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by

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**Critical Reflections on  
Applied Ethnomusicology and Activist Scholarship**

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**Critical Reflections on  
Applied Ethnomusicology and Activist Scholarship**

**by**

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**Report**

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## **Dedication**

To Viviane, without your love and support I would be lost.

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## **Abstract**

# **Critical Reflections on Applied Ethnomusicology and Activist Scholarship**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

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Applied ethnomusicology emerged as a sub-discipline within the larger field of ethnomusicology in the late 1980s. The approach has gained considerable attention in recent years, evidenced by the publication of the first book-length treatment of the subject in 2010 and numerous scholarly papers and roundtables devoted to the topic at the 2011 SEM conference. I review of the literature in order to trace general trends and shifts in frame and approach in order to establish a context for critically reflecting on the role of activist scholarship in ethnomusicology today. Drawing from the literature on applied ethnomusicology, cultural rights projects in Brazil, and personal experiences working with black women hip-hop activists in Recife, I suggest that activist approaches allow greater possibilities for progressive social change, facilitating dialogue and critical reflection in ways that applied approaches do not. I propose that we must re-think activist scholarship in ethnomusicology, and in Brazil more specifically, seriously considering the possibilities and limitations of music making for establishing sustained community activism that incorporates dialogic pedagogy.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

At about eight in the evening, Viviane and I arrived at Tufão's house. Rei Arthur, a rapper, met us at the bus stop and together we walked down the street to Tufão's house and studio. There we met Karina and Rose (members of the hip-hop duo Yabas) and Tufão, a hip-hop producer and recording engineer. Happy to see us, they eagerly showed us the completed songs from the night before. I was the only foreigner and the only white male in the room.

I was in Recife working with my wife Viviane Santiago, an educator and hip-hop activist, on a collaborative project with the female hip-hop duo Yabas. The Projeto Yabas initiative works toward establishing a pedagogical program based in hip-hop to prevent violence—more specifically sexual domestic violence—against young black women in the Santo Amaro community of Recife. Part of the project at that time involved the recording and distribution of a CD of Yabas's music, entitled *Yabas: a força que a mulher tem EM COMUM* (Yabas: the strength women have IN COMMON).

We gathered around Tufão's workstation as he played back the songs they recorded the previous night. The results thrilled everyone: Rose and Karina were ecstatic to record new songs and their first full-length album; Tufão appeared especially pleased that we enjoyed the finished tracks. After we listened, Tufão started talking about the upcoming recording session. He suggested I participate by recording a spoken sample that would be inserted into the song. This took me by surprise. Throughout the entire project, I strived to be continuously hyper-aware and self-critical of my positionality. I felt especially self-conscious about my role as a foreign, white, and male ethnomusicologist studying black Brazilian music and working as a collaborator on a

project designed by and for black Brazilian women. That I also happened to be the person “paying” for the CD only complicated my sensitivity to these issues. That is, on behalf of the project, I received a Summer Activist Research Grant from the Social Justice Institute at the University of Texas-Austin. The Brazilian Ministry of Culture (MinC) also awarded the original project a significant grant. However, just before I arrived the MinC suddenly and inexplicably revoked this funding and gave it to another community project. With the Summer Activist Research Grant now the sole source of funding, I was especially cautious to not influence in any direct way the production of the CD. I wanted to distance myself as much as possible so that my presence, actions, comments, and expectations—both conscious and unconscious—would not interfere. I wanted to insure that the project remained theirs and not mine.

The song in question, “*Em Comum*” (In Common), is the title track of the album and it addresses sexual violence against young women and children in Brazil. The track includes several samples of spoken commentary. They incorporate the voices of journalists, community activists, and social scientists (or individuals recognized in the public sphere as authority figures) commenting on the deplorable situation of child abuse in Brazil. Yabas had taken some verbal comments from news media and in other cases recited the texts themselves. With space for one more sample, I was a perfect candidate because my accent would immediately mark me as a foreigner—possibly a graduate student, intern, or social worker with a NGO or similar type of social justice organization. Tufão suggested I say something along the lines of, “I had heard it was really bad, but after arriving here and seeing the real situation, it’s worse than I ever imagined.”

I immediately felt uncomfortable with the idea. Initially I wondered if the idea came from Tufão as the record producer or from Rose and Karina as the artists. Indeed, the idea emerged out of collaboration between all three. However, I still hesitated. I asked

“why me?” I had not planned on directly contributing and I worried about how and when I should participate in the musical aspects of the project. I wanted the CD to be theirs (Karina and Rose). The manner in which Tufão presented the idea heightened my hesitation; attempting to encourage me, he explained jokingly that I really should participate because “it’s your investment, you know? You should participate in your own investment.” Tufão’s words struck a nerve; this was exactly the kind of position I hoped to avoid. What did he mean by investment? Beyond that, I felt ill prepared. I did not know what to say and, perhaps more importantly, what my participation would mean—and to whom? Feeling pressed, I reluctantly agreed. However, everyone in the room sensed my hesitation and insisted that I not participate if I felt uncomfortable. Rose, Karina, and Tufão continued working on the album and I did not record for the song. After reflecting on the moment for a few days, I became comfortable with the idea of participating. However, by then recording had finished and I could not lend my voice to the completed track.

This incident was one of the definitive moments during my experience working on the project. The invitation to perform, my initial discomfort with participating, the symbolic significance of my accented voice, and Tufão’s perceptive comment all speak to important issues surrounding activist scholarship, and specifically one’s positionality as both activist and scholar. What role should I play in this activism? Who should define that role—me, the hip-hop activists I was working with, or both? How are these roles defined and agreed upon?

Reflecting on my reluctance, I now regret not participating in what my collaborators clearly saw as an appropriate role. I realized that the invitation to perform was a way in which Rose, Karina, Viviane, and Tufão hoped to define my role more broadly and opened a space of access—albeit not one I initially felt appropriate—as an

active participant. My reluctance because of a sensitivity to underlying issues of power inadvertently re-negotiated this boundary. Moreover, group members sought to articulate a musical and political statement through my participation and my identity as embedded and expressed in my voice. I often wonder whether I failed them in their expectations at that moment. What did my reluctance to contribute to the album mean for Rose, Karina, Tufão, and Viviane? How would my positionality as both activist and foreign researcher been altered if I had recorded that sample? Had it changed in any event since I refused?

My foreign-marked voice and Tufão's reference to my "investment" speak to the visible presence of foreign-funded NGOs in advocating for social justice and human rights in Brazil. This highlights important issues regarding the role of ethnomusicologists and culture-based community activism there. For example, the use of the term "investment" to refer to the production of an activist CD evokes notions of cultural and economic development in the articulation of citizenship and references tensions surrounding funding, the public sphere, the politics of recognition, and cultural citizenship.

The issues mentioned above are at the heart of this master's report. As mentioned, I regret not performing on the recording, yet I also recognize that the decision has served as a driving force behind my critical reflections and discussions about activist scholarship and applied ethnomusicology.

#### **DEFINING APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY**

If ethnomusicology is an approach to the study of the music of the world's peoples, then applied ethnomusicology is an approach to the approach to the study of the music of the world's peoples. It is a larger frame of reference, a state of mind, something more fundamental that informs all one's actions as an ethnomusicologist.

-Daniel Sheehy<sup>1</sup>

Although ethnomusicologists employ various names to describe applied ethnomusicology (including applied, engaged, activist, and public) the former is perhaps the most common. Applied ethnomusicology emerged as a sub-discipline within the larger field in the early 1990s. For much of its history, applied ethnomusicology has been considered a separate, specialized approach within the broader discipline. Alan Merriam addressed the topic in his foundational text, *The Anthropology of Music*. He raised the “question of whether one is searching out knowledge for its own sake, or is attempting to provide solutions to practical applied problems” (Merriam 1980 (1964):42-43). Merriam explains, “ethnomusicology has seldom been used in the same manner as applied or action anthropology, and ethnomusicologists have only rarely felt called upon to help solve problems in manipulating the destinies of people” (43). Merriam also predicted that applied projects would become more commonplace within the field. He was correct; evidence can be seen in the development of study groups and sections dedicated to applied ethnomusicology by the discipline’s principal organizations, the Society for Ethnomusicology’s (SEM) and the International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM), as well as a growing body of literature.

The Applied Ethnomusicology Section of SEM acknowledges the difficulty in defining applied ethnomusicology, but suggests that it is work “that puts music to use in a variety of contexts, academic and otherwise, including education, cultural policy, conflict resolution, medicine, arts programming, and community music.”<sup>2</sup> The Study Group on

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Sheehy 1992:323

<sup>2</sup> The Society for Ethnomusicology, “Applied Ethnomusicology Section,” Ethnomusicology [http://webdb.iu.edu/sem/scripts/groups/sections/applied/applied\\_ethnomusicology\\_section.cfm](http://webdb.iu.edu/sem/scripts/groups/sections/applied/applied_ethnomusicology_section.cfm) (Accessed March 1, 2012).

Applied Ethnomusicology of ICTM defines applied ethnomusicology as “the approach guided by principles of social responsibility, which extends the usual academic goal of broadening and deepening knowledge and understanding toward solving concrete problems and toward working both inside and beyond typical academic contexts.” The Study Group “advocates the use of ethnomusicological knowledge in influencing social interaction and course of cultural change.”<sup>3</sup> A common definition of applied ethnomusicology includes some notion of applying ethnomusicological knowledge to the improvement of social conditions and the practical benefit of the public at large, normally contextualized as outside of the academy. It is important to stress that these definitions include, but are not limited to, some concept of social responsibility, manifested in notions of reciprocity, ethics, and the view that ethnomusicologists as experts can facilitate cultural interactions and understanding. As I discuss in greater detail in the next chapter, much work related to advocacy has been in the context of music festivals and projects that deal with multiculturalism, the preservation of musical heritage, the positive acceptance of difference, the creation of ethical recording standards and/or support of musical legislation, and advocacy on the behalf of the music makers that ethnomusicologists study.

#### **APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY OR ACTIVIST SCHOLARSHIP?**

Throughout the introduction, I employ the term “activist scholarship” to discuss my work because I associate my research with the theoretical and methodological stance of activist anthropology (Hale 2008). Applied ethnomusicology (in its general definition and practice) is heavily influenced by applied or public folklore. Another stream of influence is applied anthropology (Pettan 2010; Harrison 2012). Recently, activist

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<sup>3</sup> The International Council of Traditional Music, “Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology” <http://www.ictmusic.org/group/applied-ethnomusicology> (accessed March 1, 2012).

anthropology, which has distinguished itself from applied anthropology by emphasizing collaboration and the subjectivity of the researcher as a political activist, has increasingly influenced applied ethnomusicology. I explore these distinctions in greater detail in Chapters 4 and argue that ethnomusicology would benefit from continued incorporation of activist approaches.

## **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The next chapter provides a review of the literature on applied ethnomusicology. I identify some of the prominent figures, approaches, and problems discussed and debated in this area of specialization. I discuss the growth of the sub-discipline and forums of support from within SEM and ICTM. While I draw from diverse literatures, there are three especially important publications that orient this chapter. The first is the 1992 special issue of *Ethnomusicology* entitled “Ethnomusicology in the Public Interest.” I explore this early publication that contextualizes applied ethnomusicology, its orientations, approaches and special problems, and contrast it with one that appeared a decade later, a special issue of *Folklore Forum* from 2003. Lastly, I consider the 2010 publication, *Applied Ethnomusicology: Historical and Contemporary Approaches*, edited by Klisala Harrison, Elizabeth Mackinlay, and Svanibor Pettan. Together these publications allow me to investigate the continuities and shifts in this growing body of literature.

Chapter 3, largely co-authored with Viviane Santiago, presents Projeto Yabas as a case study for analyzing approaches to applied ethnomusicology and cultural citizenship in Brazil. In the latter part of the chapter, I bring reflections from our experiences into dialogue with broader theoretical issues outlined in the previous chapters. Our analysis

indicates a need for critically reflexive, dialogic activist approaches to applied scholarship.

Chapter 4 brings these discussions together in some final considerations. I discuss activist anthropology of recent years and note the influence of its approaches on music-related literature. I pose the question of whether we need an activist ethnomusicology. Grounding my response to this debate in the experiences of Projeto Yabas, I argue that ethnomusicology as a discipline needs to continue this trajectory because the “activist” approach allows greater possibilities for progressive social change and facilitates dialogue and critical reflection in ways that “applied” approaches do not.

## **Chapter 2: Applying Ethnomusicology: An Approach to an Approach**

While various sources reference the topic in passing, publications dedicated to applied ethnomusicology as a specialized approach within the discipline do not appear until the 1990s. Principal among these early publications is the 1992 special issue of *Ethnomusicology* entitled “Ethnomusicology in the Public Interest.” Widely held as a foundational publication on applied ethnomusicology,<sup>4</sup> this publication is especially significant in that it establishes a model for writing about applied ethnomusicology that has influenced all later work.

Applied ethnomusicology is not clearly defined in the issue; it is generally assumed to be everything that ethnomusicologists do in the public sector. Editor Jeff Todd Titon suggests that applied ethnomusicology is work that “involves and empowers music-makers and music-cultures in collaborative projects that present, represent, and affect the cultural flow of music throughout the world” (1992:315). One could make the argument that such a definition applies to all ethnomusicology. However, there is an implied division between academic and public sector work. Such a framework firmly establishes applied ethnomusicology as occurring outside of academia and in close association with folklore. This connection with folklore, as well as the close collaborations between folklorists and governmental cultural agencies, is reinforced throughout the issue in a number of ways, including the definitions and strategies developed by the issue’s authors (especially Martha Ellen Davis and Daniel Sheehy). It is also significant that all of the authors were, or at some point had been, employed in public sector organizations working with government organizations: Bess Lomax Hawes

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<sup>4</sup> See Harrison, Mackinlay, and Pettan 2010; and Titon 2012.

and Sheehy with the Folk Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, Anthony Seeger with the Smithsonian Institution, and Davis with the Ministry of Culture in the Dominican Republic. At the time of the publication, Davis was the only author with an academic position.

The overall tone of the issue is defensive and bent toward establishing applied ethnomusicology as a legitimate and necessary subfield. To this end, writers discuss a longstanding history of applied approaches within ethnomusicology and academia in general during the early 20th century. The authors identify key themes that reappear throughout the literature. These include debates about academic notions of objectivity, the separation of applied work from ‘pure’ theory, reflections on the merger of theory and practice, the preservation of musical cultures, scholarly reciprocity, supporting cultural policies of multiculturalism, and advocacy in other forms.

Applied ethnomusicology gained momentum over the course of the 1990s and the SEM established a standing committee on applied ethnomusicology in 1998. Doris Dyen and Martha Ellen Davis served as co-chairs. By 2000, the committee was officially recognized as the SEM Applied Ethnomusicology Section and Tom Van Buren joined Dyen and Davis as deputy chair (Titon 2012:4). This marked the beginning of the next major period in the development of applied ethnomusicology literature. The first decade of the new millennium was characterized by unprecedented growth—in activities (research, conferences, courses), in publications, and finally, in the scope of research topics and activities considered to fall under the purview of applied research.

Positioned at the beginning of this period, the 2003 special issue of *Folklore Forum*, “Applied Ethnomusicology,” contains essays that represent, on one hand, continuations of themes found in the 1992 *Ethnomusicology* publication, and on the other hand include entirely new perspectives. For example, Lucy Long (2003) defines applied

ethnomusicologists primarily as facilitators and interpreters of traditional music presentations for broader publics—a position reminiscent of the 1992 publication. However, both Ric Alviso (2003) and Gage Averill (2003) problematize the idea that applied ethnomusicology is akin to an alternative career choice in arts management. They critique the notion of reciprocity as an underlying imperative for applied work and call for academics to assume larger roles in community activism—broadly defined.

