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Reconnecting Lusophone Musics through the Web: The Cultural Entrepreneurship of Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge

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Resumen

Este artículo pretende contribuir para o estudo de processos musicais da cultura expressiva lusófona na época digital. Analisa alguns empreendedores culturais que foram seleccionados pelo seu dinamismo online, utilizando a web para navegar e difundir as culturas dos países de língua portuguesa, muitas vezes utilizando explicitamente o conceito de "lusofonia". Perante o influente apelo de construção de uma "identidade musical lusófona" transmitido pelo documentário *Lusofonia: a (r)evolução* (2006), estes actores podem ser entendidos como exemplos de socialização e negociação que transcendem fronteiras nacionais de memória e representação. Uma análise etnomusicológica pode explicar o papel da música (divulgada através soundclouds, podcasts e vídeos no YouTube) na articulação destes processos.

Palabras clave

Música, migração, memória, *lusofonia*, era digital

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Abstract

This article wants to make a contribution to the study of musical processes of expressive lusophone culture in a digital age. It analyzes selected cultural entrepreneurs that use the web to navigate and disseminate the cultures of Portuguese-speaking countries, often explicitly utilizing the concept of "lusofonia". Given the influential call for a "lusophone musical identity" by the 2006 documentary *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução*, these actors can be understood as examples of socialization and negotiation that transcend national boundaries of memory and representation. An ethnomusicological analysis can explain the role of music - disseminated through soundclouds, podcasts and YouTube videos - in the articulation of these processes.

Key words

Music, migration, memory, *lusofonia*, digital age

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1. Introduction

This article deals with expressive culture in a transnational lusophone space, at a time when the polemic idea of “lusofonia” is increasingly heard. Lusofonia is a concept that reflects a strategy to construct a common platform of understanding at the political, economic and cultural level within the transnational space of the Portuguese-speaking language countries. Interestingly, since Red Bull Music Academy’s influential documentary *Lusofonia, a Revolução* (2006), some online cultural entrepreneurs have stimulated a shared sense of lusophone reconnections through digital mediations, specifically focusing on lusophone musics.

Using field interviews and virtual ethnography, I examine specific musical affinities of cultural entrepreneurs such as Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge. These entrepreneurs present their narratives through soundclouds, podcasts and YouTube videos, using maritime metaphors to connect their sonic voyage to lusophone communities on various sides of the Atlantic, often made of young people that have never lived under colonialism.

Building upon previous work on both online music communities and Lusophone communities, I want to analyse how lusophone musics are utilized to bind disparate geographic and language groups together into larger organisational structures. How are these social spheres creating new cultural identities? And how is music mediating this social networking?

I hope to raise critical questions about the ways in which the political and economic project of lusofonia has inspired particular cultural projects and social identities. In other words, I want to trace how community-based experiences of music and culture (and the discourses that surround them) encourage people to feel that they are in touch with an essential part of themselves, their emotions and their community (cfr. Stokes 2007: 13).

2. Lusophone musics in the digital era

I use the concept of lusofonia as proposed by Arenas (2011), namely as a contested signifier in which “nostalgic neo-colonial discourses in the political arena or in the media compete with uncompromisingly anti-colonial views or pragmatic postcolonial positions”. From my perspective, it is worthwhile to explore lusofonia as a type of modernity that transcends post-colonialism as well as the frontiers of current nation states.

Lusofonia is a term that represents a union between people that share a language and cultural characteristics despite large geographical distances. The concept is grounded in a linguistic definition, but also designates a political, economic and cultural space. Since the turn of the century, lusofonia has increasingly informed international relations in the Portuguese-speaking world: governments as well as economic, academic, juridical, sportive, cultural and social institutions or associations within this frame regularly use the concept. The creation of CPLP, the (political and economic) Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (in 1996), as well as international cultural events such as the 1998 Lisbon World Exposition (Expo '98), where musicians from Portuguese-speaking countries performed together on stage, have also contributed to the term's visibility. Finally, the advent of the internet, its social networks and digital media have much facilitated, intensified and accelerated contacts within the Portuguese-speaking world.

