

6.5. Grito Rock Festival: from do it yourself to do it together

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Abstract

The paper aims to identify the social practices and to discuss the cultural actions related to the Grito Rock Festival, which is considered the largest integrated event in the world based on the Do It Yourself principle. The paper aims to identify how the festival that occurs in hundreds of cities around the world simultaneously asserts the national identity through many live concerts that include not just Rock, as the name would suggest, but also diverse aspects of Brazilian culture. This project analyzes the organization of the Grito Rock festival in different cities. The aim is to determine whether it is possible to create a network of producers that could integrate these currently independent events: from do it yourself to do it together.

Keywords: Festival - Grito Rock - Do It Yourself - Do It Together - Music

Reconfiguring the music industry and the rise of independent festivals

In recent years, several researchers from the music industry have pointed to the emergence of new business models for the dissemination and distribution so that the players in this market will adapt to the reconfiguring of production, circulation, and consumption patterns (Herschmann, 2013; Sá, 2006; De Marchi, 2005) that have been occurring in the industry.

After a transition period, the music industry is reaching a level of restructuring, and what is happening is the emergence of a new music industry (Herschmann, 2012), in which there is a gradual appreciation of live music performances, often arranged in the form of festivals. This occurs once festivals emerge as the space where an artist shows his work, achievements, and close relationship with his audience, besides being one of the most favorable opportunities to sell CDs and promotional products. It creates an experience with new patterns of sociability.

Different music festivals have been independently put together in various states of the country, organized by local producers motivated to create cultural options in their cities. It can be confirmed that through these festivals, these cultural agents are creatively and successfully building new circuits of production, distribution and cultural consumption (Herschmann, 2010b), giving their work the power of distinction (Bordieu, 2007). It is precisely within this context that, in 2002, Grito Rock, the largest integrated independent festival in the world and is the object of this work, emerged. With this study we seek to map its main features, identifying existing social practices and forms of interaction that occur among its agents; understand the symbolic struggles that emerge in connecting to various local cultural identities

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and organizing a national identity; and finally, investigate the possible existence of a global network of culture.

The Grito Rock Festival and new social practices

The Grito Rock Festival began on February 2002 in Cuiabá, designed by the cultural collective Cubo Mágico, which sought to create an event with performances by local and regional artists as an alternative to Carnival. In 2006, members of the same group - which has been renamed as simply Cube - met with cultural producers, members of collectives in Uberlândia (Goma), Londrina (Demo Sul), and Acre (Scul), also independent festival organizers and promoters of local culture to form the circuit Fora do Eixo, a network of cultural agents whose activities consist of "powerful laboratory experiments of the new dynamics of work and subjectivities" (Bentes, 2011, online²).

Since February 2007, the Grito Rock Festival has been jointly held by all of the collective belonging to the circuit. The Festival grew with the growth of the network and started to be held by partner producers in various cities and continents as well. The 2014 festival was held in 400 cities in 30 countries (Figure 1).



Figure 1 - Map of Grito Rock Festival

Grito Rock is considered the largest integrated event in the world because it occurs in hundreds of cities simultaneously, and each local producer has the autonomy to manage the event according to the particularities of his region, ownership, and disputes. The Festival is

² Available at: <http://www.trezentos.blog.br/?p=6056>. Accessed on 15/02/2014.

known for its collaborative aspect that allows an environment of circulation at festivals for dozens of Brazilian and international cities, which together form a large circuit.

The advent of independent festivals such as Grito Rock led to "the emergence of new social practices that suggest alternatives to the restructuring of the music industry" (Herschmann, 2012, p. 1). On this aspect, the same researcher highlights the relationship between the production of these festivals and new digital media communications in shaping these new social practices related to the world of music:

It breaks away from the assumption that social practices that are related to organizing new independent festivals reveals a new way for artists to engage with their audience, increasingly employing new information and communication technologies. It is increasingly possible to find multimedia platforms on the Internet that encourage artists and consumers to initiate their production and exchange content and information. (HERSCHMANN, 2012, pg. 10)

It is therefore a new method of production, as explained by Martin-Barbero who points out that technological revolution introduces into our society a new way of producing, confusingly associated with a new way of communicating, transforms knowledge into a direct productive force (Martin-Barbero, 2006).

