

Rurals, The Experiment: Reclaiming the soundspace

Bartira de Sena e Souza
Pesquisadora independente
cultrix@riseup.net

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Abstract: The Rurals Experiment was a sound intervention developed and conducted by me and it took place in the city of Cruz das Almas, Bahia, Brazil in May 21 and 23, 2014. In this paper I analyze the intervention as an opportunity to disrupt the established soundscape of the city and give space for fresh engagements of the population with their soundscape to temporarily occur and reflect on the reasons why this approach would particularly impact that city's reality. Making use of field recordings captured at the city's countryside, they were presented in contrast, in the commercial urban center of the city in order to instigate reflection about the quick changes their sound environment has experienced in a short period of time. Thus, I review the history of Cruz das Almas, identify some of its soundmarks I considered relevant to demonstrate the hardcore and sometimes oppressive nature of this city's sound reality which has strong influence in this community's disposition to perceive sound and provides essential tools for engagement with the experiment.

Keywords: Soundscape. Noise. Fireworks. Musicology. Affect. Cruz das Almas.

Ruralidades, o experimento: recuperando o espaço sonoro

Resumo: O experimento *Ruralidades* foi uma intervenção sonora que realizei em Cruz das Almas, Bahia, Brasil, nos dias 21 e 23 de maio de 2014. Neste artigo, analiso a intervenção como uma oportunidade para modificar a paisagem sonora da cidade, dando espaço para novos engajamentos da população com essa paisagem sonora e para refletir sobre como isso afetaria a realidade da cidade. Gravações de campo capturadas na zona rural foram apresentadas, de modo contrastante, no centro urbano comercial instigando a reflexão sobre as rápidas mudanças que o ambiente sonoro da cidade sofreu em um curto período de tempo. Assim, reviso a história de Cruz das Almas e identifico algumas de suas marcas sonoras que considero relevantes para apontar questões, muitas vezes de caráter opressor, da realidade sonora da cidade.

Palavras-chave: Paisagem sonora. Ruído. Fogos de artifício. Musicologia. Afeto. Cruz das Almas.

1. Introduction

In 2014, I created a sound intervention in the city of Cruz das Almas in the State of Bahia, Brazil. The idea was to contrast sound aspects of urban environments and the countryside, reflecting on the fast changes the city's sound environment has experienced in the last few years. Set up as a sound intervention presenting rural soundscapes in an urban center, the experiment consisted in reappropriating a popular element, heavily present in that town's cultural reality to temporarily transform that place's sonic topography. The intervention was called Rurals (*Ruralidades*) and consisted of repurposing the locally popular sound equipped cars, known as *carros de som*, commonly used as audio advertising tools to present rural field recordings in the city's urban center during the town's busy working days. It was realized as a result of the artist in residency

program Cambio 14 taken place in Mexico City, the project was funded by the Brazilian Ministry of Culture and will be referred to as “the experiment” for the purpose of this paper. In the afternoon of 21 and 23 of May 2014 the Rural Experiment created and directed by me took place, it spanned along the urban center for an hour each day, filling the streets with a loud clamor of crickets, frogs and toads.

This paper will present this experiment and discourse on the aspects from which the idea emerged, reflecting on the inadvertent audience's reaction, justifying the use of the sound equipped cars by analyzing the History and sonic background this experiment was implemented. The article is divided in three moments, the first thoroughly describes the project and how it took place in the context of the urban environment of Cruz das Almas, it makes the necessary definition of the sound system equipped cars, known as *carros de som*, the way they were organized and presented in the street to better create the dynamics between the audio files being played in each car. It will explain the process in which noise pollution was fully installed in Cruz das Almas' reality, configuring the soundscape characteristics to the city. It reports the reaction of the public, of people involved in the intervention and the problematic raised by their responses. The second moment investigates the aural history of Cruz das Almas contemplating some of its soundmarks, defined by Murray Schafer as sonic aspects which hold qualities exclusive to a community's acoustic reality and specially understood and esteemed by this community.

Thereby, it will present the socio-cultural conditions in which the traditional fireworks known as *espadas*, meaning “swords” in English and also nicknamed the “swish” fireworks are staged; the city's complex sound fabric which incorporates elements of the country and rural landscapes interweaving with technology from telecommunication devices, counterfeit electronics trading and the nationally famous *paredões*, the culture of spending large amounts of money to install extremely powerful sound systems in the back of the cars, organizing meetings to show off the systems or simply parading alone, sometimes in groups in the streets of the city. By examining these aspects, the paper discusses and recognizes the aggressive and invasive qualities of the

sound ingrained to the reality of Cruz das Almas, featuring the city with a unique soundscape and relationship to it.