A similar idea seems to guide some recent online cultural entrepreneurs such as Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge, that appear to be using the concept of lusofonia as a social and cultural tool. Drawing on Guilbault's *Governing Sound* (2007), I want to reveal how the discourse and actions of these cultural collectives “promote” the idea of lusofonia by means of music (Paez & Liu 2011, Connerton 1989). My focus is on their administrating agency as well as its effect on expressive culture in a transnational lusophone space. I specifically aim to verify if the above-mentioned documentary, *Lusofonia: a (r)evolução*, continues or not to offer a relevant vision for the situation today.¹ Which are the musics that these virtual cultural agents promote? Why and how do they do so?²

¹ I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Jorge de La Barre for this thought.

² All internet links were last checked on April 27th 2013. Translations from Portuguese are my

Theoretically, I will approach lusofonia as an example of how power relations inform both social practices and representations of cultural identities (cfr. Maciel 2010). My perspective is based on the work of ethnomusicologists and other social scientists that, in a global context of diaspora and transnationalism, understand that cultural systems may be articulated linguistically rather than geographically. This fits the field of ethnomusicology, which aims to address popular music as a privileged site for the exploration of (trans) national identity and culture (Arenas 2011: 46). A musical ethnography can reveal strategies of inclusion, integration, adaptation and socially justified acceptance of population movements (Côte-Real 2011: 11). It may thus help to better understand affective notions of cultural capital that are constantly being put into practice through the web. Finally, the internet has not only become an essential medium in the identity construction of these entrepreneurs and their networking; it has also turned itself into an indispensable research tool in conducting an ethnography (Cross 2011, Macedo 2010, Martins 2010, Rosenberg 2009, Rettberg 2008).

3. Contextualizing the documentary *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução*

For most organizers of contemporary music and culture manifestations that I have interviewed, the documentary *Lusofonia: a (r)evolução*³ seems to have built an important momentum to foster a collective experience of lusophone musical cultures, often emically referred to as lusofonia. This documentary, produced by the Red Bull Music Academy in Lisbon in 2006, links the presence of “lusophone musics” in postcolonial cities to processes of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. In my analysis, this documentary ideologically embodies the idea of lusofonia.⁴

own. I am grateful to Agustina Laurito for proofreading this text and to TRANS’ reviewers for their valuable suggestions.

³ <http://web.rbmamedia.net/video-archive/documentaries/3>

⁴ For an in depth discussion of the documentary, see chapter 3 of Vanspauwen 2010.



Figure 1. Documentary *Lusofonia: a (r)evolução*

Source: <http://www.myspace.com/lusofoniaarevolucao>

Lusofonia, a (r)evolução constructs a cultural narrative that suggests that lusophone sounds have evolved but still belong together, and attempts to increase musicians' visibility and professional opportunities in Portugal. It sets out to "reconnect the musical and cultural threads that have resulted from the Portuguese expansion since the 15th century" (*Lusofonia, a (r)evolução*, Press Kit). Dubbing itself "a calling card for lusophone musical identity" (ibid.), the documentary makes a strong plea for a more supportive framework for lusophone musics in Portugal, both from an institutional and mercantile perspective. That cultural material is abundant, emanates from the accompanying announcement:

Catch a glimpse of the sound of today's Portuguese-speaking world: musical moods & memories stretching from Brazil to Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, and beyond. From Creole Hip Hop to samples of Angola's bangin' Kuduro or Portugal's Fado folk music on 4/4, Jazz-based grooves (ibid.).

Lusofonia, a (r)evolução sonically promotes the idea of lusofonia. At the same time, it fosters musical hybrids in Portugal. To do so, the Portuguese delegation of Red Bull Music Academy (RBMA) has focused on the cosmopolitan connections of Lisbon as a postcolonial metropolis, making a strong plea for revalorizing an historical notion of lusofonia, which is also present in what they call the "new multiculturalism" of a generation of urban musicians (ibid.).