The members of the Fora do Eixo circuit stimulate connection among cultural agents from more than 30 countries to hold a joint festival in which the producer of each branch should follow a few guidelines for conformity but also has various aspects of freedom (such as fundraising). The guidelines are organized by a team from the Circuit and are sent to registered producers in a guide format.

Producers usually join in one of three different ways: (1) by signing up online at the site Toque no Brasil³ during the registration period (which usually occurs in January); (2) over the phone or online (emails and social networks) promoted by the managers of the Fora do Eixo circuit who present the project and invite the producer to participate and register on the site; or (3) through direct, personal contact.

Whereas in the first two hypotheses social interactions occur in cyberspace⁴ (Lévy, 2000), the third option happens through personal contact, generally facilitated during the "Colunas Fora do Eixo" which are trips taken by members of the Circuit to share experience, according to the description on the site: "Fora do Eixo agents circulating in Brazil and other Latin American countries are sharing social technologies and network information. Those "Colunas

³ The Toque no Brasil site (<http://tnb.art.br/>) was launched on January 5, 2010, as a collaborative platform with the aim of using the internet to approach bands and event producers for free. The platform was the result of the collective work of the Fora do Eixo circuit (mainly represented by members of the Amerê collective from São Paulo), Casas Associadas, ABRAFIN, and BMA. According to the current description on the aforementioned site, Toque no Brasil is "a network of opportunities that is intended to streamline and strengthen the bond between the links in the chain of value of music, facilitating the meeting between music makers and those who hire musicians and bands, that is, serving as a work tool. On TNB, artists of any style can create their profile and sign up for various opportunities such as live performances (shows, festivals, tours), publicity (advertising, jingles, soundtracks), and brand interaction (sponsorship, competitions, contests). These opportunities are open in notice format, where the talent seeker to manage and release the results online, all within the site. Still, this is all done with the logic of a social network, where each user has a fully customizable profile where you can upload files and interact with others."

⁴ As conceived by Pierre Lévy (2000, pgs. 92 and 93), cyberspace "is the new medium of communications that arose through the global interconnection of computers. The term refers not only to the material infrastructure of digital communications but to the oceanic universe of informations it holds, as well as the human beings who navigate and nourish that infrastructure."

Fora do Eixo" articulate new relationships and establish more partner points, beside providing a consultancy specializing in collective training" (Figures 2 and 3).⁵



Figures 2 and 3 - "Colunas Fora do Eixo" Flyers

These trips often occur by car within states in order to meet new cultural agents who are interested in participating in the network's activities. This collaboration with the network includes associative actions such as the formation of a cultural collective or organizing the Grito Rock Festival in your city. After this first contact, the interested producers shall do the registration via Toque no Brazil. The producers shall participate in the collective construction of the Festival.

The main method of communication between the managers of the Circuit and the associated producers is mediated through computers: After the registration period, all producers are included in an email group (on the Google Groups platform). That way, subscribers receive all of the information and can even get in touch with producers in other cities to organize joint activities such as systematizing circulation routes or exchanging products and services in solidarity.

Besides the aforementioned group, meetings are held on Skype, in chat rooms (IRC), and even on social networks like Facebook⁶ and Twitter⁷.

⁵ Available at: <http://foradoeixo.org.br/glossario-out-of-eixes/>

⁶ The Facebook "works through profiles and communities. It is possible to add app modules (games, tools, etc.) to your profile. The system is often perceived as more private than other social networking sites, because only users in the same network can see each other's profiles." (Recuero, 2009, p. 171).