The growth of applied ethnomusicology during this period is evident in two important publications from Anthony Seeger. The first is the afterward to the 2004 edition of *Why Suyá Sing*, significant because it details the unintended advocacy that resulted—decades later— from what was otherwise a “typical” fieldwork experience and ethnography produced by an “academic” ethnomusicologist. The second is Seeger’s contribution to the second edition of *Shadows in the Field* (Barz and Cooley 2008). The inclusion of a chapter on applied ethnomusicology in the discipline’s primary textbook on fieldwork methodologies—required reading for virtually all students—marks a significant advancement in the status of applied ethnomusicology within the discipline as a whole. Additionally, related fields such as music therapy and the newly emerging medical ethnomusicology began to incorporate applied approaches (Bakan et al. 2008, Bakan 2009, Barz 2006).

The ICTM organized its study group on applied ethnomusicology in 2007 and initiated a series of conferences that brought together international perspectives on applied work. These discussions resulted in two publications: in 2008, a special issue of the journal *Musicological Annual* (*Muzikološki zbornik*) (Pettan 2008), and in 2010, the first full-length textbook dedicated to applied ethnomusicology, *Applied*

Ethnomusicology: Historical and Contemporary Approaches (Harrison, et al. 2010).<sup>5</sup> The appearance of an applied ethnomusicology textbook is a landmark moment. Moreover, the large number of panels and activities organized around applied ethnomusicology at the SEM conference in Philadelphia suggests that it has finally established itself as a legitimate subfield of ethnomusicology with its own corpus of special debates, approaches, and history. For these reasons, I tend to view 2010-2012 as a separate period, one associated with rapidly increasing interest in and broad acceptance of the topic.

## **MAJOR THEMES AND ISSUES**

### **Reclaiming a History**

In the essay “A Few Notions about Philosophy and Strategy in Applied Ethnomusicology,” his highly influential contribution to the 1992 special issue of Ethnomusicology, Daniel Sheehy documents the neglected history of applied scholarship within ethnomusicology writ large. He lists John Lomax, Robert Winslow Gordon, Benjamin Botkin, Charles Seeger, and Alan Lomax as important early applied scholars<sup>6</sup> involved in documenting “American-based musical traditions” (1992:325). Sheehy cites

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<sup>5</sup> I do not consider Hank Bradely’s 1989 publication, *Counterfeiting, Stealing, and Cultural Plundering: A Manual for Applied Ethnomusicologists*, to be the first textbook on applied ethnomusicology. Applied ethnomusicology is not well defined in Bradely’s small manual (48 pages), but seems to involve performance more than other activities, as he distinguishes between applied individuals (musicians) and academics (who simply want to talk about the music). Interestingly, applied ethnomusicologist appear as performers of “tribal music.” Bradely does not consider organizing music festivals, community projects, and education programs to be the work of applied ethnomusicologists, but rather the role of folklorists. These activities then become sites where the ‘cultural plunderer,’ i.e. ethnomusicologist, can learn new music.

<sup>6</sup> It is interesting that Henrietta Yurchenco is not listed by either Sheehy or A. Seeger. Yurchenco made countless field recordings, especially in Mexico during the 1940s, for the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian, and was instrumental in organizing folk and world music radio programming in New York City. She is celebrated as a seminal ethnomusicologist in Mexico, however she has been largely ignored in the United States. Like other figures discussed in this chapter, this is perhaps due to her employment outside of academia. The extent to which she was ignored because she is a woman is open for debate. Yurchenco 2002.

John Lomax's 1910 publication, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, as an influential early applied ethnomusicology publication (ibid.:326). It is clear that Sheehy's definition of applied ethnomusicology is closely aligned with public folklore and scholarly attempts to document musical traditions in danger of extinction. According to Sheehy, Benjamin Botkin's work with the Federal Writer's Project during the 1930s demonstrates important issues for applied methodologies, ones that we are still contemplating today:

Botkin and other New Deal folklorists did not use the terms "applied" or "public sector" during that time. The distinction they made was that they saw their work as a public, not a private, function. Botkin, though he collected primarily from secondary sources, worked to show both that the "applied" purpose could provide a richer, socially involved setting for research, giving greater importance to cultural context (an improvement over the tendency of the era toward taxonomic studies), and that dissemination in the public setting could produce more informed action on the part of the public (and perhaps even better feedback to the scholar) (ibid.: 327).

Sheehy identifies Charles Seeger as a major contributing figure, and he considers Alan Lomax to be "the major living link between the heady ideas of the New Deal era and the present" (ibid.:328). Anthony Seeger takes ethnomusicologists to task, commenting on the lack of papers about Alan Lomax at SEM events focusing on the history of ethnomusicology (2006:217). He argues, "the current membership and preoccupations of the SEM are rather limited...in terms of inclusiveness, breadth of purpose, and understanding of the potential of ethnomusicology outside of the academy" (ibid.:215). He claims Alan Lomax is a model of applied and theoretical anthropology, and points to his prolific recording activities as evidence of his contributions. Reasons why Lomax has not been more widely remembered in SEM events could be do in part to the rejection of his cantometrics paradigm as well as his abrasive personality (ibid. 217).

Significantly, Seeger argues that “ignoring Alan Lomax implicitly also meant leaving outside our concept of the discipline many important activities in which Lomax was a major figure” (ibid.).

Similarly, Anthony Seeger claims “any discussion of applying ethnomusicology and formulating cultural policy must include Charles Seeger” because he was one of the first to write specifically about the topic (ibid.:227). Charles Seeger presented a paper in 1939 entitled “Music and Government: Field for an Applied Musicology” (1944). C. Seeger defines applied musicology as putting musicological knowledge to use outside of academic arenas, most specifically in governmentally-funded music projects, broadly defined. The association with New Deal-era folklore projects is clear, as is the need to make musicology relevant to the broader public. Interestingly, major moments of theorization in applied ethnomusicology have accompanied such shifts in funding opportunities. The work of John and Alan Lomax, Henrietta Yurchenco, Benjamin Botkin, and Charles Seeger speak to the significance of governmentally supported folklore projects during the 1930s and 1940s. Similarly, the 1992 special issue of *Ethnomusicology* was a response to the increased significance of multiculturalism in North America. Most recently, Klisala Harrison suggests that after the market crash of 2008, ethnomusicology is increasingly asked to define its relevance beyond the creation of knowledge, prompting more discussions of applied methodologies (2012:505, 514). A. Seeger argues that attention to C. Seeger’s scholarly work ignores his “other ‘careers,’” from “his political idealism, to his work with the Roosevelt administration, to his Pan American Union years, and to his work with various UNESCO organizations” (2006:227). A. Seeger’s use of quotation marks around “careers” implies that these activities are not considered purely academic and are thus not recorded and celebrated in the historical narratives of ethnomusicology.

More than simply identifying and reclaiming forgotten histories of applied thought in ethnomusicology, the larger contribution of these scholars is analyzing the principal factors influencing the erasure of such histories. The reasons are varied, but foremost has been the need to establish the new discipline of ethnomusicology within the U.S. academy. As Anthony Seeger explains, “our predecessors had to demonstrate ethnomusicology’s significance and excellence according to criteria used for other humanities and social science,” which meant privileging notions of scientific objectivity and methodological rigor (*ibid.*:219).

Institutionalization also profoundly impacted the kinds of products that ethnomusicologists produced. Anthony Seeger illustrates that the need to conform to the standards of academic knowledge production, i.e., publications in English and book series rather than recording series, relegated “things that were not easily comparable [to academic work]—like recordings, public outreach, political involvement, and institution-building outside of universities”—to the wayside (*ibid.*). Daniel Sheehy confirms that “out of a concern for professionalization, or the adherence to certain standards of ‘proper’ endeavor for the purpose of ensconcing scholarly disciplines in the academy, applied work was neglected, limited by the values and scope of endeavor of the host institution” (325).

Sheehy describes the 1950s and 1960s—when ethnomusicology was establishing itself as a discipline—as “a time marked by a societal swing of the pendulum away from applied work” (*Ibid.*). Indeed, several scholars, from ethnomusicologists Martha Allen Davis (1992), Gage Averill (2003), and Anthony Seeger (2006) to activist anthropologist Craig Calhoun (2008), have emphasized a shift away from applied scholarship in favor of what was constructed as objective and methodologically rigorous research. However, prior to WWII, much US scholarship was conceptualized as public scholarship. Gage

Averill explains one such model, the Wisconsin Idea, which “held that university-based intellectuals, especially social scientists, should serve on government advisory panels and think tanks; debate public policy; and study and report on poverty, industrial concentration, and labor relations, among other social ills” (2003: 50). Averill continues, noting that “proponents of the Wisconsin Idea viewed the proper role of an institution of higher learning as a resource for society. They adopted the optimistic view that social problems could be ameliorated through the cultivation of an enlightened public and well-advised policy makers (despite the corrosive influences of monopoly power, economic disequilibria, and political power)” (ibid).

But, as Sheehy emphasizes, during the post-WWII era “the notion of ‘pure research’ reigned supreme, and applied work was not thought to have the desired ‘objective’ quality of the hard sciences” (325). Writing in 2008 and in the context of activist anthropology, Craig Calhoun identifies similar points, explaining that “modern science (and modern epistemology more generally) has developed an ideal of knowledge based on detached, objective observation” (2008:xiii). For that reason, activism is considered suspect and “widely understood as directly expressive of individual interests, or emotions, or ethical commitments rather than of a broader, more reflective, and more intellectually informed perspective on social issues” (ibid.). The charged political climate of the Cold War only exacerbated this shift, as many associated applied work with “left-leaning politics” in defense of “the inherent aesthetic worth of the creations of the ‘common man’” (Sheehy:325).

These authors highlight a pre-WWII past in which public scholarship held a more prominent position in academia and they emphasize the role of the Cold War in shifting attitudes toward applied research in the United States. By doing so, they defend applied approaches and activist stances in scholarship today and connect American scholarship to

that of other parts of the world. For example, Vesa Kurkela and Tina Ramnarine have both discussed the tradition of public scholarship in Europe and the “aspect[s] of ‘applied ethnomusicology’” found in the work of figures such as Ilmari Krohn, Béla Bartók, and Zoltán Kodály (Kurkela 1994; Ramnarine 2008:84). Kurkela and Ramnarine work with a definition of applied ethnomusicology that is closely bound with folklore studies. By pointing to a history of applied thought in American scholarship, analyzing institutional shifts away from public work in the US, and considering applied scholarly traditions outside of the US, these authors suggest the obsession with objectivity and pure research is specifically an American problem (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1992:45).

### **Reclaiming Objectivity<sup>7</sup>: Negotiating Theory and Praxis**

To the list of reasons why applied research has been neglected in ethnomusicology’s historical narratives, Jeff Todd Titon adds that “applied work must seem too thoroughly bound to ideology, and therefore not disinterested in the way that science is supposed to be” (1992:316). Anthropologist Charles Hale supports this view, noting that “graduate students and junior faculty members are regularly warned against putting scholarship in the service of struggles for social justice, on the grounds that, however worthy, such a combination deprives the work of complexity, compromises its methodological rigor, and, for these reasons, puts career advancement at risk” (2008:2). As a result, the major theoretical thrust of the literature on applied ethnomusicology focuses on exposing the false notion of objectivity and the imposed dichotomy between applied and pure knowledge.

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Hale refers to “reclaiming methodological rigor” as part of a broader recovery process whereby scholars are countering critiques against activist approaches by deconstructing and reclaiming positivism, objectivity, and methodological rigor in the social sciences (Hale 2008:8-14).

Of the authors in the 1992 special issue, Martha Ellen Davis<sup>8</sup> addresses this topic most directly. She declares that “intellectual work and applied work in ethnomusicology are not and should not be entirely separate endeavors; rather, they should constitute two uses of one’s knowledge, love, and commitment to music” (1992:364). She argues that public-sector ethnomusicologists’ work is just as “meritorious” as academic work, urges younger scholars to pursue the various career opportunities outside of academia, and “suggest[s] that even we ethnomusicologists who consider our main professional domain to be academic should contemplate the ethical obligations implied by our research” (ibid.:363). She explains:

since both academic and applied folklore and ethnomusicology, when done well, entail theory and practice, public-sector and other applied work should be viewed not as a career “alternative” but as an option. Nonetheless, in some quarters the view prevails that applied work (practical) is innately inferior to academic work (theoretical). This implies that those who have taken up practical work as their primary activity have done so because they are losers and leftovers who could not find academic positions (ibid.:365).

Davis argues against the “implicit stratification” that “ranks the theoretical as superior,” and demonstrates the necessity of unifying theory and praxis in ethnomusicological work by presenting two separate case studies—applied projects in the Dominican Republic and the Canary Islands.

However, Davis is primarily dealing with an understanding that applied activities take place outside of universities. Gage Averill interrogates that notion. Averill’s essay

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8 Subsequent writers, Seeger (2006; 2008), Araújo (2008), Pettan (2008), and Hofman (2010) cite Sheehy as an influential source from the 1992 publication. Sheehy’s essay is cited most frequently. Anthony Seeger’s essay on copyright law, Bess Lomax Hawes’s essay on the importance of alternative means for measuring the success of public-sector projects, and Titon’s introductory essay all receive numerous citations. However, it is very interesting that Davis is rarely cited. It is unclear why her essay proved less influential than Sheehy’s or Seeger’s, a conundrum made all the more bizarre if you consider her significant role as the president of the SEM Applied Ethnomusicology Section. However, Klisala Harrison’s most recent article (2012) draws heavily from Davis’ contributions, suggesting that this lack of attention is being corrected.

marks an important step toward more critical thinking in applied ethnomusicology literature. He targets two problematic assumptions of applied ethnomusicology:

1. that it is “envisioned as an alternative career choice to academia, rather than the obligation of all ethnomusicologists (whether inside or outside of academic institutions) to share their expertise and their training widely,” and;
2. when academic ethnomusicologists discuss applied work, they often frame their ethical responsibilities as products of the need for reciprocity (as fieldworkers)” (2003:49).

Averill proposes rethinking “the grounds for public ethnomusicology,” suggesting that it be brought more firmly into the realm of the academy. This would necessitate not only “the teaching (and institutionalization) of applied ethnomusicology in university curricula,” but also that academic ethnomusicologists conduct applied work themselves. Averill views applied approaches as ethnomusicology’s “disciplinary-specific manifestation of the scholar as public intellectual” (ibid.).

Since Averill’s publication in 2003, scholars have taken positions on either side. Some continue to view applied activities as primarily outside the interests of the academy. One example is Tina K. Ramnarine’s 2008 essay, “Beyond the Academy.” Ramnarine acknowledges that increased interest in applied ethnomusicology “highlights a growing intellectual activism that is very far from ideas about disengaged and remote scholarship” (2008:84). Nevertheless, she reinforces the separation of academic and public arenas by suggesting that ethnomusicology only becomes relevant when scholars apply their knowledge outside of academic institutions. Similarly, activities beyond the academy do not contribute to theoretical work inside the academy. On the other hand, some scholars reject these boundaries (inside/outside academy, theory/practice) altogether. Anthony Seeger claims that “the dichotomy of ‘theoretical’ and ‘public’ or

‘applied’ ethnomusicology is false” and “the most abstract research can have practical benefits and the most practical projects can stimulate abstract thinking” (2008:286).

