Other Scenes, Other Cities and Other Sounds in the Global South: DIY Music Scenes beyond the Creative City

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Abstract  
This article explores how the different forms of youth involvement in underground music scenes tend to develop into do-it-yourself (DIY) careers by triggering acquired expertise resulting from a long immersion in these scenes. It begins with an analysis of the representations of Portuguese punks about DIY and the ways in which they experience and develop networks and skills. Concomitantly, through a recent analysis carried out in Brazil in different underground music scenes, I examine the importance of DIY showing the approximation of two different musical, social, and geographical universes. This focus, besides amplifying the glimpse outside the Anglocentric look into creative cities, serves to understand how underground music scenes are a breath of fresh air when it comes to creative activity beyond mainstream cultural industries.


Keywords  
Creativity studies, music, cultural sociology, artistic research, cultural economy  
Kreativität, Musik, Kultursoziologie, Kunstforschung, Kulturwirtschaft

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1. Music Scenes and DIY Cultures beyond Creative Cities

Since Straw’s (1991) pioneering publication, the concept of scene – more precisely, of music scene – has evolved from an essentially vernacular term to describe clusters of musical production, performance, and consumption (BENNETT 2011), into a more elaborate model relating to the conceptual mapping of local, trans-local, virtual, and emotional musical vectors. This concept of scene is part of the wider field of subculture which, ultimately, combines several dimensions such as lifestyles, cultural and casual consumption and creativity, or ways of transitioning into adulthood (CHANNEY 1996). Music scenes transcend physical space and evoke relationships between individuals based on the sharing of affinities, values, symbologies, music, and lifestyles. Recently, within the research on music and music scenes, studies related to alternative economies have started to stand out. The focus of music scene studies is directed at the tangible consequences of infrastructural changes. Previous notions of scene and music scene have been abandoned, replaced by research that promotes new interpretations of these concepts that can keep track of all their associated dynamics, analysing dimensions such as careers, professions, and musical consumption and production (BENNETT/ROGERS 2016). It is with this purpose that I highlight the Global South and the role it plays in the pursuit of this kind of research on music scenes, conferring theoretical approaches with an empirical dimension that provide a better understanding of all the musical manifestations that make up the Southern music universe, as well as the do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos imbued in these communities as a form of resistance. What are the resources, skills, and actors mobilised by a Global South that is moreover characterised by its peripheral standing, discrimination, violence, precariousness, and insecurity?

DIY cultures seem to be the answer. There are countless reviews on DIY – not only at the academic level, but also at the social and even business levels. For some, it is a way of avoiding the dictates of a consumer society in late capitalism, an issue that gained relevance after the 2008 economic crisis, the effects of which we are still experiencing today. For others, especially companies, it is a way to keep up with social change and lifestyle trends. If there is a demand for DIY goods, then companies provide them. In any case, the discussions around DIY and (sub)cultural analyses reveal the scarcity of Southern voices, despite the constant calls
to develop a social theory that is more open to them. It is precisely the kinds of DIY practices and music scenes found in countries like Brazil and Portugal that are essential to an understanding and reinterpretation of DIY cultures as the basis for artistic and musical production of the voices of the South in this decade. Let us take the case of Brazil. In this country-continent, the differences between the federal states, of which it is composed, are so great that it provides a fertile ground to advance knowledge about DIY. A vibrant DIY culture is found in Rio de Janeiro’s funk scene, for example, which appropriates the potentialities of new technologies and social networks to break the cycle of poverty in a way that is difficult for someone from the West to understand.

In these scenes, it is possible to apprehend different ways of being in terms of DIY. On the one hand, there is a corporate ethos – a desire to do things differently and, above all, independently; on the other, DIY is a tool for other purposes – a success that only the mainstream allows. If we consider the DIY practices of the Portuguese punk scene, they resemble those of the Brazilian case in the sense of creating alternative forms of cultural production and dissemination. However, the protagonists in the two scenarios are different. In the Portuguese case, they come from a more privileged social class, with high levels of education. In the case of Brazil, I found a dual reality: on the one hand, one marked by a lower-class background and by difficulty to access cultural goods; on the other, a scenario in which actors from privileged and highly-educated social classes engage in DIY as a tool to overcome the difficulties associated with gender issues in the construction of professional trajectorises in the artistic milieu.

