materials that exemplify the current Soteropolitan trend of employing Afro-Brazilian knowledge for the development of musical competences in instruments that do not necessarily share African ascendancy. In this direction, the current section will briefly present the main features, application and aims of the selected materials in order to provide a useful background to support the reflections that will be offered in the following sections.

The materials was selected to illustrate three main categories that can be identified in the Soteropolitan music education production: 1) the academic oriented – understand here as productions developed by scholars linked to music programs of universities which aim to fulfill the traditional requirements of a postgraduate music course; 2) the non-academic oriented – represented here by publications that were systematically designed to reach audiences outside the academic context, normally adopting certain standards (e.g., language, age, musical level) that are compatible with the desired audience (e.g., adults pianists, beginner drummers, children, guitar players, etc.); and 3) the publications endorsed by the Professional Postgraduate Program in Music (PPGPROM) of the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) – identified here as materials which intend to fill the gap between the academia and the external world, as materials that were developed to integrate academic features in publications directed to the general public.

Identified as academy oriented, the article “Rhythm Ijexá on the Piano: Interpretative Aspects”,<sup>25</sup> by Pereira and Konopleva,<sup>26</sup> has as its main aim to present possible applications of the Ijexá (an African-based rhythm used in Candomblé ceremonies) into piano performance. The paper briefly presents the connections between the rhythm and the Brazilian culture at the same time that presents the main social and religious features of the Ijexá. Additionally, the article suggests a study protocol and introduces the UPB method<sup>27</sup> as the guide in the development of the examples (scores) presented in the paper.

As an outcome of his master degree, Alexandre Vargas published the dissertation entitled “Bahian Guitar: a methodology for instrumental teaching”<sup>28</sup> as a pathway to support teaching and learning processes related to the instrument Bahian Guitar (Guitarra Baiana). However, since its creation in the second half of the XX century, the Bahian guitar has been used to play Afro-

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25. Translated from Portuguese: “Guitarra Baiana: uma proposta metodológica para o ensino instrumental”

26. Pereira and Konopleva, “O Ritmo Ijexá ao Piano: Aspectos Interpretativos,” 2018.

27. The UPB (Percussive Universe of Bahia) is a method of teaching Afro-Brazilian music developed by internationally renowned Brazilian popular musician Letieres Leite.

28. Translated from Portuguese: Guitarra Baiana: uma proposta metodológica para o ensino instrumental.

Brazilian music. Thus, Vargas' work<sup>29</sup> integrates African-based knowledge into the study and training of this newborn Brazilian instrument. As an academic publication, the dissertation also offers sections with substantial theoretical backgrounds related to aspects like: history of Bahian Guitar and its connection with the carnival; music techniques, skills and competences; Brazilian rhythms; and music education approaches.

Starting the non-academic segment, the book "Afro-Brazilian Rhythms for Drum Kit", authored by Tito Oliveira, is a bilingual publication (Portuguese and English) which has as its main aim to contribute with the development of drummers by presenting possible applications of African-based music traditions for the drums (drum kit). To achieve his aim, Oliveira<sup>30</sup> was based on six Afro-Brazilian rhythms (Ijexá, Agueré, Samba de Roda, Cabila, Vassi and Samba-reggae) to develop exercises, studies, and grooves that provide knowledge associated with African-based music traditions and, at the same time, offer technical challenges that contribute with drummers technical improvement. It is relevant to mention that four of the chosen rhythms are used in Candomblé ceremonies (Ijexá, Agueré, Cabila and Vassi). In the early sections, the book presents brief theoretical sections related to the chosen rhythms, their traditional instruments, their roots and their common social and religious applications.

Still in the non-academic categorization, Rafael Lázaro published the document named "Guitar Strumming in Samba-Reggae: A proposal"<sup>31</sup> as a genuine and voluntary contribution to the development of guitar players that are interested in Samba-reggae, a relatively recent Afro-Brazilian rhythm<sup>32</sup> which is commonly associated to a Bloco-Afro<sup>33</sup> named Olodum. Lázaro's<sup>34</sup> main objective is to offer some possibilities for the employment of electric guitar in the accompaniment of songs played in the Samba-reggae rhythm. Additionally, the author provides a brief literature review related to the Soteropolitan's Blocos-Afro

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29. Alexandre Siles Vargas, *Guitarra Baiana: uma Proposta Metodológica para o Ensino Instrumental* (Salvador: Federal University of Bahia, 2015).