Back in 2006, *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução* was offered to film, music and multimedia festivals, using RBMA's global network in some 70 countries. The documentary was available in a limited DVD+CD pack edition, however without being commercialized. Next to providing YouTube fragments of the documentary and a bilingual press kit online, the project's MySpace⁵ today functions as a platform where Portuguese-speaking musicians can promote their work (linking to their respective MySpaces, where a profile and downloadable music are available) and where shows can be announced.

The hypothesis of this article is that RBMA's documentary *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução* has influenced the three case studies, Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge. I will argue that they utilize the idea of lusofonia as a tool for their cultural entrepreneurship, the documentary being their philosophical justification.

4. Case Studies: Zarpante; Conexão Lusófona; Caipirinha Lounge

4.1. Zarpante

Zarpante is a cultural entrepreneur that has been actively disseminating a notion of lusofonia since September 2011, through its website⁶, Facebook profile⁷ and group, blog⁸, and YouTube channel (called Zarpante Tube)⁹. The verb "zarpar" means "to set sail", thus cross-referencing to the same idea of cultural connection as set forth by the documentary *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução* and referring to the age of Portuguese nautical discoveries. Using the image of a Portuguese caravel, it makes ample use of digital media and its social networks to promote and disseminate its cause. Zarpante is physically listed as a company with domicile in Portugal, although it also operates from France and Brazil. Its general objective is to "democratize arts patronage for the cultural heritage of the Portuguese language" (quoted from <http://www.zarpante.com>).

⁵ <http://www.myspace.com/lusofoniaarevolucao>

⁶ <http://www.zarpante.com>

⁷ <http://zarpante.wordpress.com/about/>

⁸ <https://www.Facebook.com/zarpante.lida>

⁹ <http://www.YouTube.com/user/Zarpantetube/videos?view=pl>



Figure 2. Zarpante
Source: <http://www.zarpante.com>

Zarpante was born out of a meeting in Paris between the Brazilian Henrique Andrade Moretzsohn and the Portuguese Anne-Charlotte Louis. These two Portuguese speakers abroad - an arts lover and a financial analyst - realized that, first, the Portuguese language was their “greatest bond with arts and culture as historical themes of dialogue”, and second, that the Portuguese-speaking people around the world were “represented in multiple countries in different continents” (<http://zarpante.wordpress.com/about/>).

Zarpante’s specific objective therefore became “to enable artists of various Portuguese-speaking countries to enrich the lusophone cultural heritage through a greater exchange and interactivity” (ibid.). To do so, the project decided to

Take advantage of new media and new technologies to go beyond geographical barriers, creating an online platform for collaborative creation (“crowdsourcing”) and collective funding (“crowdfunding”) dedicated to professionals engaged in the cultural or artistic area.¹⁰

In this way, through Zarpante, one can now “discover new artists and stimulate the lusophone cultural scene” (<http://zarpante.wordpress.com/about/>):

¹⁰ “Crowdfunding!” is defined by Zarpante as the act of raising money for the realization of projects through the aggregation of multiple funding sources, while “crowdsourcing” is a production model that uses the intelligence, creativity and collective knowledge of volunteers spread across the Internet to make new projects (<http://zarpante.wordpress.com/about/>).

Art lovers will be able to provide financial assistance to lusophone projects throughout the world and dialogue directly with their favorite artists. And artists who may have never met can share their work and contribute to diversifying the art of our countries and improve the dialogues (ibid.).

This vision clearly demonstrates how the project's cultural articulation and belonging are rooted in a language-based collectivity that functions as a constitutive social force.

After all, it is through union that the lusophone community can become more imposing than its single nations in their mere individuality. We can be from Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and East Timor, but, above all, we are the language that we speak (ibid.).