### **Aren’t we all Applied Ethnomusicologists? Reciprocity, Purpose, and Strategy**

In 1992, Daniel Sheehy declared, “I believe that all ethnomusicologists have at one time or another been applied ethnomusicologists. What ethnomusicologist has never gone out of his or her way to act for the benefit of an informant or a community they have studied? Are teaching and writing not ways of applying ethnomusicological knowledge?” (323). These questions continue to inform writings on applied ethnomusicology. For example, Anthony Seeger asks “is everything an ethnomusicologist does applied ethnomusicology?” (2006:222) and Ana Hofman argues all “ethnomusicological work is fundamentally applied” (2010:24).

And yet, despite the possibility that all ethnomusicological work is potentially applied, several scholars identify the need for strategies that distinguish applied approaches from others. Both Sheehy and Averill state that the problem lies in the issue of reciprocity. Sheehy argues the majority of applied work occurs “in an ad hoc fashion as a way of reciprocating friendships and fulfilling the professional expectations of academic careers or as something unavoidable, rather than as a result of an approach to the field” (1992:323). Gage Averill, observes that relationships developed during fieldwork “do call for reciprocity, but this is far from the only, or even the primary, ethical motivation that should be guiding intellectuals in their applied praxis and advocacy roles. The moral and ethical underpinnings of engaged ethnomusicology are much more complex than simple reciprocity” (2003:51-52). J. Ricardo Alviso raises the question sharply:

Should not all research lead to a tangible and quantifiable betterment of the human condition? Should not all ethnomusicology be applied to something and

for someone? And would it not be ideal for research to be applied for the benefit of all sides involved, especially for the benefit of our research subjects, who are often poor and oppressed? It seems to me that if the goal of research is not to make a difference in the lives of our research subjects, the endeavor reads as a barren and one-sided narrative: Ethnomusicologist studies poor people's music. Ethnomusicologist goes home and gets tenure-track position. Poor people are still poor. And what has been accomplished? (2003:90-91).

Ethnomusicologists should seriously consider Alviso's harsh critiques. As I discuss in greater detail below, the view that work can be characterized as inherently academic or applied is too simplistic. However, Alviso is correct to demand critical self-reflection of all researchers because even work characterized as applied can result in academics attaining professional positions while the poor remain poor and little has actually been accomplished.

For the authors mentioned above, there is an underlying sense of purpose that drives applied work and distinguishes it from reciprocity. However, this requires strategy and an organized methodological approach to the field. Daniel Sheehy, noting the close associations between applied ethnomusicologists and folklorists, suggests that most applied work has addressed musical change and preservation. He identifies four basic strategies, or "ways to solve particular problems," that scholars have employed to affect positive change in the musicians' communities. These include, "1) developing new 'frames' for musical performance, 2) 'feeding back' musical models to the communities that created them, 3) providing community members access to strategic models and conservation techniques, and 4) developing broad, structural solutions to broad problems." (1992:330-331).

The first strategy deals with creating new performance venues and audiences for certain folk musicians. For example, arranging a folk music performance at Carnegie Hall would stimulate the development of beneficial new relationships between the culture bearers and a wider audience. (ibid.:331-332). The second strategy, "feedback," was

developed by Alan Lomax and suggests that, instead of publishing academic books and articles, research can be “fed” back to communities in the form of recordings, radio broadcasts, films, and television. The underlying assumption is that viewing one’s cultural expressions on prestigious media would greatly boost self-esteem, thus helping to keep the traditions alive and vibrant. Sheehy explains that such notions of feedback necessitate a distinction between outreach and inreach programs, (see below) and that many research strategies can incorporate both. The second and third strategies, however, are predominantly designed as inreach programs that focus on disseminating knowledge and access to cultural artifacts within the groups that produced them. The second strategy involves the dissemination of musical products, i.e. recordings and films. The third refers to disseminating knowledge about the musical traditions as well as strategies for conservation, such as the creation of cultural centers and archives, education programs, and so on. Similarly, the fourth strategy supports the previous strategies and attempts to influence cultural policy beyond the musical community.

All of the strategies mentioned are oriented toward cultural preservation, and in all, the ethnomusicologist is viewed as an expert who acts as the catalyst for change. The ethnomusicologist acts as a facilitator, reinvigorating and stimulating new developments and preservation strategies within the community. The power to decide what is beneficial to these artists and how best to pursue it rests unproblematically in the hands of the scholar. Sheehy’s strategies do not outline a collaborative relationship, but rather one in which the scholar is a professional cultural broker and the culture bearers are her clients. This is not to suggest that Sheehy’s model prevents the possibility of collaborative dialogue; the researcher and musicians frequently collaborate closely and decide upon joint goals and strategies. Martha Allen Davis’ work, discussed below, is one such example. Nor is it to suggest that the researcher does not—or should not—bring certain

skill sets, knowledge, and connections to the table, thus placing the researcher in a privileged position. These factors contribute to the importance of the scholar's participation in an applied project from the outset. Rather, it is to identify the existence of underlying power structures and to illustrate shifts in how scholars have increasingly addressed collaboration, power, and their positionality in more recent publications.

Martha Ellen Davis draws heavily from public sector folklore to develop a model for applied ethnomusicology that identifies special skills required of applied ethnomusicologists, including "sensitivity to the nature and needs of the community represented, including its political, economic, and social structure," an awareness of the external power structure in regards to municipal or government resources, and the ability to be creative in connecting the communities needs to these political resources (1992:370). She highlights the importance of cooperation with a variety of collaborators, from colleagues and professional supervisors to "key community members, or folk artists" (ibid.). Significantly, she emphasizes that "scholarly activity and applied projects require a kind of mental 'code switching' regarding one's role, from protagonist to facilitator" (ibid.:372). Davis' use of the term 'code switching' suggests a complicated and dynamic relationship between the researcher and her interlocutors, one in which the role of the researcher is flexible. That is, the ability of the researcher to assert more control (on the basis of expert opinion) over projects, acting as a protagonist along side the musicians, or to engage as an advocate or facilitator working for the interlocutors in a behind-the-scenes role. She offers a glimpse of the more sophisticated thinking about the relationship between researcher and researched, the tensions and boundaries between applied and theoretical research, that emerges in the next decade.

Toward the end of the 2000s, authors have increasingly blurred the boundaries between applied and theoretical research. They have acknowledged that even "purely

theoretical” research contributes in potentially meaningful ways to practice and action. Instead of focusing on distinctions between activist and applied action, scholars are now striving for research methods that are structured around collaboration and collective processes of knowledge production and dissemination. For example, Ana Hofman references Homi Bhabha to argue it is a question of political maturity to understand that many forms of political action obscure divisions between the “theoretical” and the “activist” (2010:23). She believes current activist scholarship similarly blurs the boundaries between academic and applied work, “challenging the ‘purity,’ ‘neutrality’ and ‘detachment’ associated with academic work, and ‘impurity’ and ‘involvement’ as characteristics of the applied approach” (ibid.). The field should not be “essentialised” into either applied or academic camps, but rather “the strong multisided nature of the discipline should be outlined” (ibid.:24). Consider, for example, someone does work in Colombia on paramilitary violence in the countryside, the massacre of individuals, and all the resulting cultural practices that have been disrupted or lost there as a result. The publication could be described as traditionally "academic" and published as a book or article, but it clearly has political and applied implications and could be used by grassroots groups as part of future struggles. Such an example raises questions of collaboration and access; is the book or article published in Spanish? Are copies distributed to activist organizations? Are the scholar’s interpretations accurate?

Samuel Araújo rejects the terms “applied, collaborative, and participatory research” altogether, claiming that “even those who believe in ‘pure’ or ‘neutral’ research are opening, intentionally or not, ways of application in and through their work” (2008:14). Instead, Araújo focuses on three modes of research method for musical ethnography. The first, labeled “more conventional (meaning long legitimized, academically speaking),” involves work by an individual researcher

tied in some way to an academic institution, equipped with academically oriented theories, methods and research categories. The researcher defines (1) research focuses and goals, as well as (2) the nature of data to be 'collected', after a period of 'immersion' in 'another' cultural reference system, (3) 'collects' the necessary data, which, to some extent, native collaboration, (4) 'translates' the data (i.e., through comparisons with his/her own cultural referents), something which is eventually done with native help, and, finally (5) interpret these data in the more coherent as possible manner, generating a textual form to be published under the researcher's exclusive authorship.

Araújo also identifies a second, "reflexive" mode,

in which the researcher is still an individual who (1) defines his/her initial focuses and goals but all the other subsequent steps will present differences to some degree in comparison with the previous outline. He/she (2) will define and redefine the nature of the data to be collected through a persistent dialogue, negotiation and approximation with her/his 'chosen society', (3) 'collect' and 'translate' data with systematic native help, and finally (4) interpret them with native collaboration (collaborative editing) aimed at a publication still to be authored by the researcher himself, despite the fact that native voices are granted greater credit and growing complexity as compared to conventional ethnographies, as well as a relative space to diverge from or even to contradict the credited author.

Araújo advocates for the third participatory mode,

in which both native and academic researchers (subject positions sometimes merged in one single individual) negotiate from the start the research focuses and goals, as well as (2) the nature of the data to be gathered, (3) the type of reflection they require, highlighting community demands which may be potentially met with the research results, in which (4) natives will both gather and interpret the data, resulting in diffusion through collective authorship in various academic and non-academic contexts (5) non-academic natives and academics of different social origins develop reflections on the dialoguing process that permeates the research, and finally, (6) new focuses arise in this reflection open new research interests and suggest new forms of diffusion beyond the conventional ones. (ibid.:15).

Scholars continue to recognize that applied approaches place extensive demands on the researcher. Those participating in the first symposium of ICTM's Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology, held in 2008 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, identified the following special skills and responsibilities required:

1. “Openness: a willingness to place oneself in positions of vulnerability, discomfort and sometimes even subservience, embracing unfamiliar and sometimes counterintuitive positions to appropriate process and outcomes.
2. Self-reflections: a sensitivity to approaches to “the Other,” including considerable insight into values and attitudes that one brings to working with specific music cultures
3. Communication skills: the [ability] to listen, communicate, engage, understand, to recognise unspoken codes, negotiate and empower [others]
4. Broadness: applying interdisciplinary approaches (or working with interdisciplinary teams) to ensure that [far-reaching] aspects of threats to a music culture and pathways to sustainability are addressed” (Harrison et al. 2010:7).

#### **APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY: ITS SCOPE AND PRIMARY AREAS OF INTEREST**

In the 2003 special issue of *Folklore Forum*, guest editor John Fenn explained:

this issue does not define applied ethnomusicology in any static way; each author has been free to use his or her own definitions—working or otherwise—of applied work. Along these lines, readers will notice that the term itself, "applied ethnomusicology," appears throughout the issue almost to the exclusion of other possible terms: "public ethnomusicology," "engaged ethnomusicology," "ethnomusicology in the public interest." There was no editorial edict for or against specific terminology, but most authors chose to use the common label "applied ethnomusicology" (as I did in the call for papers). *Future publications may wrestle with the nuances of terminology regarding applied ethnomusicological work, but this issue attempts to establish common ground in terms of practice rather than labels*” (2003: 5. Emphasis added)

Indeed, most authors have accepted the definitions developed by the field’s leading organizations, SEM and ICTM, and tend to focus on common practices and areas of interest in applied ethnomusicology. Sheehy and Davis outlined the scope of applied

ethnomusicology in 1992. Tom Van Buren, in the 2003 issue of *Folklore Forum*, identified three “general areas of endeavor and experience” in applied ethnomusicology:

1. “the public sector of national, state, and county level arts agencies, museums, and archives;
2. commercial applications, publishing, or music production and promotion; and
3. the research and public programs of regional independent non-for-profit intercultural arts organizations, often known as Folklife centers” (2003:61).

Anthony Seeger continues the tradition of defining applied ethnomusicology via its activities, although he employs a more systematic categorization. He divides applied activities into three types, “according to the kinds of knowledge required:

1. activities where intensive knowledge of certain musical traditions enables us to be particularly effective;
2. activities where a very good knowledge of the researcher’s own society and the music industry is necessary in addition to intensive knowledge of a certain musical tradition for us to be effective; and
3. activities where knowledge both of local communities and of the wider social context in which that community lives is essential” (2006: 222).

Seeger’s categorization is useful for examining, in addition to activities, the underlying structures that shape applied methodologies. Below, I have divided the principal activities of applied ethnomusicologists into major areas of interest, organized around their primary objectives. These categories are not exclusive; in fact, most applied ethnomusicologists work in several of these areas throughout their careers. First, I identify three areas that have been dominant since the early 1990s: cultural preservation, the advocacy of multiculturalism and public policy, and interest legal frameworks surrounding music making. I discuss each area in reference to Seeger’s schema. Second, I

identify areas of research that have emerged over the past decade (2000-2012). These include music and citizenship; music and health, and music and conflict. This section illustrates the scope of applied ethnomusicology, its definitions, and shifts that have occurred in the literature.

### **Cultural Preservation**

Most applied ethnomusicological work falls into this category, which is admittedly very broad. Sheehy identifies the major activities as “recordings, festivals, exhibits, and so forth.” (323). Martha Allen Davis elaborates further, arguing that applied ethnomusicology developed from public sector folklore, which she defines as “practical projects in cultural conservation undertaken by folklorists as employees or consultants of government—federal, state, or local—and non-profit cultural-conservation organizations such as historical societies and museums” (1992:361). Portia Maulsby provides an even broader definition that adds an educational element: “presenting, interpreting, representing, and educating broad audiences about different cultures in various contexts, such as schools, museums and archives, public media, public celebrations, and community culture events. Educational activities include public programs, community outreach, curricular and educational material development, teacher training, etc.” (2003:15).

For Lucy Long, applied ethnomusicology essentially consists of museum-style exhibits and presentations (from concerts and educational workshops to recordings and documentaries) of a musical tradition for others outside of that tradition (2003:98-100). She claims, “one of the tasks of applied ethnomusicologists is to construct and present musical performances in such a manner that audiences "feel" the music similarly to how

it is felt in its original context” (ibid.:98). She lists the purposes and functions of applied ethnomusicology:

- “To introduce music traditions, styles, or performers that are not commonly available to a particular audience;
- To introduce listeners to the aesthetic system of a particular musical style or tradition being performed, teaching the logic of this system as well as the criteria used to evaluate it;
- To introduce listeners to the cultural contexts surrounding the musical performance, connecting the musical logic to the historical circumstances from which it grew, to the ethos and belief systems it may represent, to the actual situations in which it may be realized, and to the social groupings and individuals
- who participate in music-making and listening;
- To present the meanings a particular music holds for its creators and listeners and suggest the possibility of multiple interpretations;
- To encourage participation (whether continued or new) in a music tradition, with discussion about the implications of this encouragement and its impact on the tradition” (100-101).

In Seeger’s categorization, these fall under “Activities where intensive knowledge of certain musical traditions enables us to Act on the Basis of Talking and Working Collaboratively with People in Order to Understand Musical Processes (i.e., Field Work)”<sup>9</sup> which include:

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<sup>9</sup> After first identifying this category as “activities where intensive knowledge of certain musical traditions enables us to be particularly effective,” Seeger uses this slightly reworded phrase as the sub-heading for his elaboration of this point in the body of his essay.

1. "Teaching, Performing, and Interpreting," where he claims, "specialists in musical traditions can often do an excellent job assisting musicians in presenting their music to unfamiliar audiences at festivals, lecture demonstrations, and other kinds of public events;" and
2. "Writing for a Wide Variety of Audiences through General Market Books, Newspaper Columns, and Reviews in Commercial Journals (222-223).