30. Tito Oliveira, *Ritmos Afro-Brasileiros na Bateria* (Salvador: Etina, 2014).

31. Translated from Portuguese: *Levadas de Guitarra no Samba-Reggae: Uma Proposta*

32. Although extremely influenced by African-matrix music, the samba reggae was forged in the second half of the XX century by a Brazilian percussionist "Antonio Luis Alves de Souza", known as "Neguinho do Samba". Unlike the majority of rhythms presented in this article, the samba-reggae is not found in centenary African or African-based traditions.

33. Blocos-Afro are organizations which started to be created in XX century with the aiming of showing African based cultures during the Soteropolitan carnival. Today, they have event all year long and have objectives related to social changing and social equality.

34. Rafael Lima Lázaro, *Levadas de Guitarra no Samba-Reggae: Uma Proposta* (2019).



(focusing on Olodum, the responsible for spreading the samba-reggae) and the rise of the “Axé Music”<sup>35</sup> in the Brazilian carnival.<sup>36</sup>

Despite being previously outlined, it is important to reiterate the reasons to create a third section dedicated to materials developed in PPGPROM. The PPGPROM is an innovative Postgraduate program which aims to strengthen the gap between universities’ knowledge production and the public outside the academy. Instead of requiring a dissertation, as the majority of master programs, the PPGPROM is flexible regarding the nature of the main outcome of the master degree’s studies. In general terms, the student needs to develop an academic memorial (focusing on the period he or she spent in the program), an academic article (as an evidence of the required scientific writing skills) and a “main product”.<sup>37</sup> What makes PPGPROM’s production closer to the general public is the fact that, as long as it achieves the quality demands, the main product may be presented in a variety of formats, since the traditional dissertation to a series of podcasts.

In this context, Rafael Palmeira developed the product “Rhythms of Candomblé Ketu on drum kit: adaptations of the Agueré, Vassi, Daró and Jinká touches,<sup>38</sup> based on the practices of Iuri Passos”<sup>39</sup> as an educational approach oriented to teaching and learning processes related to the drum kit. Palmeira’s<sup>40</sup> main product is focused on four rhythms (Aguéré, Vassi, Daró and Jinká) that are directly related with the experiences of Iuri Passos, a famous percussionist who coordinates the musical matters in one of the most influential candomblés of Salvador, the Gantois.<sup>41</sup> The academic article which integrates the author’s master outcomes reflects on a learning theory oriented to the development of drummer competences. Furthermore, as a support for the published products, Palmeira recorded a CD with samples, models and examples that make his product accessible even for instrumentalists who are not able to read scores.

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35. Axé music is an aesthetics formed by several local and global musical genres, such as, ijexá, reggae, salsa and lambada. Therefore, it should not be considered “a” musical genre.

36. P. Fryer, *Rhythms of Resistance: African Musical Heritage in Brazil* (London: Pluto Press, 2000); Castro “Axé Music: Mitos, Verdades e World Music,” *Per Musi* 22, no. 239 (2010): 203-217, claims that.

37. Débora Mara Lima de Oliveira, *Memorial Acadêmico: Uma Trajetória Profissional no Ensino de Piano em Grupo para Crianças* (Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2019).

38. In soteropolitan Candomblés, the rhythms are known as touches.

39. Translated from Portuguese: “Ritmos do Candomblé Ketu na bateria: adaptações dos toques Agueré, Vassi, Daró e Jinká, a partir das práticas de Iuri Passos”.

40. Rafael S. Palmeira, *Ritmos do Candomblé Ketu na Bateria: Adaptações dos Toques Agueré, Vassi, Daró e Jinká, a Partir das Práticas de Iuri Passos* (Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2017).