Creative cities have been the subject of extensive debate. One of this debate’s most prolific dimensions relates to the need to take into account a sociological approach due to the interest in showing that seemingly natural or taken for granted categories are, in fact, contingent and constructed (CASEY/O’BRIEN 2020). This focus, besides amplifying our glimpse into the Global South – beyond the Anglocentric look into creative cities – allows us to understand how underground music scenes are a breath of fresh air when it comes to creative activity beyond mainstream cultural industries (KEMPSON 2015). Founded on sensitive and informal networks based on the DIY ethos, these music scenes highlight the possibilities of going beyond economic and social experiences in contexts of endemic social and economic fragility, showing an intense proliferation of underground creativity in the Global South, capable of complexifying and relativizing the commonly established concept of creative
city and economy. This study of DIY music scenes echoes crucial ideas from early research into cultural and creative industries, namely studies on the fashion and music industries (McROBBIE 2002; NEGUS 1998), the concern with authenticity within a given scene, and the importance of spatial dimensions in cultural production.

2. DIY Cultures and Contemporary Artistic Practices

Both the acronym DIY and the expression ‘do-it-yourself’ have slowly become common terms. They often refer to a mode of musical production that is symbolically and ideologically distinct from the commercial circuits of the popular music industry. Two key aspects are regularly pointed out as historical precursors: the action of the Situationist International in the 1950s and the punk scene in the 1970s. The Situationist International was an artistic and cultural movement that sought primarily to satirize and denounce the contradictions of capitalist consumer society (DEBORD 1992). Through the creation of countercultural artistic objects, it opposed dominant cultural representations and used new forms of communication, such as manifestos, zines and so on, to awaken a feeling that the ordre des chôses [system] could be changed. Its claims extended to the use of the symbols and forms of the status quo as a means of symbolic and ideological resistance.

Awakening from a crisis in the 1970s (marked by frozen salaries, plummeting trade rates, economic stagnation, high unemployment, and under-employment among the youth), the rising discontent of various layers of society was widely felt in the Western world. Punk arose precisely in this context, particularly in the United Kingdom, as a baseline of social explosion as well as an unwilling vehicle for fear and moral panic (GILDART 2013). Even after its ‘death’ in 1978, punk breathed new life into counterculture through the growth of scenes, networks, fanzines, independent record labels, DIY, clothes, specific aesthetics, media, and venues (CLARK 2003).

Dale (2016) argues that there is no zero year for the spirit of DIY – or at least that it certainly was not 1977. Instead, there was a long period of construction, partly due to a culture of resistance and a desire for other types of music. This was also due to technological developments, such as the Xerox copiers that facilitated the production of fanzines. The importance of the DIY ethos of punk cannot, however, be overstated – particularly the break with the pretentiousness of progressive rock and
amateurism as a form of resistance against virtuosity. However, this still created problems: when amateurism rises above all else, when any form of professionalization is attacked, how is a punk band supposed to survive? That is why Dale (2016) maintains that punk rock’s aspiration to completely disassociate from the mainstream economy is always bound to fail. In a global context, this happened markedly in the 1990s, a decade that was significant for the development of DIY culture, which ceased to be purely an underground niche to become professionalized, having emerged as an avenue to establish a career in the music scene. Hesmondhalgh (1999: 44) speaks of a shift from an idealistic standpoint towards an industry-based model; however, O’Connor (2008) refutes any kind of transition. The reality is more prosaic: DIY has always been more of a necessity than an ethos of resistance.

Here lies a key issue when studying DIY and youth cultures: is there, in fact, an act of resistance against mainstream culture or is it just that we, intellectuals, wish to see a politicised act of resistance where there is only a mere act of existential need? Let us take, for example, the case of the University of Birmingham’s Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Authors like Paul Willis (1977) saw their assertions being contested because they focused on a romanticised view of resistance – one which existed more in the authors’ heads and within search for politicization rather than in the social reality they sought to study (DEBIES-CARL 2013; HODKINSON 2012). Could not the same happen in the study of DIY? In my opinion, and as I will substantiate next, the reality is completely different. The CCCS studied young people in a given time of their life; my research (GUERRA 2018, 2016), as well as other DIY studies, have emphasised a concern with focusing on the subcultures’ members throughout their biographical paths, and how they convert their subcultural and DIY capital into capital in the professional world. This leads me to believe that DIY is more than an act of need. It is, on the contrary, a learned disposition which informs all aspects of the agents’ lives, as I will show through an analysis of the transition of Portuguese and Brazilian young people into professional life.