Activities aimed at cultural preservation continue to play a major role in applied ethnomusicology. The ICTM's Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology held its first symposium, entitled "Historical and emerging approaches to applied ethnomusicology," in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2008. The symposium was organized into three talking circles. The first, " 'Threatened music, threatened communities': Ethnomusicology's responses and responsibilities to endangered music cultures," illustrates the contemporary significance of this area of activity. According to a report of the proceedings, the circle debated "1) the nature of musical cultures, 2) aspects of music and its context that influence sustainability, and 3) the position and roles of applied ethnomusicology" (Harrison et al.: 5-6). While they did not develop a specific strategy for applied ethnomusicology and cultural preservation, members identified important factors influencing sustainability such as "the availability of and accessibility to effective systems of transmission (formal or informal); the creation of appropriate support structures (and/or the opening of existing ones) for education, performance, productions, funding and organisational support." (ibid.:6).

### **Multiculturalism and Public Policy**

Notions of multiculturalism have often been driving forces behind many of the cultural preservation initiatives discussed above. In fact, ethnomusicologists advocating

for public policy shifts, especially regarding multiculturalism and the positive acceptance of difference, is a major theme in the literature. It is important to note that this literature engages with questions of representation, empowerment, issues of interpreting and translating cultural expressions for the broader public, and the advocacy roles played by ethnomusicologists.

Anthony Seeger acknowledges that “subject-area specialists like ethnomusicologists can play a role in cultural policy as long as we recognized the limits of our influences and are willing to work within them” (2006:226). He urges ethnomusicologists working with public culture policy to “[apply] our knowledge locally, nationally, and internationally, just as our analyses of musical practices increasingly include all these levels” (ibid.:227). In his knowledge-type categorization, cultural policy falls under the third category, “Cases Where Knowledge of Both Local and Wider Communities Is Essential Because Local Life Is Affected by National, Regional, and Global Processes,” within which Seeger places the following activities:

1. Voting, Political Action, Land Adjudication, and Policies Where Mediation between Local, National, and International Bodies Is Required and
2. Formulating Cultural Policy” (ibid.:225-227).

Paradoxically, Seeger illustrates that it is often the foreignness or outsider status—and therefore a perceived objectivity—that works as an asset for applied ethnomusicologist, enabling them to advocate on behalf of cultural groups from the position of a neutral expert in the eyes of government officials. He argues that affiliation with political parties and groups would diminish the effectiveness of ethnomusicologists negotiating in these situations.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Certainly, my outsider status was a factor when Yabas asked me to perform on their recording.

## Music Law

In the 1992 Ethnomusicology special issue, Anthony Seeger demonstrates convincingly the importance of copyright law for ethnomusicologists. He suggests that our tendency to ignore the issue in ethnomusicology is inherited from the founders of the discipline, who included few jurists. He uses personal experience as a co-producer of a recording with the Suyá to highlight the large number of ethical and legal issues surrounding field recording. He identifies four cultural presuppositions of copyright law that directly impact ethnomusicology broadly, and six perspectives based on his own professional activities that reinforce the importance of copyright laws for applied ethnomusicologists.

Seeger groups recording and music law activities into distinct areas of knowledge. The following activities belong to the first knowledge type (knowledge of an other culture group): “Producing and Disseminating Recordings,” which Seeger stresses is an activity that nearly all ethnomusicologists engage in at some point; and “Providing Evidence Where Specialized Knowledge is Required,” which is based on his experience with the Suyá<sup>11</sup> (2006: 222-224). Additionally, Seeger’s second knowledge type “Cases Where a Good Knowledge of Our Society is Also Essential to the Activity,” is dominated by music recording activities:

1. “Assisting Musicians with Issues of Copyright, Publication, and Dissemination,” in which he reiterates his argument from 1992 on the importance of understanding copyright law, arguing that “successfully assisting musicians in their dealings with the entertainment industry depends on our knowledge of those aspects of our own society”;

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<sup>11</sup> See Seeger 2004 *Why Suyá Sing: : A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*, especially “Afterward” 141-151.

2. “Bringing Musicians to Tour the USA and Helping them Professionally,” an expectation increasingly “raised by the musicians we work with”;
3. “Starting a Record Label, Distribution Company, or Other Business;
4. “Creating Music Education Programs for Primary and Secondary Schools,” where he argues that specialized knowledge of a musical tradition is not enough—we also need an understanding of how education works at the national and state level, the various regulations, as well as parents’ organizations (ibid.:224-225).

## **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Music, Cultural Rights, and Citizenship**

Acknowledgement of music making as a cultural right and a dimension of citizenship by international organizations such as the United Nations has profound implications for applied ethnomusicology. The concept of “cultural rights” is articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948. Article 27 states that “everyone has the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community.” Article 22 suggests that the State is responsible for ensuring in the “realization” of rights, (economic, social, and cultural). The underlying premise is that “full recognition of personhood” or citizenship includes cultural rights, and that they are “indispensable for the maintenance of dignity and development of one’s personality” (Weintraub 2009:3). The implementation of UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 sparked renewed interest in cultural preservation, national patrimony, and music’s role in citizenship. (Weintraub: 6-7; Sandroni 2010:375).

Andrew N. Weintraub explains further: “although not explicitly formulated in terms of rights, the goals of applied ethnomusicology are to influence public policy and to empower communities.” (2009:10). The volume *Music & Cultural Rights*, coedited by Andrew N. Weintraub and Bell Yung, aims to “help scholars clarify their roles in mediating rights claims based on cultural grounds” (ibid.). The volume consists of nine essays that explore a variety of topics and problems. For example, Bell Yung notes the ironic effects of the UNESCO’s proclamation of the *qin* as a “masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity” in 2003. He explores debates that emerged in the wake of the proclamation, including the controversial popularization and modernization of the *qin*, which in some ways erodes the earlier forms of heritage—such as traditional systems of pedagogy—that the proclamation was trying to safeguard in the first place (2009:163).

In his contribution to *Music and Cultural Rights*, Ricardo D. Trimillos suggests that the problem faced by ethnomusicologists is “no longer the justification of cultural rights per se but determining the locus of agency. That is, upon which individual, individuals, or groups do these rights devolve and by what mechanism?” (2009:23). Trimillos observes that agency in cultural rights discourse can be conceived in three categories: the right to access, the right to stewardship, and the right to control (20-23). His model helps researchers identify the multiple agencies involved in applied projects. He demonstrates that ethnomusicologists inevitably assume agency in all of these categories: “Certainly all of us subscribe to a right of access. Many of us are involved with issues of stewardship. And some of us, particularly those in government service, exercise the right of control” (ibid.:24).

Trimillos’s work is significant because it illustrates the complexity of applied ethnomusicology projects. Examining Philippine participation in the 1998 Smithsonian

Folklife Festival, Trimillos identified the following groups, each claiming rights and exerting agency:

1. the state (here, the Philippines) and its claims [over] culture as part of its heritage and patrimony
2. the cultural community ... and its claims [to] culture as part of [local] expression
3. the practitioner [ensemble] and [their] claims [to authority] as the producers and stewards of the specific [forms of cultural] expression
4. The individual practitioner and his or her claims as [a] repository of cultural knowledge
5. the scholar/researcher (sometimes a non-national and often a non-community member) and his or her claims [to] special expertise concerning a cultural expression (ibid.: 34).

Trimillos concludes that ethnomusicologists must “reflect upon and assess their role, which is very much about entitlement and responsibility rather than rights per se.” He asks “what are the levels of advocacy within our purview, and are they appropriate or desirable? (ibid.:38).

Idelbar Avelar and Christopher Dunn have explored the importance of music as a means of practicing, claiming, or even constituting citizenship in Brazil. Emphasizing a slightly different, although certainly related, trajectory from the UNESCO-based focus of Weintraub and Yung, Avelar and Dunn refer to T.H. Marshall’s foundational “three forms of citizenship: civil, political, and social,” suggesting that culture be considered a fourth form of citizenship. They situate their arguments within a growing body of literature on cultural politics, and especially the role of culture in citizenship formation, articulation, and recognition. The authors cite Toby Miller who defines cultural

citizenship as “the maintenance and development of cultural lineage through education, custom, language, and religion and the positive acknowledgment of difference in and by the mainstream” (Miller 2001:2). However, Avelar and Dunn stress that “notions such as recoding and mixing, rather than preservation” more aptly describe how music acquired special significance in citizenship discourse in Brazil (2011:4). They show—in the introduction and in the collection of essays that follows—the “common tendency to observe the mutual constitution between musical practice and the processes of citizenship” in Brazil, historically and contemporaneously (ibid.:27). The volume demonstrates the complex ways in which social actors invoke citizenship via musically contoured spaces, places, and performances, variously aligning themselves with or resisting governmental positions.

### **Music and Health**

Projects that incorporate music to improve and maintain wellness is a large area of applied ethnomusicology that emerged in the late 1990s. Music therapy has a long history as a field in its own right, but by the late 1990s and 2000s ethnomusicologists have become increasingly involved in projects that incorporate aspects of music therapy and medical ethnomusicology. In music therapy, this trend has been labeled community music therapy. For Brynjulf Stige, community music therapy is characterized by “collaborative and context-sensitive music-making” focused on “giving voice to the relatively disadvantaged in each context” as well as “concerns for health, human development, and equity” (2010:5). Examples include anthropologist Celeste Henery’s work with the group *Meninas de Sinhá*, a grassroots organization for ageing black women that uses collective musicking (both for play and for performance) as part of a strategy to cope with pain and promote mental wellness (2010).

Gregory Barz introduced the term “medical ethnomusicology” to “inspire the need for further ethnographic-based studies of the roles of music in the performance of health- and healing-related activities” (2006:60). Barz’s discussion of the multiple uses of music as more than responses to AIDS, but as “medical interventions” laid the theoretical framework for understanding the “many pathways by which music and other expressive art forms gained prominence in Africa as agents for addressing HIV and AIDS (Barz and Cohen 2011:5). As identified by Ric Alviso, some of these pathways include music as “education-entertainment;” music as therapy, “i.e., the use of music to directly improve or maintain physical health;” which Alviso distinguishes from his final category, music as healing, “where music is used to express grief, sadness, hope, shock, or other emotions and urge action or change behavior” (2011:57).

These approaches are not limited to Africa<sup>12</sup> or AIDS. Michael Bakan and his colleagues’ work with music and children with an autism spectrum disorder is another example of the potential and new directions of research in medical ethnomusicology. Their findings suggest that music can facilitate the development of communication and social-interaction skills in children with autism. Additionally, participation in the project has strengthened the caregivers’ ability to recognize and react to certain communicative signs and behavioral cues given by the children (Bakan et al. 2008:195).

The growing influence of music and health in applied ethnomusicology is seen in the 2008 symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology, which included a talking circle dedicated to “applied ethnomusicological approaches to music therapy and healing.” In addition to healing, the group considered music therapy as a “means of empowerment and prevention,” and agreed that applied ethnomusicology can,

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<sup>12</sup> Ethnomusicologist Kathleen J. Van Buren discusses her AIDS-related applied work in both Kenya and the United Kingdom, see Kathleen J. Van Buren 2010.

1) “offer information on how to approach music therapy in a culturally appropriate fashion”; and, 2) “help us to become more aware of the diverse ways in which the same music can affect different individuals, including their wellness levels, and as per their histories and socio-cultural contexts” (Harrison and Pettan 2010:8-9). The group also outlined the following questions that could be informed by applied approaches:

- “Who is music therapy for? Is it just for a person who comes for “treatment” or is it for an entire community?”
- How might music therapists best reconcile scientific medical knowledge with contradictions in minority and indigenous healing practices, including those documented in musical ethnographies? What are related implications for medical ethics?
- What are responsibilities of scholars and practitioners of music therapy when they decontextualise unfamiliar or “foreign” musical practises in relation to healing? The ethics of culture-centered music therapy are little theorised.
- How might one use audiovisual technologies, such as those of film and audio recording, in efforts to promote reflexive responses to working in a music therapeutic environment? Such technologies might assist with observations about how people respond to music, and how facilitators operate in a therapy setting. Physical, verbal and emotional responses of a facilitator can be highly influential in determining outcomes of healing sessions (ibid.).

### **Music and Conflict**

Another recent development, and one closely related to music and health, is applied approaches to research on music and conflict. The ICTM Study Group’s symposium included a talking circle on “Theorising Music’s Roles in Conflict and

Peacemaking.” The group suggested that applied ethnomusicology focus on identifying the catalysts for conflict, such as economic resources and ownership systems, the rationale being “if we do not understand what provokes conflict, then we cannot return to or maintain peace” (ibid.:11). The primary example of applied ethnomusicology’s approaches to conflict is the volume *Music and Conflict*, edited by John Morgan O’Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (2010). The research can be broadly organized into the following three themes:

1. **Negotiating Conflict Situations:** Research that investigates how music is a) implicated in fomenting violent conflicts and b) used as a coping or defensive mechanism during violent conflicts (Araújo et al. 2006, 2010; Cooper 2010; Cusick 2006, 2008; Howard 2010; Naroditskaya 2010; Sugarman 2010);
2. **Education and Prevention:** (related to multiculturalism): How can music be used to educate and help prevent violence and conflict, especially ethnic and racial violence? Prime examples include projects that attempt to prevent right-wing violence against ethnic minorities and facilitate multicultural awareness and understanding in Germany, Norway, and Kosovo (Pettan 2010; Sweers 2010a, 2010b; Welz 1993);
3. **Healing (music and health).** Similar to education and prevention are projects that use music as a healing strategy for victims of violence and conflict, as well as a catalyst for dialogue and exchange (Castelo-Branco 2010; Cooper 2010; Howard 2010; Pettan 2010; Urbain 2008).

It is significant that two recently developed areas of music scholarship—conflict studies and medical ethnomusicology—emerged in close dialogue with applied methodologies. It highlights the growth of applied ethnomusicology over the past 25 years. More research

is needed to evaluate the role of collaborative approaches in both fields and the extent to which they engage directly in political activism.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the literature on applied ethnomusicology over the past 20 years. The definitions and activities of applied ethnomusicology have become increasingly varied since the turn of the century. Klisala Harrison identifies several factors that explain the broad scope and differences of applied ethnomusicology. First, she suggests that two prominent disciplinary influences have established what might be considered a schism in the scholarship internationally. The first group is associated with the SEM, as we have already seen, and is derived from public folklore in the United States (Harrison 2012:510). Harrison suggests that for these scholars, applied ethnomusicology refers to “the application of music or associated research,” usually outside of universities (*ibid.*:525). The second group is associated with the ICTM and is derived from applied anthropology (*ibid.*:506). This group understands applied ethnomusicology as guided by social responsibility and seeks to solve concrete social problems via ethnomusicological approaches (*ibid.*:525). This dichotomy appears to be based primarily on the development of particular models for applied ethnomusicology—specifically, Martha Ellen Davis’s model based on public folklore (1992) and Svanibor Pettan’s model based from applied anthropology (2008)—and on the definitions developed by ICTM and SEM.

The dichotomy presented in these two literatures is problematic. Daniel Sheehy, a scholar firmly grounded in the folklore-influenced SEM camp, stresses an underlying sense of purpose (akin to notions of social responsibility) in applied work. Similarly, he defines strategies as “ways to solve a particular problem” (1992:329). In fact, Harrison

acknowledges that the two approaches (represented by SEM and ICTM) “can also be seen as part of the same thing, the second approach [ICTM] being a specifically focused take on the first [SEM]” (2012:514).