41. Calabrich et al., *Afrobook: Mapeamento dos Ritmos Afro Baianos*.

Closing the third section, the "Piano Workbook Based on the Rhythms Ijexá, Cabila, Barravento and Vassi",<sup>42</sup> authored by Adrian Pereira, has as its general aim to suggest some possible pathways to integrate characteristics of four Candomblé's rhythms (Ijexá, Cabila, Barravento and Vassi) into piano performance. Beyond presenting piano exercises, studies and complete solo pieces, the author developed a series of "preparatory studies" that can be done without any musical instruments. Furthermore, Pereira also recorded a CD in order to illustrate the written music materials. Despite briefly describing the most relevant features of the rhythms Ijexá, Cabila, Barravento and Vassi throughout the main product, for the academic article the author focused on Ijexá, providing a substantial historical, social and ethnomusicological literature review regarding the rhythm.

## Methodology and Discussion

### Methodology

This research employs qualitative document analysis (QDA) as a methodological approach to examine materials that can contribute to the development of the knowledge that will support the presented discussions. The QDA can be understood as a set of procedures for the search, selection, systematization and analysis of the data contained in several types of materials from different sources.<sup>43</sup> Bowen, states that, regarding researches guided by QDA, are considered "documents" the materials that were developed without the researcher's participation.<sup>44</sup> As posited by the author,

documents that may be used for systematic evaluation as part of a study take a variety of forms. They include advertisements; agendas, attendance registers, and minutes of meetings; manuals; background papers; books and brochures; diaries and journals; event programs (i.e., printed outlines); letters and memoranda; maps and charts; newspapers (clippings/articles); press releases; program proposals, application forms, and summaries; radio and television program scripts; organizational or institutional reports; survey data; and various public records. Scrapbooks and photo albums can also furnish documentary material for research purposes.<sup>45</sup>

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42. Translated from Portuguese: "Caderno de Exercícios para Piano Baseados Nos Ritmos Ijexá, Cabila, Barravento e Vassi". The "Piano Workbook Based on the Rhythms Ijexá, Cabila, Barravento and Vassi" is the name of Pereira's main product in PPGPROM. The Workbook is integrated in the author's publication entitled "Memorial Acadêmico".

43. Elise Wach and Richard Ward, "Learning about Qualitative Document Analysis," *IDS Practice Paper In Brief*, no. 13 (2013): 1-10.

44. Glenn A. Bowen, "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method," *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009): 27-40.

45. *Ibid*, 27-28.

Following this trail, the construction of the presented article underwent searches for materials which linked the development of musical instruments' skills with African-based knowledge and approaches. Due to the focus on Salvador, the academic repository of the Federal University of Bahia, one of the most influential universities in the region, was particularly employed in the hunt for relevant materials. However, considering the purpose of investigating materials that can contribute to the development of competences related to music instruments (which may integrate contents directed to different ages and instrumental levels) not only academic-oriented materials were examined. Therefore, other search mechanisms such as google books, bookstores' websites and publishers' websites were also employed.

## Discussion

As stated above, this article's discussions are strongly influenced by a critical understanding of social manifestations. In general terms, Historical Realism can be considered the ontology defended by the critical paradigm.<sup>46</sup> According to it, the reality is accepted as historically "shaped by a congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors, and then crystallized (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as 'real' [...] for all practical purposes the structures are real".<sup>47</sup> The Critical Paradigm (CP) is based on deep analysis and reflections on diverse segments of a society with an aim of "raising consciousness"<sup>48</sup> about the relations which "illegitimately"<sup>49</sup> domains and constrains people's behavior.

Critical theorists aim to expose the hidden power relations that generate imprisoning worldviews.<sup>50</sup> Thereby, critical theorists tend to include in their inquiries and analysis reflections related to gender inequalities, religious intolerance, racial discriminations, economic privilege, class disadvantages and a number of other structural characteristics of the studied society. Focusing on oppression mechanisms, the CP aims to be emancipatory by promoting the replacement of ignorance and misapprehensions for more conscious and

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46. Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (eds.) Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1994).

47. *Ibid*, 110.

48. Antonina Lukenchuk and Eileen Kolich, "Paradigms and Educational Research: Weaving the Tapestry," in *Paradigms of Research for the 21st Century: Perspectives and Examples from Practice* (New York: Peter Lang AG, 2013), 61-90.

49. Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

50. G. Ryan and Hanah Sfar-Gandoura, "Introduction to Positivism, Interpretivism and Critical Theory," *Nurse Researcher* 25, no. 4 (2018): 14-20.

enlightened perceptions.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, it is important to stress the “reformative”<sup>52</sup> characteristic as one of the most distinguishing features of the critical paradigm. For CP, besides offering well-based and enlightening analysis of oppressive and dominatory structures, it is extremely relevant to promote, by diverse means, a just, fair and democratic society. As stated by Cohen et al. “its purpose is not merely to understand situations and phenomena but to change them. In particular, it seeks to emancipate the disempowered, to redress inequality and to promote individual freedoms within a democratic society”.<sup>53</sup>

Considering this viewpoint, it is important to reinforce that the Brazilian culture had in its formation enormous influence of cultures coming from diverse African regions due to the slaving period of Colonial Brazil. However, because of the exploratory model employed for Brazilian colonization, Brazilian society was built on very uneven and unfair relations between people from different ethnic groups. Due to the very nature of their forced immigration, the African-descendants were particularly affected by this systemic unbalance. For a big portion of the Brazilian history, diverse elements that could be slightly linked to African heritage were repressed.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, African-based characteristics like skin color, habits, beliefs, cuisine, techniques, tools, sports, clothing, language, religion, dance, visual arts and music were placed in a hierarchically inferior position, considering the Brazilian overall social perception.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, even after the end of the formal persecution, the Afro-Brazilian heritage is, by diverse means, affected by these historically constructed discriminatory mechanisms.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to social, economic and political effects, the aforementioned mechanisms also encompass philosophical and psychological dimensions.<sup>57</sup> Abib refers to “coloniality” as the process of destroying a people’s “symbolic world” and replacing it with the colonizer’s worldviews; the process of westernization of peoples.<sup>58</sup> According to the author,<sup>59</sup> the coloniality represses “the beliefs, spirituality and knowledge of the colonized and imposes new ones”.<sup>60</sup>

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51. Guba and Lincoln, “Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research,” 1994.

52. Jabreel Asghar, “Critical Paradigm: A Preamble for Novice Researchers,” *Life Science Journal* 10, no. 4 (2013): 3121-3127.

53. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, 2007, 26.

54. Sharyse Piroupo Amaral, *História do Negro no Brasil: Módulo 2* (Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2011).

55. Wlamyra R. de Albuquerque and Walter Fraga, *Uma História do Negro no Brasil* (Salvador: Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais da Universidade Federal da Bahia e Fundação Cultural Palmares, 2006).

56. Ramos, “Território Afrodescendente: Leitura de Cidade Através do Bairro da Liberdade, Salvador (Bahia),” 2007.

57. Catherine Walsh, Luiz Fernandes de Oliveira, and Vera Maria Candau, “Colonialidade e Pedagogia Decolonial: Para Pensar uma Educação Outra,” *Arquivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas* 26, no. 83 (2018): 1-26.

58. Pedro Rodolpho Jungers Abib, “Culturas Populares, Educação e Descolonização,” *Revista Educação Em Questão* 57, no. 54 (2019): 1-20.

Furthermore, aspects of the current world globalization may impact on African-heritage manifestations. The globalization process can be understood as a philosophical approach that supports the institutionalization of a universal culture (or, at least, a worldwide common basis). Villodre claims that “the globalization phenomenon could be considered a homogenizing process involving dissolution of one’s own cultural identity in favor of what is considered universal”.<sup>61</sup> A consequence of establishing a universal culture is the creation of the perception of “other” cultures. Following this track, all behaviors and habits that are outside the “global culture” are understood as “the others”. Harmoniously, Barry asserts that the “Eurocentric universalism takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or Western, and the inferiority of what is not”.<sup>62</sup>

Employing a CP standpoint for the investigation of music scenarios, it is possible to notice a series of effects of the Eurocentric thinking. The psychological dimension of colonial influence (coloniality) can support hierarchical effects in musics that represent different peoples or social groups.<sup>63</sup> Queiroz attributes the term “musical epistemicide” to the process of inferiorization that, based on Western hegemonic principles, excludes non-Eurocentric music from significant social places.<sup>64</sup> According to the author,<sup>65</sup> “musical praxis not aligned with the perspectives of Western classical music [...] were excluded from 'civilized' contexts of music production”.<sup>66</sup>