2. The Experiment

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After a tropical warm and rainy week, the sun had dried out the streets, the people left their umbrellas resting behind their living room doors and hit the city center for another busy lively day. The market was thriving with people rushing to avoid Saturday morning shopping. In the city center of a town like Cruz das Almas, in the State of Bahia, northern Brazil there is rarely a moment of tranquility and very little space for silence. Speakers installed on the lamp posts loud and sharply broadcast the local radio shows to the frantic main square, motorbikes grunt up and down the roads. The shop assistants holding their megaphones and microphones scream at the top of their voices about the best deals they have to offer interpolated by “cheesy” contemporary local music, popular and passionately known as *Arrocha*. This type of music combines sharp and extremely high pitched male vocalists singing about love, disillusion and unemployment while accompanied by keyboard default electronic harmonic and rhythms, commonly “merengue”, “beguine” or salsa in an unusual slower bpm and with each tune splicing over the next, nonstop.

Cruz das Almas offers several sound alternatives for businesses to advertise their products. In such a small scale city, amplified sound covers efficiently and for cheaper a much wider area; that explains why an increasing number of people install on their personal vehicles large PA speakers, charging per hour to drive around town advertising different products and services. Whether with a microphone reading a script live or with an audio file recorded on a cd or pendrive repeating over and over again, these vehicles can be cars, bicycles, motorbikes and even ice-cream trolleys; going around the center, rich residential neighborhoods, occupations, impoverished and sometimes closer countryside areas. These cars are also heavily used during election campaign with noise pollution levels perhaps at its peak in this period.

The universal deafness predicted by many experts mentioned by Schafer (1993) seems to be fully embedded in this city's reality, with husky speakers, 'doppler shifted' music, piles of cheap electronic toys and equipment in the market stalls loudly

demonstrating their gimmicks. Radio devices tuned and television sets on and in full volume for the simple purpose of demonstrating the efficiency of 'diy' antennas, highly integrate the life and psyche of this little town's soundscape. The experiment explored aspects of collective memory and 'psychogeography' by occupying the sound space of an urban center with its opposite, countryside environmental sounds. After frustrating negotiations and being stood up by three car drivers and a bike owner, the experiment finally came about with two cars equipped with more or less 200 watts speakers and one motorbike with something less potent. The three left the starting point at the same time, with the motorbike at the front followed by the two cars occupying the street in parallel, when possible. Each vehicle played one specific audio file and when out together created this dimensional effect where the soundscape would be perceived differently depending on where the listener were standing. It happened on a Wednesday and was repeated on Friday. The days and times were chosen based on the high peaks of street activities but limited to the city council's license permissions, which didn't allow the experiment to happen on a Saturday morning, the busiest day of the week arguing it would cause nuisance.

In *The soundscape*, Schaffer argues the production of sounds represents subjectivities of modern age while contemporary soundscape's dynamic hedonism could reflect upon social conditions, indicate trends and evolution levels of societies (SCHAFFER, 1993). To the author, sound stance is also disadvantaged in terms of historical perspective and while aspects of the city can be forever registered in photographs and maps, the soundscapes and sonic characteristics of an environment will rarely be known for certain, with these sounds being altered and slowly dissolving into the ever changing sonic reality. But if it is true that every reality carries soundmarks which creates its specific geography and, though they can gently fade away from the sonic reality, its systematic disappearance would directly cause a sense of impoverishment. Is it also true to say that by repositioning these soundmarks in a slightly different context where that society, for having been so indiscriminately fast transformed and bloated, still hold the tools to investigate their own collective memory and relate to them, would it create a sense of self-awareness and identity reinforcement? Would the experiment pose as an opportunity to create a human experience of exceptional powers, what Schaffer has

called “clairaudience” (SCHAFFER, 1993) and of which Western societies seem to be completely void?

As the cars drove along, people's reactions were expressed in diverse forms, the most appalling coming from one of my drivers whose reactions were expressed from his position of being part of the audience as well as a business man. He suspected it all to be part of a well orchestrated campaign to demoralize the culture of the sound equipped cars by exacerbating its effect through music he defined as “maddening” and “disturbing”. He also seemed to be extremely concerned that he might have been allured to engage into an illegal activity and could be arrested at any moment. He carried on and fled the scene after his one hour job was over.