Harrison additionally identifies the use of polyvalent language in the definitions of applied ethnomusicology. She sites several examples, including “public interest,” “purpose,” “benefit,” “change,” and even “applied” (ibid.:514-515). These terms connote a multitude of meanings, thus contributing to the vast array of activities and research that fall under the scope of applied ethnomusicology. Especially interesting is how the language of funding agencies often heavily influences these terms. Harrison illustrates the linkages between the term “social responsibility” in the ICTM’s definition of applied ethnomusicology and the terms “corporate social responsibility” and “social responsibility theory” used in business management and media theory, respectively (ibid.:516-517).

Harrison’s greatest contribution is her use of epistemic communities as an analytical frame for taking stock of the differences within applied ethnomusicology. Building on the work of political scientist Peter M. Haas, she defines an epistemic community as:

a network of people with expertise and ability in a particular domain and an authoritative or working claim to knowledge within that domain or issue-area. Although an epistemic community may consist of engaged participants from a variety of backgrounds, they have (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a rationale for the social action; (2) shared causal beliefs, which are derived from analysis of practices leading or contributing to a problem or set of problems which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible actions and desired outcomes; (3) shared or accepted notions of analysis for the action; and (4) a common enterprise—that is, a set of common practices associated with the problem or problems to which their competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence (Harrison 2012:521-522).

The notion of epistemic communities allows Harrison to assert that applied ethnomusicology is “still developing a shared set of normative and principled beliefs and a common enterprise,” and thus that “applied ethnomusicology currently consists of a series of applied ethnomusicologies” (ibid.:525). Such a framework allows scholars to identify clusters of multilayered influence within an increasingly variegated field, including the priorities of funders and employers (519).

Harrison’s theoretical frame is also potentially useful for critical self-reflection in applied ethnomusicology (522). The rest of this report represents a move in that direction; I incorporate the notion of epistemic communities in my assessment of Projeto Yabas, suggesting that critical evaluation of the successes and failures of music-based community activism in Brazil is needed to develop more effective and collaborative methods.

### **Chapter 3: Projeto Yabas-A Força que a Mulher Tem! Hip-Hop and Combating Sexual and Domestic Violence in Recife, Brazil**

This chapter is an expanded version of a paper—co-authored with my wife and research partner Viviane Santiago—delivered at Abriendo Brechas Activist Scholarship Conference in February, 2012. It discusses Projeto Yabas, a collaborative community-based project that uses hip-hop as an interactive vehicle to address sexual and domestic violence against young black women in Santo Amaro, Recife, Brazil. The experiences of Projeto Yabas reflect many key issues surrounding activist scholarship and cultural citizenship policy in Brazil. This chapter discusses the rap duo Yabas and the evolution of Projeto Yabas, including difficulties securing funding via the Ministry of Culture and subsequent reformulations of the project design. We argue that despite its many limitations, Projeto Yabas was largely successful in achieving its goals of strengthening the political and artistic protagonism of its participants. These successes are most evident in the advancement in Yabas’ musical career—such as additional performance opportunities and collaborations, as well as participation in political activities of Recife’s hip-hop movement—and in the development and growth of Yabas as community activists advocating for young black women and adolescents. In the next chapter, I use the experiences of Projeto Yabas to consider the implications of activist scholarship for ethnomusicology. Ultimately, I use the limitations and successes of Projeto Yabas as evidence to support the incorporation of dialogic and collaborative approaches in ethnomusicological research.

## YABAS

Yabas is a female rap duo from the Santo Amaro community in Recife. Karina and Rose formed the group in 2007 (Fig. 1). They are one of the few, if not they only currently active, all-female rap groups in Recife. Rose and Karina view hip-hop as a powerful medium conducive to representing women's strength and agency. Initially, hip-hop afforded a space for Karina and Rose to engage in processes of self-making and negotiating lived-experiences of racial and sexual violence. More recently, Rose and Karina are utilizing hip-hop as a vehicle to expand their social and political activism, such as denouncing embedded forms of racism and misogyny, preventing sexual violence against young black women, and demonstrating the real possibility of creating and occupying alternative realities for the residents of Santo Amaro.



Figure 1: Yabas. Karina (left) and Rose (right). Photo by José Cleiton Carbonel

Derived from the Yoruba word *iyáàgba*, “yabas” (also spelled *yábás*, *iabás*, *iyabás*) is frequently translated as “*Mãe Rainha*,” (Mother Queen) in Portuguese, and refers in general to all of the female *orixás*. However, Karina and Rose did not choose the name to allude to Afro-matrix religions per se. Rather, they associate Yabas with an image of black women warriors. They explain that, initially, the group did not have a name; people began to call them “Antônia,” referencing the film starring Brazilian hip-hop star Nega Li.<sup>13</sup> Karina explains that she did not like this name, especially because her grandmother was named Antônia. Without ideas, they searched the Internet for stories of strong women who “made history” (“*fizerem a historia*”). They encountered a story about three black women who mobilized their community (a *quilombo*) from an invasion (by Europeans). The women led and won the battle. The title of the story was “Yabas.”

Rose and Karina identified with the story and took the name Yabas as an appropriate title for their group. Afterwards, through conversations with other black activists, they learned of the connection to Afro-matrix religions. They continue to use the name and spelling “Yabas,” distinguishing themselves from the Yoruba-influenced spellings and pronunciation (i.e., an open accent on the final ‘a’—*iyabás*). Thus, they emphasize a history of black resistance and women leaders while simultaneously neither fully embracing nor rejecting associations with Afro-matrix religions in Brazil.

### **YABAS: PROJECT DESIGN**

Yabas and a group of activists working on a youth arts-education program (PROTEJO) in Santo Amaro came together to design a project around Yabas’ music and activism. The project was created in response to the Ministry of Culture (MinC) in Recife announcing funding for artistic and cultural development projects for youth in Santo

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<sup>13</sup> The film tells the fictional story of a group of four black women hip-hop artists living in São Paulo. *Antônia*. 2006. Directed by Tata Amaral. Globo Filmes.



Figure 2: Yabas Performing at Pre-Esporte do Mangue, September 4, 2011. Photo by Cláudio Damangar.

Amaro. Santo Amaro is a large city district located just north of Recife’s city center (Fig. 3). Within this district is the Santo Amaro “favela,” an extremely vulnerable community that suffers from poverty, a lack of infrastructure, and violence related to drug trafficking and the police, as well as domestic, sexual, and symbolic violence (Fig. 4). As Samuel Araújo remarks, residents of such communities suffer from “century-old social prejudice and stereotypes”—e.g., marked as poor, uneducated, and criminal by the larger populace (Araújo et al. 2010:222). I use Santo Amaro to refer specifically to the favela.

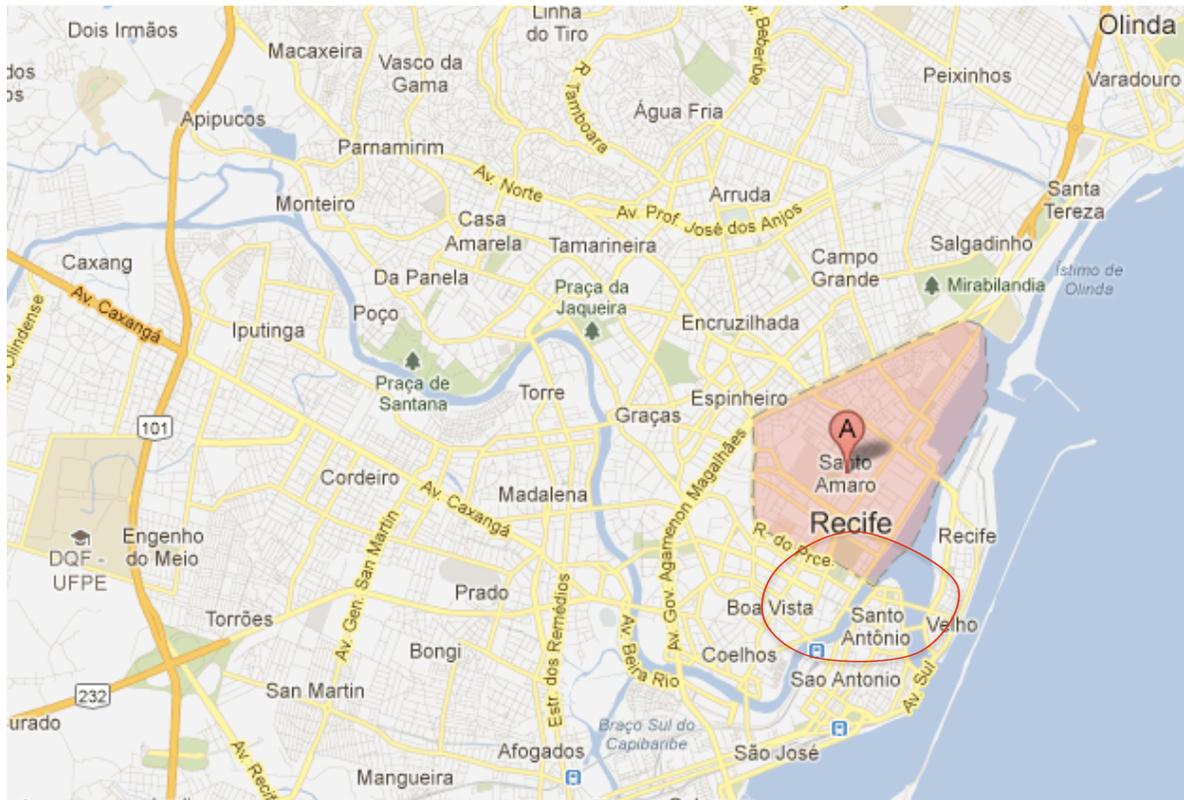


Figure 3: The Santo Amaro district (shaded in pink) just north of Recife's center (red circle). Google Maps.

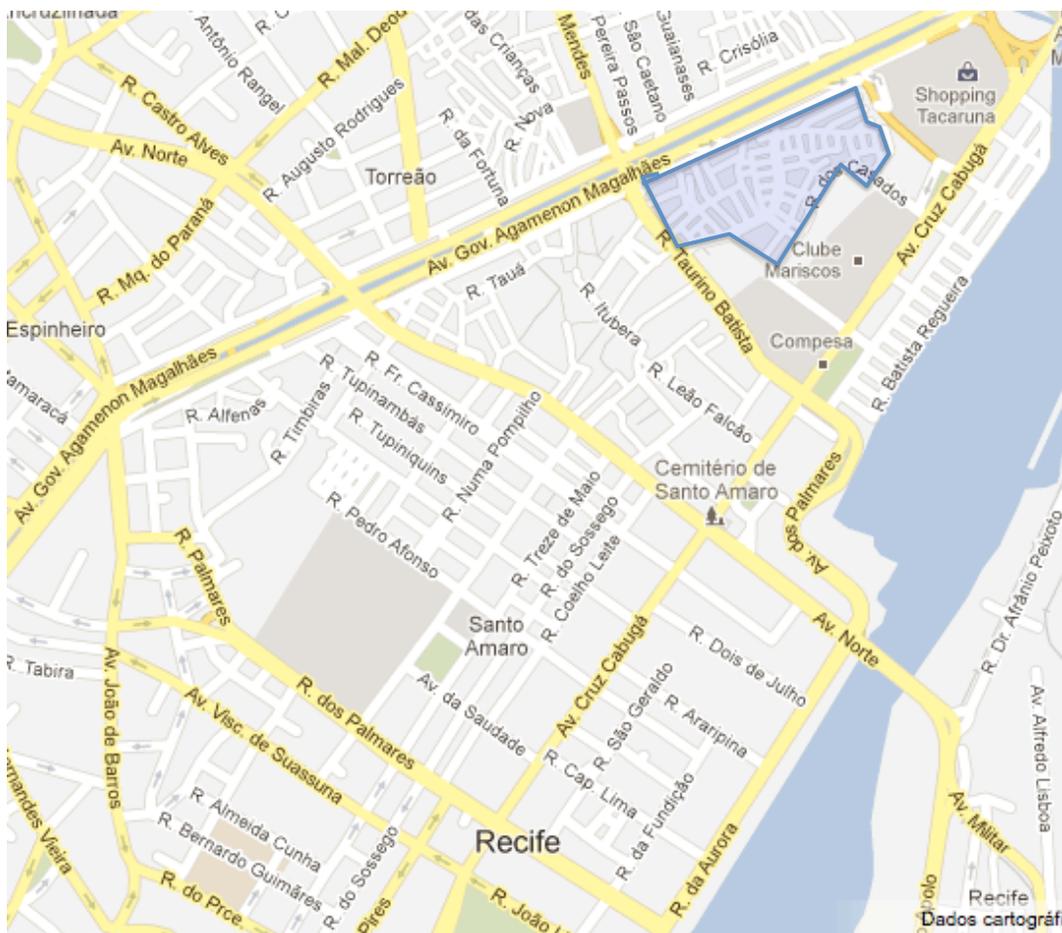


Figure 4: Santo Amaro District, with the “favela” shaded in blue. Google Maps.

Rose, Karina, and the activists met in December to design a project that would strengthen the “artistic protagonism” of Yabas, that is, use their music as a point of departure for collective activism against racial and sexual violence. The goal of the project was to use hip-hop as a participatory pedagogical tool to facilitate young women’s conceptualization of themselves as black women and to recognize and prevent racial and sexual domestic violence. The original project had four components:

1. Race and Gender Workshops: Through a series of eight workshops, the project sought to reinforce critical understandings of racial identity and gender issues to

- facilitate self-empowerment and deployment of successful resistance strategies for preventing racialized and gendered violence. Of particular importance is how these kinds of violence often occur within family relationships. The workshops were to be comprised of about 25 young black women from Santo Amaro.
2. CD of Yabas Music: The production and distribution of a CD of Yabas's music would serve the project in two main ways: 1) Yabas had not yet recorded a complete album of their own music.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the only way at the time to hear their music was to attend live performances. This complicated access to their music and political project because drug trafficking has divided Santo Amaro into rival sections. If Yabas perform in one territory, residents from another section might not be able to attend for fear of violent reprisals from rival organizations.<sup>15</sup> Enacting music as a means to demonstrate alternative realities wherein rival territories can be linked in various ways is part of Yabas's overall political project. Distribution of a CD of recorded music supports this goal and increases the accessibility of Yabas's music and activism. 2) Members envisioned the CD as a pedagogical tool for future workshops. Songs could be incorporated into discussion sessions about a variety of themes ranging from sexual violence, racism, and blackness to power, identity, feminism, and citizenship.
  3. DVD Documentary: This was designed to record the activities of the project and strengthen its goals by promoting community participation. A group of students

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<sup>14</sup> Previously, they had only recorded two tracks that appeared on a compilation of new hip-hop artists produced by Zé Brown. *Zé Brown apresenta Talentos*. Recife, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Araújo has written about similar conditions in Rio de Janeiro: "An individual who crosses these boundaries risks his or her life, as happens when a resident who lives in a sub-area controlled by a given comando [sic] goes to a party in a neighboring place under another one's control, or when relatives are separated simply by living in areas controlled by different organizations" (Araújo et al. 2006: 294).

from Santo Amaro, trained by PROTEJO's Video Course, agreed film the documentary. It promotes images of the community's participatory activism and collective resistance to sexual abuse. It is also an instructional tool to be distributed (along with the CD and a booklet) to the various youth-oriented organizations in Santo Amaro.