A similar discourse to the one which hierarchizes different musical genres also influences upon initiatives oriented to music education.<sup>67</sup> In her denounce of neutral understandings, Hess states that in music courses “western classical music is constructed as ‘natural’, and the curriculum tokenizes alternative practices by making them tangential to the main curriculum”.<sup>68</sup> In many respects, Western music in music education acts as a colonizer”. Aligned with this, Bradley reports that many programs do not embrace “other” types of music and “if such

59. Here and ahead: authors’ translation.

60. Abib, “Culturas Populares, Educação e Descolonização,” 2019, 8.

61. María del Mar Bernabé Villodre, “Cultural Identity and Using Music in the Intercultural Educational Process,” *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 132 (2014): 236.

62. Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 128.

63. Marcus Vinícius Medeiros Pereira, “Possibilidades e Desafios em Música e na Formação Musical: A Proposta de um Giro Decolonial,” *Interlúdio* 10 (2018): 10-22.

64. Luis Ricardo Silva Queiroz, “Traços de Colonialidade na Educação Superior em Música Do Brasil: Análises a Partir de uma Trajetória de Epistemicídios Musicais e Exclusões,” *Revista Da ABEM* 25, no. 39 (2017): 132-159.

65. Here and ahead: authors’ translation.

66. Queiroz, “Traços de Colonialidade na Educação Superior em Música do Brasil: Análises a Partir de uma Trajetória de Epistemicídios Musicais e Exclusões,” 2017, 137.

67. Juliet Hess, “Decolonizing Music Education: Moving beyond Tokenism,” *International Journal of Music Education* 33, no. 3 (2015): 336-347.

68. *Ibid*, 336.

musics are included in the curricula, they often tend to perpetuate the sense of 'different or exotic' (Campbell, 1994), rather than musics as equally important components of the curriculum".<sup>69</sup>

Embedded in these agitated and troubled contexts, the African based music managed to keep its relevance to the Brazilian national culture. However, despite its undeniable participation in the construction of Brazilian popular music, the African-heritage music still finds countless obstacles to join the formal contexts of music education. Even with its cultural, social and historical richness, it is noticeable that today it is still difficult to find materials for studying music based on Afro-Brazilian genres. Influential and popular publications such as Collura,<sup>70</sup> Faria,<sup>71</sup> and Giffoni,<sup>72</sup> usually present studies to superficially understand some internationally popular Brazilian rhythms, like "Samba", "Bossa Nova" and "Partido-alto".

Nevertheless, the availability of these materials can be considered as important steps in the struggles for a proper appreciation of the Afro-Brazilian music heritage. Furthermore, it is possible to mention the enormous contributions provided by the materials that were presented in the Literature review section. Focused on the production guided by investigation in Salvador city – the Brazilian municipality with the biggest percentage of African-descendant population – the introduced literature can illustrate how deep and meaningful the studies of musical elements of Afro-Brazilian culture can be. From a critical point of view, these initiatives can be comprehended as mechanisms to "erode ignorance", mitigating the effects of prejudicial preconceptions related to African heritage to and "raise consciousness" regarding the important role the African-based knowledge can undertake in the development of general musical skills and competences.

Parallely, the presence of these kinds of materials as a constitutive content of formal educational contexts may assist in the process of increasing the social appreciation of African-based culture in general. This reflection is supported by the assumption of a cross-feeding relation between the music field and the broad society. In other words, it is expected that, at the same time the political, historical, social and economic relations have significant influence in musical contexts, the music field also participates in the development of political, social and economic aspects of general societies. Following this trail, it is possible to reflect on the mutually influential relation between music, music education and

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69. Deborah Bradley, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Race and Racism in Music Education," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education* (ed.) Cathy Benedict et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 7.

70. Turi Collura, *Ritmica e Levadas Brasileiras para o Piano: Novos Conceitos para a Ritmica Pianística* (Vitória: Irmãos Vitale, 2009).