His reaction demonstrated a curious controversy. These drivers get paid per hour and can sometimes work up to 4 hours non stop driving along and playing the exact same 15 seconds advert over and over again, how could he become so disturbed by the sound of birds, cicadas and toads? The files used were not plain sound recordings of nature environments, they had a mild level of filtering and software processing on them but the overall quality and timbres were still very faithful to nature's sound, resembling white noise and rearing an ethereal sound one could perceive as cosmic or simply as the familiar local countryside calmness.

Others ran to the shop' doors to see what was happening. Passers-by and business attendants froze their activities to experience it and, although looking confused for seeing sound equipped cars without adverts being played. Expressions of relief followed by smiles were reported, with people escorting the cars in the same manner seen during the carnival street party, when they follow the *trio elétricos*, trucks that go around a street itinerary and carry the music groups while they are performing; or also, when showing support to their political party candidate during campaign parade. Here the experiment suggested moments of fun and leisure, where people stopped their fast-paced walking, relaxed and chatted with each other in the street.

Figure - Sound system equipped cars during procession.



Photo by Bartira Sena.

Figure 2 - Sound system equipped cars.



Photo by Bartira Sena.

Another comment explained the experiment as an actual advert to campaign for dengue fever awareness, while the other remarkable assertion defined it as Art, from the perspective that whatever cannot be understood or objectively justified would fit into this category, with the passerby describing it as 'that's what Art is, these crazy things'. This comment was coming from a man on his mid- 50s who appeared to be from the countryside himself and possibly uneducated. However, it also highlights the cultural changes the city and its surroundings have experienced throughout the years where, though people might not attend school or Higher Education or even leave their rural settings they are educated by tv and Internet, accessed from gadgets such as smartphones and tablets, re- stating Brazil as one of the countries which most consumes telecommunication products.

3. An account of Cruz das Almas

Cruz das Almas is a county in the State of Bahia with an estimated population of 63.761 inhabitants apart from an average of 15 thousand dwellers residing in the city during University's term. Considered an important subregional center, it is the second most important city in the south of the region known as Reconcavo Baiano. The city hosts the Rectory Office for the Reconcavo da Bahia's Federal University and houses important centers for agricultural and livestock technology research.

The name means "Cross of the Souls" and its origins are uncertain with some regarding it to late drovers who, when passing by the city of Nossa Senhora do Bom Sucesso (one of Virgin Mary's many names) spotted a cross where they stopped and prayed before continuing their journey. It is said the city developed around this cross. Others argue that the name was chosen in tribute to the Portuguese city of same name so there would be a sister city in the south American invaded land.

With a majority of the population experiencing serious financial struggle and with a council severely compromised with corruption and bribe, the city is nationally famous for its St. John's festivities in June. The *espada*, "sword" in English, an extremely dangerous type of fireworks have given the city its strongest cultural pillar. As someone who grew up in the city I have vivid memories of its sound and I believe it is engraved in everyone's who have lived there too. This certainly very ancient artifact is regarded by

researcher Moacir Carvalho (CARVALHO, 2009) as being 6 to 7 centuries old and has gone through several transformations in its functions. Consisting of a pyrotechnic device, the 'espada' is an artifact which is pushed forward through autonomous energy generation, in this case, gun powder and it has Arabic origins, with initially war functions and later as port signaling tool in Europe. It is used in Cruz das Almas today in what they conveniently named “'espada' wars”, consisting of playful group disputes for a determined space control and taking place basically anywhere in the city, apart from streets with hospitals or petrol stations. Designed to stay just above ground level it received the name of 'swish' firework and the word in English could not define better the astounding sound this device produces. Banned since 2011 in Cruz das Almas, people still make and play with it and because it requires the use of illegal smuggled substances, some communities have kept a complicity to cover the local manufacturers as if reclaiming their cultural heritage.

My perspective to the 'espadas' is that of a social soundmark, regarded by Schaffer (SCHAFFER, 1993) as “those sounds which are important either because of their individuality, their numerousness or their domination”. It once more places the city of Cruz das Almas as this environment encoded with imposing sound with which relationship's nature can be clearly defined as one of power and domination, with sound frequently playing the role of oppressor. As a child and teenager I perceived St John's festivities as the most extremely dangerous time of the year, with my sister spending most of the days locked up in her room and people covering up their windows and doors with pieces of wood or thick cardboard to prevent the fireworks from entering. I was strangely very drawn to it, mesmerized by this mixture of feelings I was unable to grasp, the loud sonic violence it produces reminding what one would define as harsh noise. This time of the year is waited with huge expectation by most of the people, mainly the disenfranchised communities who embrace it as their unique tradition. Recognizing this as a significant sound feature of the soundscape and considering Schaffer's accounts that features may not always be heard consciously but its ubiquity pervades behaviors and moods, it is interesting to think what the aggressive sound of the 'espadas' says about that society, specially when looking through the lens of sound as social welfare.