Over a long period, the DIY analysis focused on a vision that celebrated the creation of a DIY industry (COHEN 1991; BENNETT/PETerson 2004), made up of a small number of collectives and fans who became entrepreneurs – individuals who followed a DIY ethos and kept away from the mainstream. In her analysis of the Milanese independent scene, Tarassi (2018) suggests that the binary nature of reality between independent and mainstream is outdated. The significant changes in the
music industry and the creative economy changed the relationship between indie and the mainstream. Today this is a relationship of interdependence. In the 1990s, authors such as Hesmondhalgh (1999) and Negus (1992) had already advocated this non-opposition perspective. Moreover, independent musical production is increasingly approaching the logic of cultural economics – that is, a core of professionalization and entrepreneurship runs through the independent scene.

Indeed, it has become more common in large cultural industries to outsource to small cultural enterprises. As Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) and Leadbeater and Oakley (1999) note, cultural production today is a network of small, independent, autonomous cultural groups. These groups and individuals choose independence in order to obtain artistic autonomy, but at the same time they do not refrain from maintaining relations with large cultural enterprises. In the world of music specifically, according to Tarassi (2018), the distinction between bands that are signed to a major label and those that have their own label, or work under micro-labels, no longer has any operational value. It is no longer a plausible means to explain the reality of the tactics used by independent bands to derive a living from music. Pereira de Sá (2019) reaches similar conclusions in her analysis on *Batalha do Passinho* [Passinho Dance-Off].\(^2\) The author shows how mobile phones are used in a very DIY way to spread material on social media, and how they intersect with notions of center/periphery, global/local, world/favela (slum in Brazil), and independent/mainstream.

Indeed, recent analyses focusing on countries in the Global South have drawn attention to a dimension of analysis of the DIY ethos and practices that has not always been present in Eurocentric approaches, specifically the articulation between DIY and gender issues. The authors show that the new waves of feminism have received new perspectives and cosmologies coming from previously subaltern actors: black, lesbian, transgender, and poor. Intersected with postcolonial perspectives, this new feminism questions and broadens the agenda of the discussion led by white, heterosexual, middle-class activists, claiming the need for more complex articulations between gender, ethnicity, and DIY (SÁ/GUERRA/JANOTTI JÚNIOR 2019).

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\(^2\) *Passinho* Dance-Off is a ‘challenge’ between youngsters from the favelas and outskirts of Rio de Janeiro who perform complex dance steps, blending funk and other genres such as *frevo* (a traditional dance from northeast Brazil), tango, and even the famous Michael Jackson move known as the moonwalk.
According to Jian (2018), any analysis of DIY musical careers implies considering a new paradox – that of the rapid appropriation of the DIY ethos by neoliberal ideology, completely subverting punk resistance logic. Authors such as Hesmondhalgh and Meier (2015) warn us against web utopianism; Chapman (2013) refers to the emergence of the DIY ‘one-man band,’ which is a dynamic known to be based on a neoliberal logic that prioritizes individual success. Despite this critical note, at a time marked by uncertainty and risk, young people tend to look for alternatives to a transition into adult and professional life (McROBBIE 2016; WOODMAN/BENNETT 2015).

This phenomenon opened up a new perspective in youth studies, called ‘life after subculture’ (HAENFLER 2018); it is the recognition that subculture careers do not end with youth, and sometimes do not end at all (BENNETT/HODKINSON 2012; FURLONG/WOODMAN/WYN 2011). A subcultural trajectory entails gaining a form of know-how that can be activated in one’s professional life – not only in careers in the music world, as a manager, producer or musician, but in a new cultural economy that values a set of characteristics typical of DIY scenes and alternatives. Similarly, at the marketing level, promoting the band or the fanzine, distributing flyers and so on, involves learning how to sell oneself and being innovative and entrepreneurial – the idea of “self-making” (WIERENGA 2009). In this regard, Campbell (2015) argues that young people with DIY dispositions and expertise are particularly well prepared for these forms of action.

Threadgold (2018) speaks of ‘choosing poverty.’ Young people who invest in DIY cultures must establish a difficult and complex series of negotiations between studies and (un)employment (and, increasingly, under-employment) in order to financially survive without compromising their artistic passion. They consciously ‘choose poverty,’ making strategic decisions that give them more time and space for their creative passions to the detriment of greater economic safety. Success is no longer understood according to a neoliberal logic, which implies its measurement in material terms. In these cases, it is understood in terms of the possibilities of personal fulfilment in a much more comprehensive sense. This means that in a reflective analysis of their future, with all the risks involved, ethical concerns outweigh economic ones. This choice could be understood as opting for a bohemian lifestyle. But it is far from that: it is the result of a reflexive strategy for dealing with the existing precarious structure and the option to choose ontological security to the detriment of economic success. The idea of success is not measured in
economic terms here, but rather through the possibility of having free

time and space to continue investing in oneself. If this requires living in

relative poverty, so be it. In the following sections, I seek to develop a set

of themes: the different modalities of DIY; the possibility of DIY practic-
es without a corresponding ethos; the ways DIY careers are activated and

represented in Portugal and Brazil.