Since the end of 2011, Zarpante has put 15 monthly podcasts online about lusophone sounds under a variety of topics, offering "a sound trip through seas of our language", with "flavors of Angola, perfumes from Brazil, spices from Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, mixtures from Mozambique or Macau, pinches from Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and East Timor" (<http://zarpante.wordpress.com/podcasts-zarpante>). In the same allusive maritime language, Zarpante invites the listener "to set sail", proposing to "navigate through ports of Mozambique, Angola, Brazil and Cape Verde" (ibid., podcast 2), offering songs by Cesária Evora, Martinho Da Vila, Maria Alice, Marisa Monte, as well as some lesser known names. Other podcasts entail lusophone hip hop (podcast 1), lusophone carnival music (3), Rio de Janeiro's music scene (4) and bossa nova/tropicalia (5). Podcast 6, "an episode in contact with the roots but also directed toward the future" (ibid.), explicitly links itself to the music festival organized by Conexão Lusófona (see below):

Feel the spirit of lusofonia by listening to our podcast and take part in the festival of Conexão Lusófona in support of our language in Lisbon[!] A festival that in the future may be extended to other countries that speak the language of Camões! (ibid.).

More recent podcasts include “sounds of Angola”, put together by partner association Caipirinha Lounge (see below); international film excerpts that feature songs of lusophone musicians, such as Cesaria Evora’s song written for her by Goran Bregovic, Seu Jorge singing David Bowie, Elite Squad, City of God and others; a podcast dedicated to rock (11) or to African influences in music (13) from Portuguese-speaking countries; and an episode on *saudade* (10) with another metaphorical invitation: “come sail the musical seas of this feeling so characteristic of our language!” (ibid.). Many of these podcasts were put together after a poll between the site’s followers.

4.2. *Conexão Lusófona*

Conexão Lusófona¹¹ (“The Lusophone Connection”) started in 2006 as an initiative of a group of young people that eventually became a social network promoting culture and knowledge between Portuguese speakers. This already materialized in the form of 2 public debates¹² and a music festival at Mercado da Ribeira in Lisbon (see below). Conexão Lusófona wants to organize cultural events targeted to young people in all the Portuguese-speaking countries, offering “music, arts and literature of excellent quality, much of it until now difficult to access for not being part of the big circuit” (<http://conexaolusofona.org>). Music is an important part of the association’s focus, incorporating both the older generation of lusophone musicians (Martinho da Vila and Tito Paris, the latter being the association’s mentor, among others) and younger musicians (Aline Frazão and Kalaf (Buraka Som Sistema), among others).

¹¹ <http://conexaolusofona.org>

¹² November 17th 2011 at the Letters Faculty of the Universidade de Lisboa, and November 15th 2012 at Fundação África-Portugal in Porto. http://www.conexaolusofona.org/eventos/2011-11-17_em_debate_01/cartaz_01_web.html; <https://www.facebook.com/events/272214619548746/>

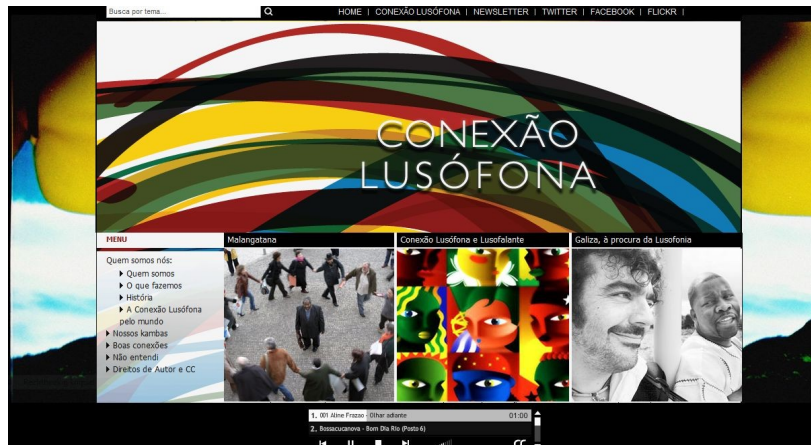


Figure 3. Conexão Lusófona
Source: <http://conexaolusofona.org>

In a personal interview (November 29th 2011), founding member Laura Filipa Vidal stresses that Conexão Lusófona “was created to promote lusophone cultures for members in geographically diffuse countries.” Its main objective is “working on a dialogue with the new generations”, using “lusofonia as a potentializing factor of social entrepreneurship.”¹³