71. Nelson Faria, *The Brazilian Guitar Book: Samba, Bossa Nova and Other Brazilian Stiles* (Petaluma: Sher Music Co, 1995).

72. Adriano Giffoni, *Música Brasileira para Contrabaixo* (São Paulo: Irmãos Vitale, 1997).

broad society. Accordingly, Schmidt claims that music education “has the potential to reach as a transforming power to different realities; [...] it must not only establish its value in cognitive and emotional connections alone, but also search for social and thus, personal, transformation”.<sup>73</sup> Decolonization-oriented approaches to music education, as asserted by Stanton, “carries profound implications not only for decolonizing music as such, but for larger decolonial struggles”.<sup>74</sup>

Influenced by this comprehension, several scholars have been publishing research outcomes that call the attention of music educators for their possible role in fostering democratic societies.<sup>75</sup> Pereira, for example, suggests the “decolonial turn” to implement a “deconservative” approach in order to “denaturalize” the election of Western music as “the” content of music education.<sup>76</sup> This approach suggests the establishment of criteria that assign equal relevance to musics from different cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, as posited by the author,<sup>77</sup> the decolonial turn “does not exclude or deny Western musical knowledge [...] it only breaks with arbitrary cultural hegemonies, taking Western music to the status of ‘one’ among several possibilities for musical training”.<sup>78</sup>

Embedded in these ideas, it is possible to comprehend some possible implications of the aforementioned Soteropolitan materials to the music education field. The authors inverted the traditional reasoning of employing Western knowledge to make sense of African-heritage music and started employing African-based knowledge into the development of musical competences that were mostly achieved by western-oriented methods. Despite its municipal orientation, the release of the Soteropolitan materials may be an indicative of a brighter and fairer future for African-based knowledge in formal music education contexts. Beyond that, these publications and this trend of applying African-based knowledge in teaching and learning processes of non-African-based musical competences can be understood as mechanisms to encourage more democratic and emancipated societies.

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73. Schmidt, “Music Education as Transformative Practice: Creating New Frameworks for Learning Music through a Freirian Perspective,” 2005, 4.

74. Burke Stanton, “Musicking in the Borders toward Decolonizing Methodologies,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 26, no. 1 (2018): 4.

75. Frank Abrahams, “The Application of Critical Pedagogy to Music Teaching and Learning,” *Visions of Research in Music Education* 6 (2005): 1-16.

76. Pereira, “Possibilidades e Desafios em Música e na Formação Musical: A Proposta de um Giro Decolonial,” 2018.

77. Here and ahead: authors’ translation.

78. Pereira, “Possibilidades e Desafios em Música e na Formação Musical: A Proposta de um Giro Decolonial,” 2018, 20.

## Conclusions

Due to colonialism and the slave regime between the 16th and 19th centuries, several cultures were placed on the margins of Brazilian society. Additionally, aspects of globalization, arising from the 20th century, contributed to the devaluation of the same groups. The population of Salvador city, the world's biggest African-descendant municipality outside Africa, was particularly affected by these kinds of social discrimination. To combat this evidence, various socio-cultural manifestations (e.g., Blocos-Afro) were created with the aim of preserving, making visible and valuing the identities of Afro-Brazilian minorities. In recent years, it can be observed a Brazilian academic interest in studying African-based musical knowledge to apply it in approaches oriented to music education.

This article focused on the investigation of Soteropolitan publications which apply knowledge derived from Afro-Brazilian traditions in the development of approaches to teaching and learning non-African-based musical instruments. It was argued that these initiatives may contribute significantly not only to the process of increasing the Afro-Brazilian music social appreciation but also to the valuation and valorization of the minority groups that are commonly linked to these types of music. Accordingly, due to the cross-feeding relation between the general society and the music field, the current work defends that the systematic study of African-based music associated with its application in the development of musical competences can assist in the development of democratic and emancipated societies. Additionally, in spite of the municipal focus of this article, it is expected that the promoted discussions can influence similar reflections in other contexts, making it possible for this investigation to promote relevant impacts that can reverberate throughout broader scenarios, especially considering our increasingly globalized world.

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