4. Booklet: The final objective of the project was the production and distribution of an informational booklet that discusses the key ideas from the workshops such as recognizing, resisting, and preventing varying forms of violence. The booklets use music as a point of departure to address issues of identity, empowerment, and collective resistance. The aim was to articulate clearly the major themes presented artistically in the music, to consolidate these discussions in a concise format, and to aide and guide interpretations, reflections, and interactions with the cultural materials. Taken together, these materials offer a range of pedagogical potential for initiating and maintaining programs that address sexual abuse.

#### **FUNDING PROJETO YABAS**

The activists and musicians involved in Projeto Yabas live in various parts of the greater Recife metropolitan area (only Rose and Karina are residents of Santo Amaro); coordinating meetings proved difficult. Moreover, project proposals had to be submitted to the MinC online, and this required arranging meetings at internet cafes in Recife's city center. Such logistical difficulties contributed to the project being finalized only on the deadline for funding applications, December 30, 2010. Unfortunately, the MinC website was not working properly when the activists attempted to submit project proposal. With the deadline fast approaching, the group tried desperately to contact the MinC but received no response from the technical support staff. They emailed the MinC, explaining

the situation and asking for authorization to submit the proposal as a Word document, which they had attached to the email. On January 2nd, 2011, they received an email declaring that the project was officially received. In late January, the MinC notified Karina via telephone that the project was pre-approved. By February, MinC's website listed the project as preapproved.

Viviane Santiago serve as principal organizer of Projeto Yabas. She works as an educational coordinator and is a black activist in Recife's the hip-hop community. She was one of several individuals who were working with PROTEJO in Santo Amaro that formed the initial team of Projeto Yabas. In March, after discussing the matter with the rest of the team, she suggested I participate in the project as well because of my training in ethnomusicology and Pan African studies, my commitment to fighting racism and anti-black violence, and my interest in the role of music contributing to Afro-Diasporic resistance movements. She and others felt that my training would provide valuable insights into aspects of the project. My primary responsibility in Projeto Yabas was to contribute to the workshops and discussions with Rose and Karina about music as a practice where race, gender, geography, and the body are all performed, both constantly reified as well as resisted, renegotiated, and re-embodied. We intended this dialogue to reinforce, through new ideas and perspectives, the group's musical performances and political activism. My additional responsibilities included assisting in highlighting these issues in the project's written materials and writing English subtitles for a promotional version of the DVD that would allow the project to circulate within a wider selection of organizations and possible funding sources, supporting future work. After discussing the parameters of my role, I applied for and received a Summer Activist Research Grant from the Social Justice Institute of the University of Texas at Austin. In the original budget, we allocated this funding for printing the booklet.

At the end of April, the MinC published on their website a complete list of all the project proposals, with their evaluation grades, to be funded by the state of Pernambuco. Our project was ranked 12th. At the end of May, as I was on my way to Recife, the MinC released a final list of projects that stated when the funds would be released. To our surprise, Projeto Yabas was not on the list; We had been replaced by another project previously ranked much lower than ours.

We quickly contacted MinC, who initially claimed they never received our project proposal. After we produced the emails proving that our project was not only received, but listed as preapproved, the MinC countered that that our project was mistakenly placed on the lists, they confused it with another project. Ours was the only project with “Yabas” in the title; and how then, could they explain the phone calls to Karina? The MinC finally relented and acknowledged that our project was indeed preapproved; however, because of an unexplainable error, our project would not be funded. We suspect recent elections shifted political party alliances and certain projects ranked lower than ours, but with friends in the right places, were approved for funding over our project.

### **REFORMULATING THE PROJECT**

The disrespect shown to us by the MinC in Recife had a demoralizing impact for the group. Most members were unemployed, had been denied unemployment compensation when they lost their jobs, and now also lost remuneration for work in Project Yabas. Most had difficulties even discussing these issues. After some time, a few of us continued with the initiative and attempted to decide how best to use the limited SJI funds.

We considered organizing a day, or possibly an entire weekend, of workshops on race and gender that would be concluded with a concert by Yabas. However, it was

agreed that such a reduced period of exposure would have a limited impact for the youths involved. After a long process of discussing and debating potential “plan Bs,” we finally decided, in late July, on a project that focused its energies on the artistic and social protagonism of Yabas. The reformulated project included three interrelated components: 1) producing a CD of Yabas music; 2) organizing a series of dialogical reflection sessions featuring Karina and Rose; and 3) organizing a CD release concert. We drew on networks of local hip-hop activists to achieve these goals.

### **PRODUCING THE CD**

Hip-hop producer Tufão agreed to record the album for half price; he produced the music tracks (as bases) for free, charging us only for the actual recording (figure 5). Tufão and Yabas finished recording the CD in just two and a half months. Graffiti artist José Cleiton Carbonel shot the cover photos for free. I assumed the role of graphic artist by designing the album covers and liner notes (figs. 6 and 7).



Figure 5: Tufão in his Studio. Photo by Cory LaFevers

Distributing the CDs with copies of the lyrics, while more costly, was an important goal for the project. Providing the lyrics insured another form of access to the content addressed in the music, increasing the pedagogical potential of the CD. With dwindling funds, we produced 1,000 CD cases and inserts and only 100 CDs. This is significant because the cases and inserts are only printed in runs of 1,000 units at a cost that would be prohibitive for Yabas to reprint at a later date. CDs, on the other hand, can be printed in any number at any time (1 Real apiece). Thus, we managed to include the lyrics and insure materials for continued distribution of the CD. Carbonel, along with his production team Mangue Crew, produced (at no charge) a music video of the song “*Desabafo Feminino*” (Women’s Disburden). The full album is available for download

and streaming at: <http://palcomp3.com/yabas>. The video is also available at palcomp3.com, as well as on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/e2R6jpObtkE>.



Figure 6 CD Cover: *Yabas, A força que a mulher tem EM COMUM* (Yabas, The Strength that Women have IN COMMON) October, 2011.

## **REFLECTION SESSIONS:**

Dialogic reflection sessions were held weekly, from July through the end of October 2011. These discussions were facilitated by Viviane Santiago and held in her house. I participated in the early sessions, focused on designing and implementing Project Yabas and recording the CD. We discussed how cultural citizenship and funding agencies (public and private) contribute to folklorized images and sounds of blackness. We discussed “collaboration” and which hip-hop producer to approach about recording the album. For example, we questioned what other artists a given producer worked with; how they positioned themselves in the misogynist world of hip-hop; and what do they might seek to gain by working with us? Reflecting upon these questions influenced our decision to work with Tufão over other possible producers.

Later discussion sessions focused on creating spaces of dialogue, reflection, and support for Rose, Karina, and Viviane as black women living in a racist and sexist society. I did not participate in these sessions. First, I had returned to Austin for the fall semester. Second, and most important, I felt that my positionality as a white male would be detrimental to the effectiveness of the sessions. Discussion topics were generated by Karina and Rose and ranged from questions such as: what does it mean to be a black woman in Brazil, and a black woman in hip-hop? Additional issues raised referenced attitudes toward Afro-descendant hair, toward means of dealing with violence, issues of sexual and reproductive rights, the dynamics of abusive relationships, self-esteem, self-control, and self-making, resilience, professionalism, and artistic and political protagonism.



Figure 7 Back Cover of CD: *Yabas, A força que a mulher tem EM COMUM* (Yabas, The Strength that Women have IN COMMON) October, 2011.

Karina and Rose led the discussions in the sense that they brought up their own issues, concerns, and questions. Viviane served as facilitator and mentor. The dialogue proved truly successful in terms of self-making and strengthening the artistic and political protagonism of Rose, Karina, and Viviane. Moreover, they had immediate and expansive

results. For example, launching their CD has brought several performance opportunities for Yabas, as well as potential collaborations with hip-hop artists throughout Brazil. When approached with collaborative recording and performing opportunities, Rose demanded to review song lyrics, make changes, and refused to work with certain people. However, she went beyond simply refusing to work with them; she engaged those individuals about their politics. Rose's discussions with one male hip-hop artist facilitated his own protagonism and altered his stance on collaborating with misogynist musicians in Recife. Before engaging in dialogue with Rose, he simply hadn't thought about it that way.

#### **CD RELEASE PERFORMANCE**

The CD release concert occurred on Tuesday, October 11, 2011, at *Terça Negra* (Black Tuesday), a weekly performance of black music held at the historic, *Pátio de São Pedro* in Recife. *Terça Negra*, in its current form, was established in 2001 as a joint effort between the *Movimento Negro Unificado* (Unified Black Movement, or MNU), the *Núcleo Cultural Afro-Brazileiro* (Afro-Brazilian Cultural Center, or NCAB), and Recife's municipal government. Each week, the MNU presents three or four musical groups playing Afro-Brazilian or Afro-Diasporic music. MNU activists speak before the music starts and in-between performances, informing the crowd about presentations of Afro-Brazilian culture, lectures, and similar activities.



Figure 8: Yabas performing at the CD Release Show, Terça Negra October 11, 2011.  
Photo by Xicco Limma.

Terça Negra is a space/place negotiated through the struggles of Recife's black activists. Before Terça Negra, activists and musical groups gathered on Thursday and Friday nights at a small pagode samba hotspot called Pagode de Didi located in another section of the city. It was only afterwards that the MNU moved the gatherings to Pátio de

São Pedro and the night changed to Tuesday. The driving force behind the move was the desire to establish a permanent space/place for Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations outside of the established spaces and places, such as carnival and favelas. Alzenide Simões explains that the idea was “not to get the public to go to the ghetto and for the performers to stay in the ghetto. If [the performer] left the ghetto, came to the city center...[it would] demonstrate the true face of Recife.... Where are the blacks in this city? They’re here, look. We are everywhere. Blacks are not only over there in the ghetto” (LaFevers 2010:107).



Figure 9: Yabas Performing at CD Release Show, Terça Negra, October 11, 2011. Note the Pátio de São Pedro is full of spectators. Photo by Xicco Limma.

Logistically, Terça Negra allowed us to tap into a pre-existing infrastructure; we did not have to rent a stage or hire a sound manager. Holding the CD release show at Terça-Negra contributed to the objectives of the project in that it provided a high level of visibility for the group and their social and artistic protagonism. Yabas' CD release performance contributed to an entire month of Terça Negra programming that showcased hip-hop. The concert was extremely well attended, and many residents of Santo Amaro were present.

### **EVALUATING PROJETO YABAS: RESULTS**

Despite its difficulties and limitations, Projeto Yabas successfully achieved its goal of enhancing the social protagonism of Rose and Karina as hip-hop artists and community activists. The release of their CD brought considerable exposure for the group. Rose and Karina sold the entire original run of CDs within a month of its release and continue to produce and sell CDs. Increased attention to the music of Yabas began prior to the CD release show when the group debuted material from the album at the *Pre-Esporte do Mangue* festival on September 4, 2011. *Esporte do Mangue* is one of the largest festivals of alternative youth culture (including music) in Recife. A series of “pre” festivals showcase youth performances from each of the city’s districts. The festival organizers select the best acts to present at the final festival. Yabas’ performance was strong and they were invited to perform during the final *Esporte do Mangue* event (March 1-3, 2012) alongside the festival headliner, nationally famous rapper Emcida.<sup>16</sup> The festival organizers informed Yabas that, in addition to the artistic quality of their performance, the subject matter addressed in their music was a deciding factor in their selection. Additionally, the festival organizers are releasing a compilation CD with songs

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<sup>16</sup> <http://brigadahiphop-pe.blogspot.com/2012/02/esporte-do-mangue-2012-com-emicida.html> (accessed October 20, 2012).

from all of the artists. Sharing a bill—as well as a forthcoming CD—with a rapper as famous as Emcida marks a massive achievement in Yabas’ career. The success of these performances (Pre-Esporte do Manguê, the CD release party at Terça-Negra, and Esporte do Manguê Festival) prompted further attention in a news report and interview with Yabas that aired on SBT Television.

Since the release of their CD, Yabas have become more active advocates for black women within the hip-hop movement in Recife. They participated in meetings and roundtable discussions—*FloreSendo Ideas* (Flowering/Being Ideas 27-30 October, 2011) and *Máfia do Batom* (Lipstick Mafia, August 24-26, 2012)<sup>17</sup>—dedicated to the promotion of the work of black women, as well as strategies to confront racism and sexism within the movement. Additionally, Yabas entered into a partnership with the feminist NGO *SOS Corpo-Instituto Feminista para a Democracia* (SOS Body: Feminist Institute for Democracy) to develop strategies and actions (grounded in hip-hop) to confront domestic violence and the abortion rights in Pernambuco. This collaboration has already resulted in the recording of a new song to be used by SOS Corpo in promotional and pedagogical activities.

The greatest success of Project Yabas is Rose and Karina’s increased involvement in with young black women who have experienced sexual violence. This is at least partially the result of Yabas’ music, social message, and participation in the project—especially the reflection sessions. Involvement in hip-hop has been a transformative process for Karina and Rose; it has helped them to gain an understanding of themselves as black women in a racist and sexist society, and to evaluate the ways in which racism and sexism have shaped their identities. That is, hip-hop allows Karina and Rose to

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<sup>17</sup> Both events were organized by the Recife based, all-female graffiti collective, *Coletivo Flores Crew* (Flower Crew Collective).

engage in processes of healing from sexual abuses and racial violence. Such healing processes can be heard in the title track of the album “*Em Comum*” (In Common). The song begins with Karina sharing the story of her rape. She is speaking over a repeating string ostinato and the crackling sounds of hi-fi record static, representing memory and the past. Her voice is calm and determined, yet soft and quite; her language—at times erratic and vague—indicates her pain:

*Em 2004 quando eu tinha 15 anos tava perto de fazer 16 anos eu vim de um show que minha família, minhas amigas e meus amigos me pediram para eu não ir e na volta a partir do horário não tinha mais ônibus aí eu vim sozinha desse determinado lugar pra casa e eu fui andando. E no trajeto encontrei um homem que pegou na minha mão com violência, apertou minha mão e disse que eu não fizesse gestos, não olhasse pra ninguém, tipo eu não identificasse que eu não conhecia ele, era pra agir como se eu conhecesse ele. Chegou lá começou a dizer que eu era linda, que eu era gostosa, que queria transar comigo, e eu disse a ele que eu não queria que eu tinha acabado de sofrer um aborto, tinha nem um mês que eu tinha acabado de sofrer um aborto espontâneo e aí eu tava a maior deprê, tipo eu queria fazer de tudo pra me distrair, me divertir, e aí aconteceu isso, o pior ele me estuprou e eu não consegui falar isso pra ninguém porque eu fiquei com vergonha e com medo de ser [julgada], poucas pessoas sabem disso....<sup>18</sup>*

In 2004, when I was 15, about to turn 16, I came from a show that my family, my friends, had asked me not to go to, and afterwards on the way back, there were no more buses, I went back alone, from there to my house, and I went walking. On the way I met a man who grabbed my hand violently, he squeezed my hand and told me not to make any gestures, not to look at anybody, like not to indicate that I didn't know him, I was to act as if I knew him. When we got there he started to say that I was pretty, that I was hot, that he wanted to have sex with me, and I told him that I didn't want to, that I just miscarried, it hadn't been even a month since I suffered a miscarriage, and I was really sad, like wanting to do everything to distract me, to have fun, and then it happened. The worst, he raped me and I couldn't tell anybody because I was embarrassed and afraid to be judged, few people know about this....

She is crying as she finishes the story.

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<sup>18</sup> Punctuation and spelling are reproduced as they appear in the CD inserts. The only exception is that “*humilhada*” (humiliated) has been correctly transcribed as “*julgada*” (judged).