Attali (1977) argues that music is more than a subject of study but a way of perceiving the world, a tool to directly assess it. This growing ambiguity and fast change of social economic scenarios pose a challenge to rethink music, since he as well believes it to be an instrument of understanding society, “a form of sound knowledge which in his own words reflects the manufacture of society, constituting the audible waveband of the vibrations and signs that make up society”, could we theorize about other societies through the case of Cruz das Almas' unique scope of sounds and its relationship to it?

In *Noise, the Political Economy of Music*, Attali (1977) also speculates about “why music is so rarely listened to and why-as with every facet of social life for which the rules are breaking down (sexuality, the family, politics)-it is censored, people refuse to draw conclusions from it.”

Although Cruz das Almas' council organizes a huge outdoors event secured by police and with all sorts of catering options for tourists and all the city's communities, the vast majority of poor people stay in their houses or proximity watching the 'espadeiros', name given to the person lighting up and throwing the firework and who could be their neighbors, friends or just someone passing by.

Figure 3: *Espadas* War in 1983.



Photo from <http://reynivaldobrito.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/guerraque-assusta-uma-cidade.html>. Retrieved in 20 November 2014.

While burning the *espadas*, people deliberately run after it in an attempt to kick it or take it from the ground and throw it back again, with people getting seriously burned as a result of actions performed during these adrenalin rushes. Several *espadas* can be lit up at the same time by different groups of people, smoke takes over the space and the tremendous sound coming from all directions can be seriously disorientating. For some of the participants however, these burns will be exhibited as trophies suggesting this practice as one of liberating vindication not only of the physical space but also their whole body and consciousness, away from the submission of their workplaces or social power relations.

Cruz das Almas' soundscape can as well be expressed through its historical complex semiotic system, with its own grammar and syntax as understood by Garrioch (2003) in his analysis of western cities. Having gone through dramatic changes in the last decades, the city has experienced a fast process of expansion towards the countryside areas. Brazil has in itself gone through considerable economical reconfiguration which

reflected directly in northern cities. The horses and wagons gave place to motorbikes; landline devices to mobile phones, tablets and notebooks used outdoors; community vans and cars equipped with potent sound systems replaced horses and donkeys, radically changing that landscape in less than 20 years. From a bucolic rural setting, marked by farmers leading the cattle, whistling or singing while working the land, the town developed to a small self-contained urbanized rural center with a confusing mixture of loud television, radio and other communication mobile devices occupying the space with their embedded notification bleeps competing with the sounds of farmers' markets, carts and donkeys.

Figure 4: playful disputes in 2014.



Source: <http://atarde.uol.com.br/galerias/30/18425-cruz-das-almas-naoabre-mao-das-espadas>.

Figure 5 - Cruz das Almas Central Market.



Photo from <http://newssaj.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/cruz-das-almas-feirantes-reclamam.html>. Retrieved in 20 November 2014.

It is important to highlight affect as something consistently manifesting in large or minor scale in everyday life. When Thrift (2004) attempts to establish notions of affect he argues it is usually “associated with words such as emotion and feeling, and a consequent repertoire of terms such as hatred, shame, envy, jealousy, fear, disgust, anger, embarrassment, sorrow, grief, anguish, pride, love, happiness, joy, hope, wonder.” He continues to justify his approach to affect as an often indirect and non-reflective form of thinking where motion and emotion are both literally and figuratively in intrinsic correlation. The experiment coheres with conceptions envisioned by Thrift as a framework in which individuals are generally understood as effects of the events to which their body parts (broadly understood) respond. The space then participates in constant dialog in the construction of affect, representing another form of thinking on which affect can act.

In a more similar fashion to noise gigs, here a violent and aggressive sound might not exactly pose as oppressive but well as enjoyable circumspection, the constituent

which incites the guts to confront such dangerous fireworks with great charges of adrenalin liberated, like the reassuring shouts of self-encouragement when about to experience something one is scared of.