Like Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona makes use of social networks and digital media, by hosting music, documentaries and interviews through its website and YouTube channel¹⁴ (since November 2011), as well as by establishing a web of personal connections (members and/or musicians) through its Facebook profile.¹⁵ On its website, it offers a dynamic playlist of lusophone musics that is incorporated within the general framework of each page, as a soundtrack to each visit. This playlist is especially prepared for the site by Henrique de Andrade of Zarpante, its logo featuring prominently next to the songs. Every two weeks, a new selection is put online. As De Andrade states on the Zarpante website:

We always try to prepare varied music lists in terms of musical styles and origins. You can rarely find two songs from the same country and the same musical style! To make this happen, we go from reggae over rock to rap and folk songs.¹⁶

¹³ The latter also being the title of her talk delivered on October 1st 2011 at the V Congress of Social Entrepreneurship, in the Centro de Congresso de Estoril, Lisbon Metropolitan Area http://www.ies.org.pt/ies/congressos/2011_-_v_congresso_do_es/

¹⁴ <http://www.YouTube.com/user/tvconexaolusofona>

¹⁵ <http://www.Facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001159813616>

¹⁶ <http://zarpante.wordpress.com/2012/11/09/listas-musicais-para-a-conexao-lusofona/>

The goal is to “show the diversity of musics coming from Portuguese-speaking countries. Mixing is the key term, and by doing so we will be offering a panorama of eternal old guards as well as new representatives of this beautiful culture!,” he adds (<http://zarpante.wordpress.com/2012/11/09/listas-musicais-para-a-conexao-lusofona/>). For each new playlist, an initial selection of 24 songs is validated by 4 representatives of Conexão Lusófona.

The discourse used to promote the first edition of the “Festival Conexão Lusófona”¹⁷, held on May 12th 2012 at Lisbon's downtown riverside, is relevant for our argument. Marking the end of the Cultural Week of Portuguese-speaking Countries, organized by CPLP, this Festival brought to the stage several nationalities and generations of Portuguese-speaking musicians, many of them of migrant background, such as Sara Tavares, Yuri da Cunha, Tito Paris, Manecas Costa, Couple Coffee, Aline Frazão and Costa Neto¹⁸. Many of these musicians support Conexão Lusófona through Facebook and feature in the playlists/podcasts that are put together by Zarpante. The flyer for the festival invites to “join this voyage and come participate in the Connection!” (<http://www.destinoslusos.com/2012/04/festival-conexao-lusofona-2012-mercado.html>), thus alluding once again to the metaphor of lusofonia as the result of historical cross-sea travel, as discussed above. It further indicates that the music festival represents “an intimate celebration for an eclectic audience,” which will be “immersed in the sounds and flavors, colors, images and people of our community” (ibid.).

The 2012 edition of the festival counted with the presence and/or support of many established musicians of “lusophone culture” (that are also online members of the community). As such, these real and virtual connections seem to reinforce a musical network that supports the association’s cause, which it calls “a base for a constructive, democratic and efficient intervention” (<http://conexaolusofona.org>). Conexão Lusófona hence positions itself as a,

¹⁷ <http://www.buala.org/pt/da-fala/conexao-lusofona-festival>

¹⁸ At the time of writing, a second edition of the festival was being planned on May 4th 2013 at Patio da Galé, at Lisbon's downtown riverside, with performing musicians Bena Lobo, Bonga, Boss AC, Dino d'Santiago, Elisa Rodrigues, Filipe Mukenga, Gapa, Karyna Gomes, Kay Limak, Micas Cabral, NBC, Orlanda Guilande, Quinteto Luso-Baião and Selma Uamusse.

Spontaneous movement of young people, spread over four continents but united by the internet, who decide to implement cultural and educational projects that promote a sense of identity and belonging to lusofonia and to encourage active citizenship of its youth (ibid.).