⁷ According to Raquel Recuero: "Twitter is a site popularly deemed a microblogging service (...), structured with followers and people to follow, where each user can choose whom they want to follow and be followed by others. There is also the possibility of sending private messages to other users. The individual timeline of each user therefore contains all public messages posted by those individuals whom they follow." (Recuero, 2009, p. 173).

Through these digital platforms, it is possible to ask questions, exchange contact information, share experiences, and encourage producers to follow guidelines and to adhere to suggested campaigns, which are divided into the areas of promotion (Promote your Grito, Record your Grito, ExpoGrito, Grito Doc, Grito Live, Collaborative Media, and Grito Photography); training (Grito Kids, Organize Your Campus and Grito Gay); circulation of languages (Stage Grito, Grito Routes, OrFel, Compacto.Cine, Camelô 2.0, and Grito Hip Hop); and sustainability (Capture Your Grito, Mount your Compacto.tec, Host Culture, Green Grito, Collective Grito, and Pitch Your Coin at Grito Rock).

As can be seen, the leading social practices applied by cultural collectives in planning the Grito Rock Festival is based on association⁸, in cyberculture⁹ and solidarity economy¹⁰. These practices relate to the realization of what Castells has defined as "network society": "social structure which is characterized by networked communications technologies and information processing. This includes such social phenomena as economic interdependence among nations as well as globalization and social movements related to individual identity" (1999, p. 20).

Even by following Pierre Lévy's concept it is possible to see the formation of a virtual community dedicated to the execution of Grito Rock. This community is built on the affinities of interests and knowledge and mutual projects in a process of cooperation or exchanges, all independent of geographical proximity and international affiliations (Lévy, 1999).

It is interesting to note that Jenkins, in "Convergence Culture," highlights, upon analyzing Lévy's studies, the power of collective intelligence evidenced by the author:

On the Internet, argues Pierre Lévy, people subordinate their individual expertise to common goals and purposes. 'No one knows everything. All knowledge resides in humanity.' Collective intelligence refers to the ability of virtual communities to leverage the combined expertise of its members. What we cannot do alone, we can now do collectively. (Jenkins, 2006, p. 56).

On this point it is worth stressing that during the entirety of the Festival production the managers from the Fora do Eixo circuit share files collaborating with the execution of the event, such as explanatory spreadsheets to achieve control and accountability, releases, publicity photos, press kits, and presentations to assist in fundraising. All this material is made available in online directories (mainly Google Drive).

This kind of attitude dialogues directly with Pierre Lévy's notes, whereas in his understanding, cyberspace's is the main channel of communication of and memory support for humanity from the next century (2000).

Regarding face-to-face contact, it deserves to be emphasized that during the execution of the Grito Rock Festival there is often exchange among collective agents of the circuit and also among associated producers to participate in other cities' events. This occurs in many ways

⁸ According to Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service, the "concept of association is related to the adoption of work methods that promote trust, mutual aid, and strengthening human capital, among other factors." Available at: <http://arquivopdf.sebrae.com.br/customizado/desenvolvimento-territorial/temas-relacionados/associativismo-e-cooperativismo>

⁹ According to Pierre Lévy, cyberculture "is the set of technologies (material and intellectual), practices, attitudes, modes of thought, and values developed along with the growth of cyberspace" (Lévy, 1999, p. 15).

¹⁰ In this article we consider the concept of Paul Singer, who defines solidarity economy as "another means of production, whose basic principles are collective or associated capital property and the right to individual freedom. Application of these principles unites all those who produce in a single class of workers who possess capital equally in each economic cooperative or society." (Singer, 2002, p. 2)

but mainly through artist, production team, collaborative media, and speaker/training workshop host circulation.

From the above, it is clear how the Fora do Eixo Circuit resorts to new social practices to organize the Grito Rock Festival and that they occur mainly through digital media, although there is still a relevant *offline* liaison.

Based on this first aspect of understanding how to train a "virtual community"¹¹ (Lemos, 2002, p. 93) to plan the Festival, it now remains to analyze how each city's events relate to the cultural identities of the places where they are held, as examined in the next section.