465 According to Garrioch (2003), soundscapes can contribute to evoke multiple identities, local and broader. For the author, these particular sounds and responses allow the construction of multiple acoustic communities bonded by a dispersed sense of belonging arising from familiarity with the local noises thick with meaning. The communities participating in the 'espadas' wars might share this familiarity, ascribing triggers to the fireworks' sound that might suggest urgent frightening escape for safety or signal the folk street party's starting point. The council's free music festival taking place in the city's commercial center is dismissed and a certain civil disobedience materializes elsewhere.

If human language is no longer assumed to offer the only meaningful model of communication as states Thrift (2004), events must be understood as genuinely open on at least some dimensions and, regardless of the extraordinary power of many social systems, the experiment proposes temporary condition for them to emerge. Cruz das Almas inherited set of keynotes, consisting of the harsh noise in the 'espadas' tradition; the convention of invasive amplified sound spaces, whether through personal cars pounding sub-woofers, loud level music coming from houses and the shop assistants with their microphones; the city constitutes an auditory community equipped with properties to withdraw meaning and engage with the experiment, which on the other hand uses the very same method of intense sound occupation to momentarily reconnect with another set of symbols. If events unfolded in the cities are threads in which the bodies experience affect this experiment could as well bring a whole set of histories and geographies. The incongruence the rural sounds caused when broadcast widely in that urban scenario effectively staged an experience of de-familiarization which revealed that city's own contradictions. It disrupted the established cluster of registers which Thrift (2004) argues is used as economic weapon instrumentally deployed for political ends.

Such assertion weighted when a license to execute the action on a Saturday was regarded as "difficult to obtain". Saturday is the busiest day of the week in the center, with the farmer's market and other stalls in the main square intensely running its activities

as well as huge number of cars and motorbikes traveling in the smothered and overcrowded streets. The experiment would only last for one hour, with the cars moving in an average of 20km/h, stopping the traffic was not required and sound equipped cars when in use for adverts are not normally prohibited on Saturdays. A recurrent question I had to answer was about what exactly I was selling with the difficulties being disclosed after they have learned it was an Art project and I was not selling anything.

Although cities are expected to have “buzz” and be “creative” as Thrift (2004) mentioned they are also supposed to catalyze economical activities and the experiment didn't seem to dialog with the capitalist guidelines. A staff member in the Transport and Traffic Office as well as one of the drivers had suggested the experiment should be heavily advertised with time and 'space' clearly informed so people would be able to plan themselves to attend it. One of the drivers also suggested the details about the project should be read live through a microphone from one of the cars during the action, explaining what the project was about. I was obviously not interested in having an audience but in catching passers- by inadvertently turning them into audience only temporarily, as that would be the only effective way to disrupt their acoustic routines. It would no longer propose a form of sociality where people could meet and communicate, a very programmed project where people would know exact location and time would simply be ineffective and sterile though timely to the economic agenda. An Art project taking place in the streets of the city becomes an opportunity, a commercial attraction for trading goods rather than a construction of symbols dissolving the other imposed and controlled to exist as commercial arena.

In this context, Attali (2003) assures the networks can be destroyed by noises attacking and transforming the conventional codes if the latter fail to normalize and suppress the first. For Attali (2003) noise contains order in itself, it carries different codes of information. Thus, a new order can be constituted by replacing new differences for old differences.

The use of sound equipped cars in the context of Cruz das Almas seem to hold analogous position to the musical instrument in Attali's (1977) understandings. Since the instrument often predates the expression it authorizes it grants constant creation of music, what he defines as a renewed syntax. It allows a new system of combination, outstretching

the field for a wider possibility of musical expressions usage. Thus, the Rurals experiment re-appropriates from element and practice constitutive to that context and could not have worked the same way in any city.

The *carros de som*, term for these audio system equipped cars integrate a cultural group of means used to propagate sound and it could be regarded as of mild impact in face of what they call *paredão*, meaning big wall in English, these are cars, sometimes of popular cheaper model, with portable soundsystems installed at the rear, attached to the back seats and extending all the way to the trunk, the whole system can cost more than the actual car and have strength to break window glasses and be heard from miles away. Though the *paredões* exist nationally, the community in context listens to a very specific locally brewed type of music and encompasses various levels of social complexities, I will not cover this subject in this paper, focusing my analysis in their use.

The choice for the sound equipped cars for my experiment was not done by chance and in order to justify it, a presentation of this other crucial cultural sound component becomes necessary. The very organized community of owners meet regularly in meetings to exhibit their always more improved sound systems. I am talking about meetings held in the local stadium or large outdoor spaces where their portable sound systems are pulled out and fully opened, played at its highest in order to identify technical qualities of their sound systems, usually focused in how clear and high the audio in their systems can get. It will not be abnormal to see more than 10 of these cars parked on semicircles, all playing at the same time. They also give names to their systems and most of the times as direct references to violence implying one has to painfully “endure” or “survive” their soundsystems with names such as *pancadão* (big bash) or *porradão* (big shitload) heading the list.