4.3. *Caipirinha Lounge*

Caipirinha Lounge, also dubbed “Lusotunes”, is an online, bilingual music platform that focuses on lusofonia and the musics related to it.¹⁹ It has been active as a blogspot since April 2010. Since then, it has widely embraced other digital networks such as Facebook, YouTube, Last.fm, MySpace and Twitter to disseminate its content and expand its network to the general public.



Figure 4. Caipirinha Lounge
Source: <http://lusotunes.blogspot.pt>

The founder of this project is Cláudio Silva²⁰, who lives in New York City and Luanda. His objective is to make lusophone music more available:

Traveling has had a large influence on my music taste, but I have a special place in my heart for lusophone music. I've always thought that despite its aural quality, lusomusic, especially from Africa, has not been adequately made available to people the world over. So this is my small contribution towards bucking that trend. (<http://lusotunes.blogspot.com>)

Caipirinha Lounge functions as a radio platform using the “audioblog” format. It is dedicated to “lusophone music, from Brazilian bossa nova to Portuguese fado, including kizomba” as well as other related musics, offering YouTube

¹⁹ <http://lusotunes.blogspot.com/2010/03/caipirinha-lounge-presents-lusofonia.html>

²⁰ <http://claudiocsilva.com/>

music videos, interviews and listeners' reactions. The project explicitly features music from Brazil, Angola, Portugal, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique and East Timor. For Silva, the categorization "lusophone music" includes "music in Portuguese or by lusophone artists" (ibid.). In my opinion, this conceptual division is telling in that it positions lusofonia as a cultural system with various languages and cultures.

For Silva, the purpose of his blog is "purely educational", interrelating musical events and cultural agents in the lusophone world. Caipirinha Lounge offers background and opinion articles and offers free downloads of music for limited amounts of time, for which computer access is indispensable.

Plug in your earphones and hear rhythms from places you have never heard of, from artists you have never heard about, sung in the world's most beautiful language. If you like a song, you can download it by right clicking on it and then clicking 'save target as'. If you like it a lot, buy the cd, support the artist, keep good music alive. If you are a singer or a label and want a particular song taken down, please contact me. Or, if you have music you think I will enjoy, do send via email (ibid.).

This collaborative/participatory approach is complemented with so-called "mixtapes" that are made by the platform and feature on the blog regularly²¹. Examples are *Reggae Lusófono, Vol. 1*, a collection of reggae and dub tracks by Angolan, Brazilian, Portuguese and Mozambican musicians, and *Caipirinha Lounge: Lusofonia Acústica Vol. II*.²² These mixtapes have a blog post link on Caipirinha Lounge with a detailed play order²³, *but are also available as a sendspace.com file*.²⁴ Finally, Caipirinha Lounge also features editor's picks, such as the *Top 10 Lusophone albums of 2009 and of 2010*, *10 great reasons to listen to music in Portuguese*, the *Top 11 Bossa Nova songs of past and present*, 5 volumes of *Editor's Pick: The Top 11 Songs of the Past Six Months*, as well as *The Top 5 Live Music Venues in Luanda*.

²¹ <http://www.buala.org/pt/da-fala/etiquetas/caipirinha-lounge>

²² <http://www.pglingua.org/noticias/publicacoes/3263-caipirinha-lounge-lusofonia-acustica-vol-ii>

²³ <http://lusotunes.blogspot.com/2011/04/caipirinha-lounge-presents-reggae.html>;

²⁴ <http://www.sendspace.com/file/0vzmlc>

Interestingly, Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge emerged separately, but soon turned themselves into “ideological partners”, collaborating on their respective sites and promoting themselves collectively. In terms of visitors, it is possible to present some partial numbers.²⁵ According to its statistics, Zarpante received 22 485 visitors to its main site since October 2012. On Facebook, it has both a regular profile with 2 797 friends and a closed group with 2 897 members, while on YouTube it has had 2 849 views. According to Henrique de Andrade, Zarpante’s podcasts, which are available on five different sites, had around 3 500 hits just over a year. Regarding Conexão Lusófona, it was not possible to determine the number of visitors to its main site. On Facebook, it has 2 392 friends, while it has 6 162 views on YouTube. Finally, Caipirinha Lounge obtained a total of 240 999 visitors since the beginning of its site, with an average of 174 visits per day, and has 1 149 “likes” on Facebook. In all three cases, it was not possible to determine the nationality or place of residence of the visiting public.