Local cultural identities in the Grito Rock Festival

Considering territories as spaces in construction full of disputes and negotiations, it is interesting to try to understand the connection between local cultural identities while planning the Grito Rock Festival. After all, independent festivals exercise an important role in the reconfiguration of the music industry once they emerge as arenas of disputes of symbolic struggles.

This aspect can be seen in Grito Rock from the time that the festival is born in Brazil, in an environment outside of the Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo hub, from a growing demand for cultural options. The first wave of expansion of the event was to other cities outside the traditional circulation route: Londrina (PR), Rio Branco (AC), and Uberlândia (MG).

That is, local producers felt excluded from the usual cultural circuit and through the festival sought to intermeditate a new relationship with their territories in order to encourage new public policies and promote a transformation in the local cultural environment. This reconfiguration process is consistent with the disputes over attribution of meaning to the geographical spaces the Ana Enne highlights in her studies:

Historically, the symbolic struggle for the significance of social and geographic spaces involves classification systems that generate procedures of exclusion and inclusion that, although dynamic, mark "fences" and "bridges" and define Mary Douglas (2006) to talk about goods and their social uses. In this sense, forms of (de)valuation of urban areas, in their multiple perspectives, involve a number of agents and situations, including public policies of occupation, tactics of appropriation, and use of space by multiple specific subjects in which they travel and the media representations of places, among other possible extents. We face, therefore, an intense and everyday dispute over the attribution of meaning around the space, in its transformation into a significant place" (ENNE, 2012, p. 27).

Grito Rock is a festival full of associative activities that have various embodiments because each producer can organize it in the way that is most adapted to their local situation. That is, although in Rio de Janeiro the Festival occurs in the Circo Voador with popular prices, in Macapá (in the north of Brazil) the festival is held in a square with free admission (Figures 4 and 5). Some events have the support of local governments; others are produced by only private campaigns. The number of artists varies as much as the range of the public and media.

¹¹ Virtual communities "are aggregations around common interests independent of fixed boundaries or territorial limits" (Lemos, 2002, p.93).



Figures 4 and 5 - Rio de Janeiro and Macapá editions

For these characteristics, the relationship between the festival and the territory is often magnified in proportion to the size of the reach of the festival to the size of the city where it is held and if it really fits the cultural needs of that locality. Thus, cultural producers use the social practices described in Topic 2 of this paper to give a new way to operating through which they "reappropriate the space organised by techniques of sociocultural production" (Certeau, 2002, p. 41). These ways of operating are "ruses of other interests and desires" (Certeau, 2002, p. 41).

Thus, we can understand that through the collective experience of assigning new meaning to the territories where Grito Rock events are held is a process of formation of a cultural identity, following the assertion of Thompson that "when some men, as a result of common experience (inherited or shared) feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs (Thompson, 2001, p. 10).

In fact, it is worth noting that the existing feeling among producers who plan Grito Rock is belonging to a network, based on associative practices, which form a collective identity of the event while keeping up local individual cultural identities, respected throughout the planning process.

It is important to note that the construction of this collective identity does not presuppose that there is unanimity only during the production of Grito Rock. Rather, there is an intense exchange of emails and in-person meetings and online through which associated producers question, debate, disagree, and come in line for running the event in accordance with the reality of their territories. This characteristic approaches the understanding of Stuart Hall that it is "impossible to think the construction of identities as resulting only in commonalities of common points or establishment of contrasts and oppositions. The production of identity as a process must contain the two axes or vectors, as he calls it" (Enne and Lacerda, 2011, p. 8).

One of the major targets of discussions between the film makers at the festival was precisely the question of rock.

With a completion date scheduled for the carnival, the initial proposal was to take advantage of the festival to showcase what was promoted by the carnival festivities to consolidate and targeted those who had no interest in samba alternative rocker, acting in this way as a practice "of resistance to these hegemonic impositions of taste" (ENNE, 2012, p. 10).