It is easy to make connections with Suzanne Cusick’s studies of music as torture, with the owners of these cars clearly stating the distress they cause through the names given (CUSICK, 2008). In this context, however, this distress is glorified and understood as playful provocation to enthuse one another to keep on improving their equipment and without including an audience. In her paper “Musicology, Torture, Repair”, Suzanne G. Cusick (2008) claims to be uncertain in relation to the aimed functions of music played to prisoners in the detention camps, concluding it rather worked more often as sheer sound

which to assault the hearing capabilities of the prisoners, obscure and confuse the prisoner's ability to think clearly as well as disorientating their sense of temporality and bombarding the prisoner's body with acoustical energy. The circumstances here can present similarities, as a few of the cars have their systems pulled out and playing music at the same time in very loud volume, a cacophony of sound emerges and one cannot immediately recognize any music, possibly perceiving it as sheer sound. Considering the extreme power of the equipment, the acoustic energy it produces can be definitely felt in the body of those standing close to it, usually their owners and acquaintances. It is clearly a very different way of music enjoyment and to attempt to explain it a real challenge, as it dramatically changes the concept of music as a form of expressing human creative feelings, due to its characteristics of severe violation of someone else's sound space. Though the *paredões* enthusiasts are not being tortured, this cultural ingredient presents itself as a case to grasp what kind of meaning it is taken from this experience, since it does not favor their music and besides it posing serious harm to their hearing capacity. Having such a sonic feature as a soundmark, Cruz das Almas's soundscape, once again exposes its aggression and oppressing features, adding substance to the sound ecology the experiment attempted to dialogue.

Figure 6 - *Paredões*.

Photo by <http://www.bloggers.com.br/fotos-de-carros-com-som/>.

4. Conclusion

This paper investigated the aspects of the soundscape present in Cruz das Almas, denoting the characteristics of its sonic reality in order to contextualize the scenario in which the experiment was implemented. By analyzing the process of modernization that happened in a very fast period of time, the paper recounted the process through which the city became one of the main centers for shopping in the region, with farmer's markets and shops competing for a parcel of the outdoors sound space. The use of outdoors sonic fabric seemed to be essential for the experiment to effectively engage with the community, as the use of outdoor spaces remained as a tradition inherited by the dynamics of farmer's and street markets to trade goods, even after the fast expansion and changes experienced during the process of modernization.

Technology and electronic goods co- exist in the outdoors with unpaved rural settings, car and motorbike traffic, market sellers, horses and other animals as well as chariots, expensive 4x4 trucks, amalgamating this complex urban environment in which

the Rurals experiment took place. The use of the outdoors seemed utterly justifiable and a contrast between the sonic environment and the recordings presented by the experiment strikingly necessary to disrupt and temporarily establish a new soundscape. One which could be understood by that community, effectively remove them from their commercial activities and allure their habitual disposition to noise and invasive sonic backgrounds, channeling this remarkable skill to a plunge into their memories, allowing them to engage and re- think their sound reality.

Cruz das Almas's intrusive and richly textured sound composition could be defined as one of a hardcore nature with its harsh noise similarities re- enforced by the 'swish' fireworks and the '*paredões*'. Whether it is one more expression of subcultural resistance, a means to participation, class and gender reaffirmation, the '*paredões*' configure an appalling puzzle to musicology, because of the way enthusiasts exercise music listening and enjoyment, challenging any conventional conception and complexities such as loudness and pervasion. Thus, sonic mobility represents a notable characteristic of the aural environment of Cruz das Almas proving to be exceptional tool to briefly suspend the order and it could not be ignored when developing the experiment's framework. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the status quo can be formed by a myriad of sonic layers tensed together within an economical, cultural, and geographical context. By 'reading' and manipulating the aural fabric of a city, in order to understand its dynamics and syntax it is possible to disrupt momentarily that status quo and release from conventions, opening space for people to interconnect with their identities and culture behind social codes mostly economically controlled, suppressing the economic hypnosis strengthened by their sound environment. This experiment has revealed the relevance of the soundspace as a medium to transmit a different kind of message, one with no commercial purposes, which freely allows the community to overtake an opportunity to stir questions and, perhaps feelings of empowerment and liberation.

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