5. Argumentation

I will now establish a connection between the initial documentary (*Lusofonia, a (r)evolução*) and the three case studies (Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge) by theoretically reflecting on online music communities within the wider framework of cultural and language affinities. The aim is to shed new light on how various discourses and practices shape perceptions and uses of music, how music enables distinct ways of thinking and acting, and how musical practices are constitutive of subjectivities that are positioned in relations of power (Bourdieu 1977, Foucault 1991).

I approach the concept of lusofonia as an example of cultural administration that promotes a transnational community through its identity management of the lusophone space. This identity management is not only in the hands of governmental or commercial institutions, but also entails associative and individual agencies.²⁶ For example, institutional and commercial projects involving the notion of lusofonia, such as the 1998 Lisbon World Exposition (Expo ‘98), that involved many stage collaborations between

²⁵ These data were gathered by email and virtual ethnography in the end of March 2013.

²⁶ I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Frederick J. Moehn for these thoughts.

musicians from Portuguese-speaking countries, seem to have inspired a variety of music festivals such the Festival Conexão Lusófona, organized by a youth association and fueled by real and virtual networks of musicians and audiences. Thus, the diffusion of lusophone musics in the digital realm allows for an analysis of contemporary cultural politics and discursive practices (also see Santos 2006, Castelo-Branco 2008), which seem to contain an interesting tension between “a ‘new traditionalism’ [that situates] identities as based in a certain kind of ‘rootedness’ in race, ethnicity, linguistic communities,” on the one hand, and a “tendency to celebrate a plurality of globalized cultures,” on the other (Biddle 2007: 5).

Technological advances as the ones that emerge through the case studies both exemplify and balance this tension. The documentary *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução* uses the musical heritage of the diverse communities within the Portuguese-speaking world to legitimize contemporary musical mixtures²⁷. Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge employ the internet both to preserve the musical past and to promote the present. The cultural entrepreneurship of these case studies is necessarily linked to the notion of articulation: cultural relationships, as well as the various uses or interpretations of a single practice, are not always predetermined by class or other social categories; in some cases, they are the outcome of negotiation (cfr. Grossberg 1992). In this sense, Hall (1997, 2003) rightly stresses that,

The embodying of concepts, ideas and emotions in a symbolic form which can be transmitted and meaningfully interpreted is what we mean by the practices of representation. Meaning must enter the domain of these practices, if it is to circulate effectively within a culture (Hall 1997: 10).

The data that have been collected through the case studies above clearly show how this type of negotiation works within online lusophone music communities. For instance, Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge bring together social networks of musicians and audiences that actively disseminate,

²⁷ An example of these contemporary musical mixtures is Buraka Som Sistema, a band operating from the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, famous for its mix of the Angolan *kuduro* genre, techno and electronic music. Two of the band members, MC Kalaf (Kalaf Ângelo) and Conductor (Andro Carvalho), have Angolan origins and the band has been performing in Angola on various occasions.

discuss and comment on cultural expressions within the Portuguese-speaking world.²⁸ The common thread that unites these communities is “the challenge that each of them presents to the traditional power and authority of the institutions (and the ideologies that underpin them) that have guided the professional popular music industry for almost a century” (Norris 2004: 7). It is online that the traditional barriers, which isolated music fans and artists, are now contested, undone, reimagined, and re-articulated (Lessig 2004: np). Online musical communities offer decentralized alternatives to music consumption and criticism (Wellman 2004: 11) and potentiate listeners with a sense of participation in the process of collective consumption (O’Hara & Brown 2006: 285). Furthermore, digital platforms and formats are mediating the ontology of popular music as part of public commons and as cultural commodity (Deo 2012, n.p.), cutting out the traditional middle layers (Jones, quoted by Wellman 2004: 11). Finally, this digital “disintermediation” (ibid.) also undoes the dichotomy between bridging and bonding social capitals (Aitken 2007: 5), breaking down standardized social identity cues and allowing for greater heterogeneity in cultural participation.