Karina overcomes debilitating feelings of fear and guilt to recount her experience; then, along with Rose, she uses her voice to claim citizenship rights, denounce the existing system of law enforcement and prosecution as ineffective, and to encourage other women to speak out against pedophilia and domestic violence. Forty-eight seconds into Karina’s story, the melodic lines of the beat replace the string ostinato as the crackling vinyl fades away. At 1:09 minutes, the song begins with a statement of the refrain:

<i>Terra adorada entre outras mil</i>	Beloved land, amongst a thousand others
<i>A cada dia aumenta o abuso infantil no Brasil</i>	Everyday child abuse increases in Brazil
<i>Terra adorada, terra adorada</i>	Beloved land, beloved land

The obvious reference to Brazil’s National Anthem suggests that pedophilia is a national problem and implicates the state for failing to act effectively to prevent it:

<i>Terra adorada</i>	Beloved land,
<i>Entre outras mil</i>	amongst a thousand others
<i>És tu, Brasil,</i>	Art thou, Brazil
<i>Ó Pátria amada</i>	O beloved homeland

Excerpts from the first verse, sung by Rose, illustrate Yabas’ strategy of using their voices as a form of expression and a vehicle to demand and claim their rights:

<i>Indignação, este é meu sentimento</i>	Indignation, that is my feeling
<i>Quando vejo um caso desses me dá um tormento</i>	When I see a case like this, I am tormented
<i>O som da minha voz é meu grito de protesto</i>	The sound of my voice is my scream of protest
<i>Contra esses casos até de incesto...</i>	Against such cases, even incest...

Rose and Karina believe that their position as hip-hop artists, as survivors of sexual violence themselves, and as outspoken activists—a positionality explicit in their music—all contribute to their being recognized as mentors by women in Santo Amaro.

One example is Dandara,<sup>19</sup> a young woman from Santo Amaro who had known Karina and Rose prior to Projeto Yabas. She attended the CD release show and was familiar with Yabas' music. The week of the CD release concert, she was the victim of a "date" rape. The next morning Dandara approached Yabas for advice. Significantly, Karina and Rose claim that she did not come to them simply because they too had been victims of sexual violence, as if to be comforted; rather because she was looking for information on how to file charges and exercise her rights. She knew that Rose and Karina could help. That day, they took Dandara to the hospital and the police station. The following day, they took her to the *Centro de Referência Clarice Lispector* (Clarice Lispector Reference Center), an organization that provides judicial and psychosocial support and counseling to victims of domestic and sexual violence.

It is also significant that the man involved in the rape was a prominent member of Recife's hip-hop movement. Rose and Karina made the decision to file the charges regardless, fully aware that their actions might result in repercussions from the larger hip-hop community. Indeed, many artists have reacted against Yabas, denying the rape ever occurred, and in some cases have sought to impede Yabas' musical career.

This incident strengthened Rose and Karina's activism, including their knowledge of rights, legal processes, and support networks in Recife. They began to approach other young black women in Santo Amaro who were either victims of sexual and domestic violence, or, acting in a manner that Yabas viewed as disempowering and replicating a racist and sexist imaginary of how black Brazilian women should behave. That is, Karina and Rose felt compelled to act as mentors and illustrate other possibilities for these adolescents. The women they approached were already familiar with their music and

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<sup>19</sup> A pseudonym.

activism. Dialogue initiated by Yabas continues and has resulted in a number of these youths becoming active participants in various community organizations in Santo Amaro.

Projeto Yabas was limited in its scope; the final project, as well as the initial project design, is far from a large-scale and sustained community project. Despite these shortcomings, Projeto Yabas had immediate and expansive results. Producing and distributing an album of Yabas' music, coupled with dialogic reflection sessions, contributed significantly to Rose and Karina's artistic and political protagonism. As a result, Rose and Karina have been able—at least on a limited scale—to facilitate young black women's conceptualization of themselves as black women and work toward preventing sexual and domestic violence.

## Chapter 4: Towards an Activist Ethnomusicology

### ACTIVIST OR APPLIED?

Applied ethnomusicology (in its general definition and practice) is heavily influenced by applied or public folklore, as well as applied anthropology. However, in recent years activist anthropologists have distinguished their work from that of applied anthropology (Hale 2008). The underlying assumption behind the latter is that the scholar will apply specialized knowledge to the benefit of the population she is working with. Critiquing these methodological and institutional power imbalances is one of the major interventions of activist scholars. For example, ethnomusicologist Samuel Araújo argues that the term “applied” indicates an understanding that the actual “knowledge” was produced elsewhere, without the contributions of community members (Araújo 2009:39). Similarly, Davydd Greenwood employs a tripartite Aristotelian model of knowledge to argue that applied research is “expert dominated and hierarchical” and imposes “professional authority,” whereas activist research is “collaborative, dialogical, and built around joint praxis and evaluation” (Greenwood 2008:329).

Anthropologist Samuel Martínez developed a model for distinguishing between applied and activist research. He argues that applied anthropology is dependent on clients, which “imposes a strictly vertical structure of knowledge production and dissemination” (Martínez 2008:189). He illustrates this with a diagram (see figure 8). Note that the client produces the research question and receives the finished product. Additionally, the researcher has complete control over research design and analyzing the data.

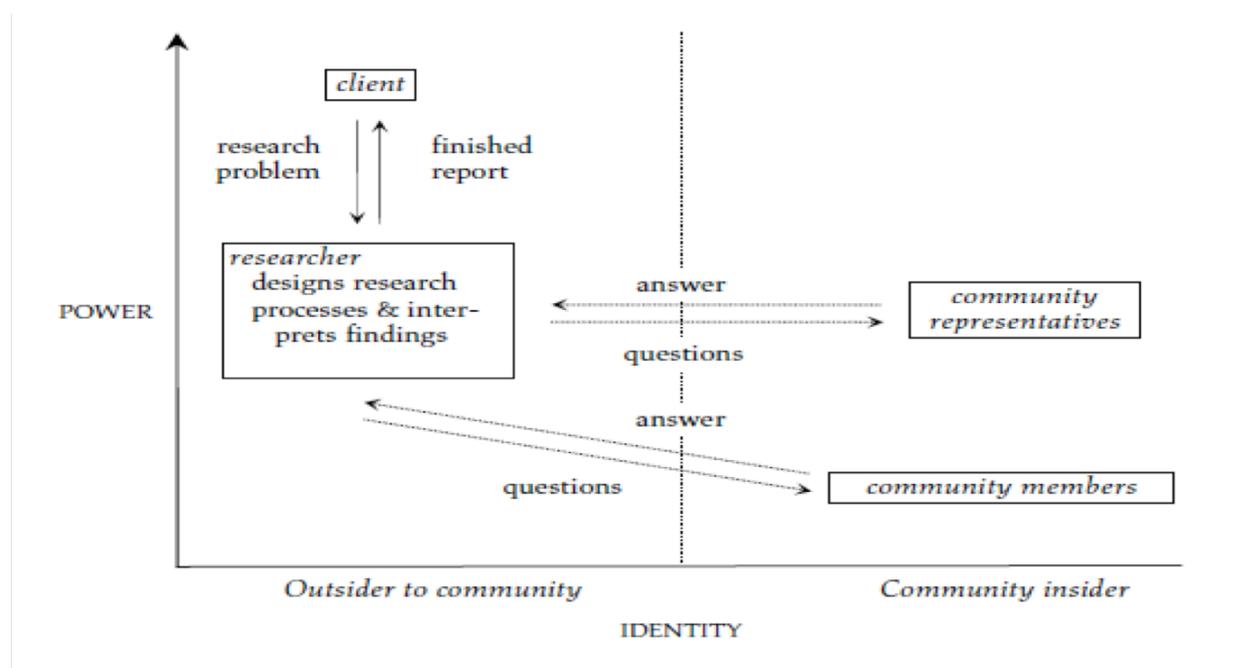


Figure 10: Model of Applied Anthropology (Martínez 2008: 188).

Martínez stresses that an activist model (represented by figure 11) employs horizontal structures of knowledge production, incorporating community representatives as research partners throughout the research process. Approaches to writing ethnography that allow the interlocutor “to speak” in the document—via extended quotes or by uploading the interviews to a website for public viewing—do not alter these vertical structures of knowledge production because the researcher continues to control the research design and interpretation of data.<sup>20</sup> Notice that problem formation and research design take place at the center of Martínez’s activist model, in dialogue with the researcher, community representatives, and community members. Applying Martínez’s model to Projeto Yabas, Viviane and I would be the researchers, Rose and Karina the community representatives, and residents of Santo Amaro the community members.

<sup>20</sup> See Agawu 1995:393-394.

Research funders, whether NGOs, state agencies such as MinC, or numerous other foundations that support community-based research, are curiously absent from Martínez's model of activist anthropology.

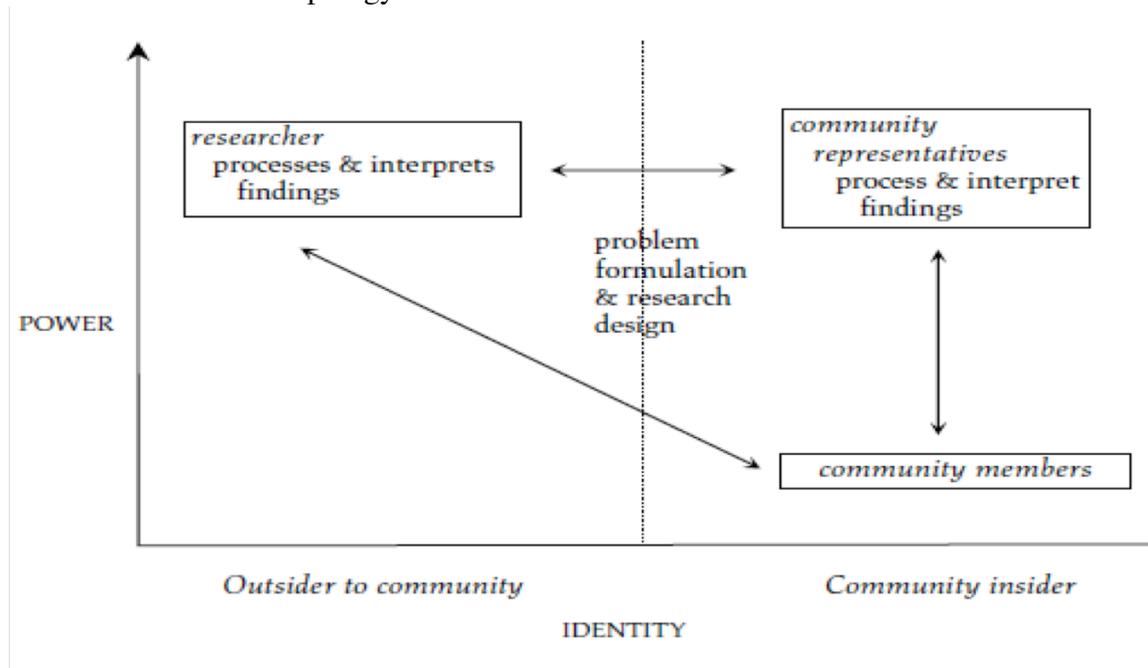


Figure 11: Model of Activist Anthropology (Martínez 2008: 190).

These authors (Araújo, Greenwood, Martínez) are making broad generalizations; it would be wrong to assume that all applied scholarship inevitably imposes hierarchical structures of knowledge production, or that individual scholars do not enter into collaborative partnerships with particular communities. Nevertheless, their critiques merit significant attention. Focusing on underlying structures of knowledge production and power can help scholars critically reflect about their positionality as both scholars and advocates/activists. The rest of this chapter considers whether activist paradigms are appropriate for ethnomusicology. I draw on the experiences of Projeto Yabas to

ultimately argue that applied ethnomusicology should continue to incorporate activist methodologies.

### **ACTIVIST ETHNOMUSICOLOGY?**

Are the models discussed above appropriate for applied ethnomusicology? It would appear so, as recent literature suggests ethnomusicology as a field is moving toward more consistent involvement with activist scholarship. In his contribution to the 2008 volume, *The New (Ethno)Musicologies*, Philip V. Bohlman advocates that music scholars take explicit political stances in their research. He argues that our tradition of seeking objectivity and the standards of academic evaluation have rendered us relatively unimportant in the eyes of community members and activists (Bohlman 2008:99;110). While carefully pointing out that the question, “does ethnomusicology have to be activist?” cannot be answered with a “simple ‘yes,’” Bohlman asserts that thoroughly reformulating ethnomusicology based on activist approaches offers the possibility to break free from such irrelevance.

In her recent article, “John Blacking: Social and Political Activist,” Victoria Rogers continues the tradition of reclaiming narratives of applied ethnomusicology history. Contrary to conclusions drawn in 1992, Rogers places activist work directly inside the academy, suggesting that universities offer unique platforms and possibilities for activism. Rogers demonstrates that it was precisely Blacking’s training as an anthropologist that informed his activism. She concludes that “Blacking the academic and Blacking the activist were intertwined; and that each sphere of activity fed from, and fed into, the other.” (Rogers 2012:77). Maureen Loughran’s definition of applied ethnomusicology could just as easily fit alongside those of activist anthropology:

As a method of research, applied ethnomusicology informs decisions made throughout the fieldwork and research process, from gathering interviews to participating in protest rallies. The scholar becomes part of the community and acts with the community (Loughran 2008:65).<sup>21</sup>

Finally, Samuel Araújo has repeatedly argued for dialogic, collaborative research and knowledge production in ethnomusicology—essentially calling for more “activist” approaches. He claims that “reviewing the process of knowledge production requires extreme application (in the sense of politically conscious engagement) in order to change public policies in favor of social movements that can build a new knowledge-producing praxis” (Araújo 2010:230). Araújo’s phrase “politically conscious engagement” recalls Samuel Martínez, who cites the most basic or obvious distinction between applied and activist scholarship as “the resituating of the ethnographer as a political ally of the people among whom she is doing fieldwork rather than as a live-in inquisitor” (Martínez 2008:188). According to Araújo, not only do these approaches produce more relevant knowledge for the community members, they are also necessary for effective policy changes. Anthony Seeger, on the other hand, argues that ethnomusicologists can become effective political allies in a variety of ways that do not necessarily require scholars to be intimately involved in the political movements of their collaborators. He suggests that distance from such internal political struggles (tensions between different factions, for example) actually allows scholars to position themselves as objective outsiders, and thus more effective at influencing policy change (2004:142-147; 2006:225-227).

Recently, Gregory Barz developed a model for reimagining notions of responsibility and how ethnomusicologists come to engage in advocacy/action. He

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<sup>21</sup> In fact, many activist anthropologists have focused on participant-observation methodology and the power of the researcher to not become involved in community struggles in the interest of scientific objectivity. Critiquing this position and encouraging a more active role for the researcher has led some to promote “Observant Participation” as a model, where participating in the political initiatives of the interlocutors’ community becomes the priority, relegating scholarly observation to a secondary concern (Vargas 2008).

reproduces a stance taken by several authors when he states, “don’t many (if not all) ethnomusicologists advocate at some point and on some level for the musics, cultures, and individuals with whom they work, even if through their publications and their teaching.” However, he destabilizes this assumption by claiming that “translating advocacy to activism, however, reveals a newer and perhaps more politicized agenda of reception, and an agenda of *responsibility*” (Barz 2012:8-9 emphasis in original). He suggests that a typical progression from experience to advocacy can be represented with an (overly simplified) model, Figure 12. Barz notes that ethnomusicologists initially receive a stimulus in the form of a musical event or experience, which is then transferred through us and results in advocacy directed away from us in that we advocate for “something outside of ourselves” (ibid.:9).