However, over the past few years, the agreed direction (after extensive debate) is that a more plural selection, which turned Grito Rock shows into having a large Brazilian cultural diversity and includes varied artistic styles (in both music and language), not just rock.

Of course, there are cities that maintain the rocker tradition, but a growing number is opting to diversify musical genres. Hip hop, for example, is the object of a specific campaign - Grito Hip Hop - which aims to promote the hip hop culture during the Festival¹²(Figure 6).

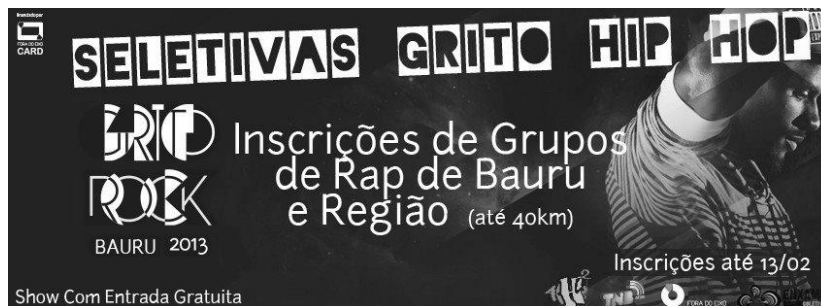


Figure 6 - Flyer of Grito Hip Hop

This measure combines the interests of farmers. For a few years, the festival has directed its efforts to form a national cultural identity in the sphere of Brazilian independent music between hundreds of local identities. On the concept of national identity, Nercolini clarifies that "*is no longer seen as a natural attribute acquired by the subject to belong to a given nation. We are not born with a national identity; it is formed and processed according to the representations we acquire and create.*" (Nercolini, 2006, p. 125).

Grito Rock collaborates with the creation of a national identity while going in the only direction that it has toward the movement of artist copyright. Each edition of the Festival must receive at least one artist from out of town, and all artists should present their own productions.

Through this model the festival promotes, between February and March, the biggest exchange period for independent artists in the country. Many bands are articulated to organize tours at this time, so make the most of the amount of vacancies.

And so, with events that include several local bands and still promote the movement of others, Grito Rock forms a connection between local and national identities.

The creation of a global network of culture

Accompanying the growth of the network it is possible to notice that Grito Rock experiences a new step with the expansion of its internationalization process. While in 2014 there were events in 400 cities of 40 countries, the goal for 2015 is to cover 500 cities in 50 countries (i.e., increasing the festival is projected worldwide).

Given the social practices developed in implementing the festival, it is possible to note a concern of the Festival in collaboration with the global construction of a more fluid and less closed Brazilian identity by encouraging the exchange of cultural agents and artists representative of our musical diversity in foreign events.

Plus, you can also see an effort to expand the boundaries ordained by the idea of multiculturalism as an effect of globalization that can generate a relevant cultural hybridization

¹² Available at: <http://qritorock.com.br/produtores/guia-do-produtor/>.

of a global scope in the future. Martin-Barbero explains these terms: "Globalization does not mean a greater diffusion of products but the rearticulation of the relations among countries through an off-centering mechanism that concentrates power, and an uprooting process that hybridizes cultures" (2006, p. 63-64).

About how hybridization occurs, Canclini points out that these are processes in *which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separated form are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices. It is clear that the discrete structures called were the result of hybridizations; reason cannot be considered clean sources.*" (2001, p. 19).

Based on these points, it is possible to understand Grito Rock as an event that can enhance a cultural hybridization through new digital technologies and by its widely associative character, configuring it as a legitimizing institution, disclosing and mainly organizing high volumes of current musical production (Queiroz, 2010, p. 7).

Finally, we conclude that the expansion of Grito Rock can be considered an important step toward the creation of a global network of culture marked by an intense and constant process of cultural hybridization.

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