Through their narratives, disseminated by means of digital media and formats, Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge successfully expand post-colonial viewpoints to a truly global understanding of “cultural cosmopolitanism”, as understood by Vertovec and Cohen (2002), Sanches et al (2004), Stokes (2007) and de La Barre (2011):

A type of cosmopolitanism that simultaneously: (a) transcends the seemingly exhausted nation-state model; (b) is able to mediate actions and ideals oriented both to the global and the local; (c) is culturally anti-essentialist; and (d) is capable of representing variously complex repertoires of allegiance, identity and interest (Vertovec and Cohen 2002: 4).

²⁸ Kalaf, the singer of Buraka Som Sistema, was one of the main guests of Conexão Lusófona’s first public debate. Another example is Aline Frazão, an Angolan singer based in Santiago de Compostela (Spain) that frequently performs in Madrid and Lisbon (for example, at the first edition of Festival Conexão Lusófona), and that was featured in Conexão Lusófona’s early YouTube videos supporting its cause.

These case studies clearly advocate a “mode of managing cultural and political multiplicities,” contradicting the process of cosmopolitanism as a mere “nationally defined and nationally determined construction” (paraphrasing De La Barre 2011: 150), thus transcending the contradictions of modernity that are blatant in the concept of lusofonia.

6. Conclusion

Without a doubt, the culturally democratic notion of lusofonia as imbedded in Red Bull Music Academy’s documentary *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução* continues to be influential among young cultural entrepreneurs that are online today in the lusophone world. Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge amply use internet platforms and digital media to stimulate a shared sense of lusophone cultural belonging that goes beyond geographical frontiers and postcolonial burdens. In addition, all three case studies actively employ the socio-political construct of lusofonia as a vehicle for its cultural-aesthetic entrepreneurship.

Interpreting online music communities through a reading of cultural and language affinities, I have tried to demonstrate that Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge display an intuitive sense for creative appropriation of new technologies. These actors are innovating cultural industries by offering more participatory models of project funding and realization as well as more accessible formats such as mixtapes, podcasts, audioblogs, soundclouds and YouTube videos. The usage of popular social networks such as Facebook directly downplays geographical distance and makes a collective experience possible. This also gives the viewer/listener a dynamic sense of participation in the process of music production and anthologization.

One could thus argue that Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge take advantage of the internet to “travel with their ears” (paraphrasing WOMEX director Cristoph Borkowsky Akbar). These three cultural entrepreneurs resort to metaphors of discoveries and sea travel, besides regularly cross-referencing to one another. On a symbolical level, “surfing” the internet has now turned into “sailing” (“zarpar”), a more collective and participatory

embarkation towards cultural and educational projects. These case studies aim at promoting a sense of identity and belonging to lusofonia from the belief that “lusophone culture” should reach a much larger audience and that arts patronage for the cultural heritage of the Portuguese language should be increased.

Concluding, Zarpante, Conexão Lusófona and Caipirinha Lounge are in the process of profoundly democratizing post-colonial culture by questioning the limits of cultural industries, nation states and postcolonial memories. Maritime metaphors from the age of discoveries are being discursively reinscribed to verbalize the sonic voyage alongside musics and musicians of the Portuguese-speaking world. Beyond using old sailing ships and modern jumbo jets these young cultural entrepreneurs are essentially rewriting their musical history through the web.²⁹

²⁹ For this idea I am indebted to the lecture “Sailing Ships and Jumbo Jets and the Caribbean-African Diaspora” as delivered by Dr. John Nunley at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Spurlock Museum, 13 March 2003. <http://www.spurlock.illinois.edu/education/calendar/calendar.php?month=3&year=2003>

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