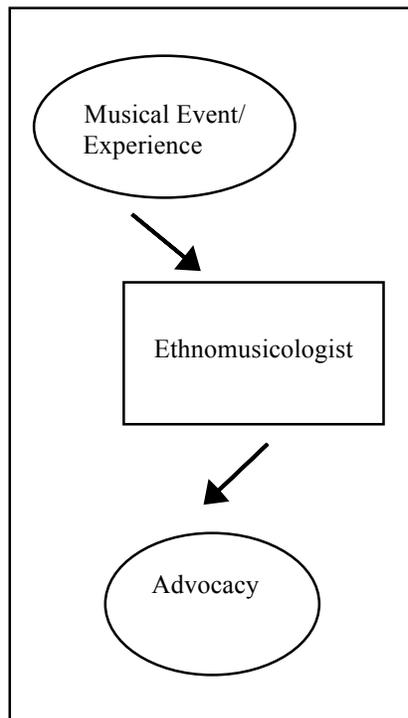


Figure 12. Advocacy Model 1, Gregory Barz (2012:9).

Barz offers a second model (figure 13) that repositions the ethnomusicologist in a manner similar to the collaborative activist models discussed above. Note that the outgoing arrow from the ethnomusicologist to the musical event accounts for the ethnomusicologist's positionality in their interpretation and experience of the musical event. The connections between advocacy and the musical event indicate the "inherent nature of advocacy in any given musical experience," suggesting that an ethnomusicologist "brings a predisposed attitude of advocacy to her reception of the musical event, and thus re-inscribes a context of responsibility." Finally, Barz claims that the coupling of advocacy with research illustrates that "advocacy is inseparable from our efforts, our products, our writing, and our field research" (ibid.).

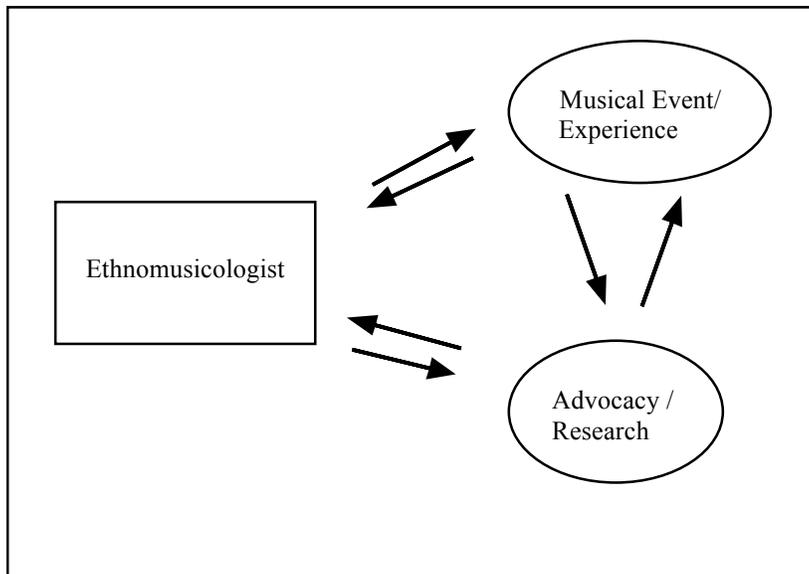


Figure 13: Advocacy Model 2, Gregory Barz (2012:9).

Barz's model is sophisticated in that it does not advocate for an exclusionary focus on collaborative (or applied approaches) over individual or academic ones. Rather, his model illustrates how ethnomusicological research of all kinds can incorporate

collaboration and advocacy, and is thus widely applicable and potentially usefully for all ethnomusicologists, including scholars engaging in historical or more strictly “academic” work.

Returning to the question of whether ethnomusicology should incorporate activist approaches, it is important to clarify a few points. First, most scholarship in ethnomusicology cannot be easily categorized as either strictly applied or academic. Second, paradigms that promote the needs and desires of the community to an extreme can also limit the possibilities of collaboration. I agree with Anthony Seeger when he cautions against “the utilitarian extreme that all research must be of immediate use to a community and with the opposite extreme that human societies are objects we may observe without becoming involved in their aspirations” (2008:271, emphasis in original). Referencing scholarship on Cuban hip-hop, Geoffrey Baker illustrates a similar point, noting how “the advancement of a political agenda can lead to simplification, exclusion, and contradictions” (2011:286). Third, it is important to acknowledge that communities are not homogeneous and thus collaborative research is inherently partial. Supporting some activist projects means potentially working against initiatives supported by others. Forth, and again following A. Seeger, there is a potential value in a scholar’s outsider status as an objective researcher that should not be dismissed outright. Rather, the strategic use of objectivity should be considered as another potentially useful dimension of how ethnomusicologists can act as political allies for their local collaborators. Finally, while I agree that scholarship should not be understood as rigidly either applied or academic, I am simultaneously skeptical of models that claim all ethnomusicologists are essentially (or at some point) applied scholars. My fear is that such a stance allows us to become complacent or lazy in our critical evaluations of the effectiveness and relevance of our work. Activist scholarship can just as easily fall into

the same trap. Thus, my point is not to argue that only scholarship with overt political implications is valuable. Rather, I argue that ethnomusicologists should focus on critical self-reflection would contribute in significant ways to Klisala Harrison's call for more "enhanced coordination of scholars' efforts, and for the increased critical understanding of applications of ethnomusicology and music." (2012:525).

Do we need an activist ethnomusicology? Based on experiences with Projeto Yabas and a critical review of the literature, I suggest that applied ethnomusicology would benefit greatly from continuing to embrace activist positionalities and research methods based on dialogue, critical reflection, and collaboration. As I elaborate below, this is especially true in countries such as Brazil, where cultural citizenship policies have greatly impacted how music and culture are employed for community activism.

## **FINAL REFLECTIONS**

### **The Importance of Dialogue, Critical Reflection, and Positionality**

While we were reformulating Projeto Yabas to correspond with the reduced budget, Viviane and I met with one of the original team members of Projeto Yabas. She was one of several activists who left the project after the MinC denied funding. Our discussion centered on community education and activism. The former team member observed that community organizations and NGOs have been active in Santo Amaro for decades to little effect. She asked, "how can *we enter the community with a radical pedagogy*"? Her use of the word "enter" suggests that activists (outsiders) come in already armed with solutions to local problems— a framework that is non-collaborative from the beginning and raises serious questions about sustainability and culture-based community projects in Brazil.

Projeto Yabas was not a long-term, sustainable program conceived in true dialogic collaboration with community members. Viviane and I developed an approach based in dialogue for the remainder of Projeto Yabas. Greater collaboration with Yabas, approached via critical dialogue, would define the needs and desires of Rose and Karina as activists and contribute to new collaborative approaches to projects in the future. The final initiative was designed to facilitate the political project of Yabas: using hip-hop to denounce sexual violence and facilitate young black women's conceptualization of themselves as political subjects. While Yabas are not grassroots leaders of a community organization in Santo Amaro, Keisha-Kahn Y. Perry reminds us of the importance of recognizing the various forms and cumulative effects of black women's daily resistance, which is not always about the "empowerment and improvement of [their communities], but also about reinventing themselves as black women and realizing their own *projetos de vida*, their own 'personal life projects'" (Perry 2008:205). As discussed in the previous chapter, Projeto Yabas contributed significantly to Rose and Karina's emergence as references for other women in the Santo Amaro. Focusing on their *projetos de vida* helped Rose and Karina increase their interaction with community members, an important step in developing larger collaborative grassroots initiatives.

The most important insight we can share about working with artistic activists, and the reason the project was so successful is that the issues, concerns, goals, and desires of the project must come from the protagonists. Here, the project is the protagonists' and activist scholars are the "community" partners. We understand that this may be an artificial separation of roles, a kind of researcher/activist dichotomy. Of course, each and every one of us is a different person with different interacting knowledge bases, agendas, and motives. Our positionalities and personhoods impact our activism and collaborations.

We must recognize that we might see things differently, and therefore act differently and approach the work differently.

We must also recognize our inability to acknowledge and efficaciously respond to all issues pertinent to the protagonists of a particular community. What matters to individual musicians or community leaders? Their perspectives, discussions, and understandings must be valorized and take precedence. However, what happens all too often—and indeed what happened initially in Projeto Yabas—is that outsider activists arrive with their own agendas and outlook which tend to render invisible the concerns of local protagonists. For example, Karina and Rose wanted to do a project to prevent violence against young black women in Santo Amaro. Outsider activists suggested a series of workshops and discussions on race and gender for community youth and a concert of Yabas' music. But, is that really going to help? These discussions would be grounded in whose knowledge base? We suggest that this kind of activism is proof of an inability to communicate and dialogue effectively with the goals and needs of the community and the protagonists. Activist scholars must valorize the differing experiences, knowledge-positions, and positionalities of themselves and their collaborators. They must listen.

They must also be self-critical and reflexive, a point clearly illustrated by Geoffrey Baker's sharp critique of Cuban hip hop scholarship. He explains that "U.S.-based academics have remade Cuban hip hop in their own image, reinforcing U.S. discourses of the civil-rights era and downplaying elements that do not fit with the idea of a noncommercial, race-based movement" (2011:288). He suggests that interest in promoting a particular kind of music and particular forms of black culture have

profoundly skewed representations of Cuban hip-hop. I view critical reflexivity as a potential means to avoiding such “epistemic violence.”<sup>22</sup>

The rise of cultural citizenship discourse and resources, via the MinC and other civil society agencies, has helped to create a particular model of community activism in Brazil; this is especially true of cultural projects. There exists a climate or culture of professional “activists” who write themselves into cultural citizenship projects and receive payment if the project is awarded funding. This has also established, in many cases, a dependency on middle-class, college-educated activists to negotiate bureaucratic spaces in order for community members to receive state funding. Nearly all of the original members of Projeto Yabas left the project when the MinC denied funding, for instance. Even though SJI funds were sufficient to continue with some aspects of the original project, many collaborators chose to seek payment for themselves by working with other projects. To be fair, the collaborators had been unemployed since the previous October. The point we would like to make, however, is that there appears to be a standard operating procedure for community projects in Brazil that reflects the vertical structures of knowledge production in applied research. Figure 14, modified from Martinez’s model of applied research, illustrates this phenomenon.

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<sup>22</sup> I borrow the term “epistemic violence” from Agawu, 393-394.

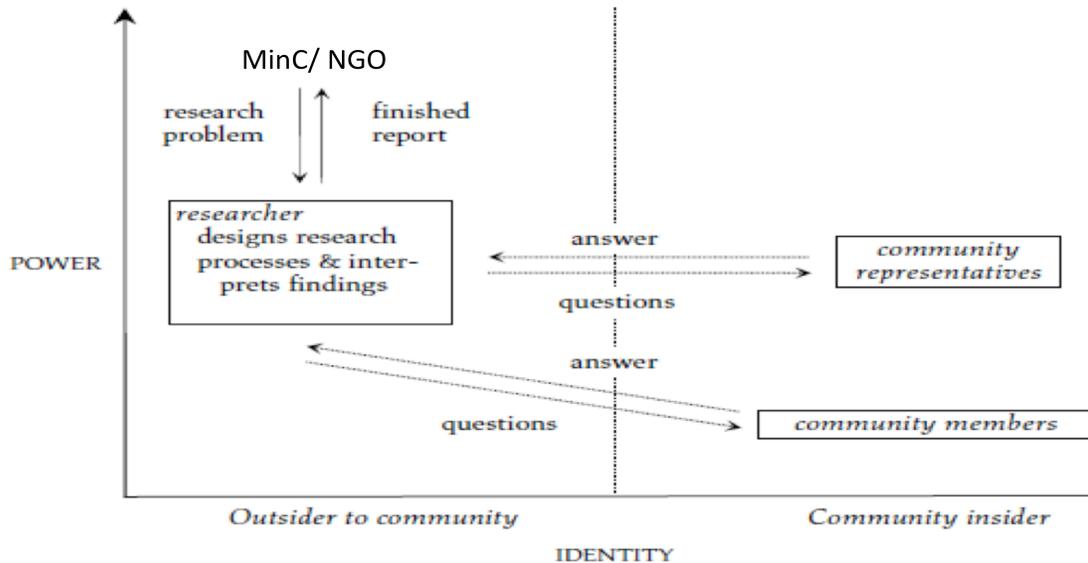


Figure 14: Model of Applied Ethnomusicology and Cultural Citizenship in Brazil. Adopted from Martínez 2008:188).

Samuel Araújo acknowledges that the root of the problem lies in nondialogic approaches to knowledge production that control project design and implementation, a problem only exacerbated by complicated bureaucratic structures of operation:

These arts programs [projetos] in general, and the musical ones in particular, encompass various focuses, from basic [instruction in reading] music to flute ensemble formation or percussion classes. They are typically isolated, self-contained actions, since their sources are [diverse] and each NGO has difficulties in keeping up with the contents of [other programs] which are often devised by outsiders on the premise that the community lacks them. From this results a certain disconnection and, not rarely, profound contradictions between ... several simultaneous experiences. (Araújo et al. 2006:296-297).

The experiences of Projeto Yabas corroborate such literature and suggest that long-term dialogic approaches can combat these disconnections because projects and strategies will emerge from the communities and protagonists themselves.

The growing trend toward transnational cultural networking in Latin American social movements may offer new solutions and possibilities to this problem. Maureen Loughran explains that “applied ethnomusicologists work within institutions, either academic or governmental, in which involvement in a community is dependent on the funds and time allowed by that institution.” She continues, claiming that “the role of grassroots organizations becomes an important aspect of applied ethnomusicological method” as many scholars “continue to do this work in spite of lack of support by institutions and governments” (2008:64-65). Our experiences confirm Loughran’s position; networks of hip-hop activists proved critical to the successful aspects of Projeto Yabas. It appears that large networks will be increasingly important in cultural activism and applied ethnomusicological projects.

Applied ethnomusicologists must critically reflect on their positionalities and the structures in which they work. They must ask difficult questions: what is music’s role in community activism? What are the possibilities and limitations of music as an affording element for establishing sustainable community programs that result in effective change? Does music, as a cultural expedient, hinder or enhance these pedagogical projects?

These questions are relevant at two interconnected levels. First, they speak to larger issues, such as how cultural citizenship, cultural policy, and funding are profoundly shaped by racist tendencies deeply embedded in society. Ethnomusicologists working with cultural policy in Brazil must ask if these policies are reinforcing institutionalized racism (and other forms of violent discrimination, i.e., misogyny or homophobia) by imposing a model of “good citizenship.” What does it truly mean to be a

good citizen in Brazil? A second level speaks to musical affordance<sup>23</sup> among individuals, e.g., how Karina and Rose employ rap in processes of healing and activism. What can music therapy contribute to social projects in situations of extreme institutional, symbolic, sexual, and physical violence? What are the benefits that can be achieved with dialogic methods and critical reflection? How can successful results at the personal or small group level be transferred to larger populations?

I am hopeful that music can afford spaces for powerful dialogic pedagogy that can be channeled into effective changes in the lived-experiences of the individuals involved. Continuing to pursue critically reflective and dialogic-participatory activist approaches in ethnomusicology offers the greatest possibility for achieving these goals.

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<sup>23</sup> Music sociologist Tia DeNora developed the notion of musical affordance to describe how social actors use music to achieve certain outcomes, including sociopolitical activism, “music may provide parameters for, and indeed on occasion trigger, cultural practice, identity work, and thus, action” (DeNora 2003:144).

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