3. Methodological Approach

Based on a project about the Portuguese punk scene, the goal was to

understand how the participants’ immersion, and the production, pro-

motion, composition, and performance skills they developed there, con-

tributed to the development of do-it-yourself careers. Simultaneously,

from the same analytical corpus, I explored the representations of DIY

among these young people and the ways in which they experienced and
developed knowledge, networks, and skills from that involvement/expe-

rience in punk scenes. This analysis is complemented by more recent re-

search carried out in Brazil between March and August 2018. These are

the results of an ethnographic approach, based on 30 interviews (mainly

This study was conducted within the project *Keep it simple, make it fast! Prolegomenons and punk scenes, a road to Portuguese contemporaneity* (1977-2012) (PTDC/CS-SOC/118830/2010) – known as KISMIF. The project and its results can be found at the site <www.punk.pt>. The information is the result of semi-structured interviews on 200 individuals considered strongly linked to the Portuguese music scene in a va-

riety of ways. Interviewees were selected based on a snowball sampling method: first, starting with a core group established by the researchers and then following their own networks to a level of saturation (i.e., contacts became repeated and no relevant innovation was provided). KISMIF seeks to explore in-depth the punk reality in Portugal from a perspective of scene development in the last 40 years. Our intention with it has been to map, as well as to historically typify punk manifestations in Portugal, making use of extensive and intensive methodologies. For more information: <www.punk.pt>. The study of Brazil’s reality is an extension of previous (and ongoing) research within the author’s post-doctorate investigation, which up to now includes over 30 interviews made in various Brazilian regions between March and August of 2018, especially with women professionally inserted in different artistic fields, such as music, photography, or visual arts. This fieldwork is part of the Transnational Cooperation Project / Bilateral Agreements Competition between the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto and the Federal University of Pernambuco entitled *Under Connected. Cenas musicais luso-brasileiras on and off line* [Under Connected. Luso-Brazilian music scenes on and off line], jointly funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and the Coordination Foundation for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), developed between 2016 and 2018.
with women) conducted with members of different artistic fields, such as music, photography, and visual arts in several Brazilian regions.

3.1 ‘Another World’: Artistic Self-Production, DIY Ethos, Practices and Roles in Portuguese Underground Punk Scenes

Authenticity and its response/alternative to the mainstream (DASCHUK 2011; WIDDICOMBE/WOOFFITT 1995) are the key elements of the DIY ethos of Portuguese punk. Another particularity lies in the heterogeneity, flexibility, and openness of Portuguese punk roles and tasks. The DIY ethos is represented as a strongly valued asset in community-based amateur music practice, which goes hand-in-hand with the underground world. The musical underground appears as a claim by young musicians to a unique type of artistic expression, or a counterpointed authentic experience against the market and dominant music conventions. It is, however, possible to analyse this space as including multiple socialization processes in a social sphere in which stratification factors, such as class or school capital, are played in a symbolic experimentation, opening the possibility for new cultural practices and trajectories. In a preliminary approach, DIY can mean the creation of a symbolic alternative through a (physical or metaphorical) space of self-empowerment, mutual help, and alternative social engagement (GUERRA 2013). Alternatively, and more frequently in the Portuguese context, it has meant the associative and recreational practices organized by the participants themselves in a process of empowerment that impacts their own personal project (e.g., independent activities of production, composition, editing, and distribution of music; organisation of events such as concerts, music festivals, band tours, art, literature, and fanzine exhibitions).

This is only one part of the story, however. The interviewees also evoked the importance of the fanzines, e-zines, posters, illustration, and record artwork linked to the music. Parallel to this, we also see concerns about the construction and customization of clothes and aesthetic accessories. The activities dedicated to merchandising also took on daily importance for these actors, who frequently noted the possibilities of punk to achieve other artistic activities, such as painting, design, cinema, video, DJing, photography, or literature. The adoption of a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle through food was also strongly felt, especially in the hardcore Portuguese punk of the 1990s. Freeganism, vegetarianism, veganism, and alternative therapies, such as Chinese medicine and homeopathy were contemporaneous with the consolidation of the DIY lifestyles of punk. All of these practices boiled down to a number of caus-
es, such as urban digging, defence of squats, voluntary unemployment, ecological transport (such as bicycles), and the collectivization and exchange of resources geared towards a return to nature, to the fields, and to escaping the big cities (BARNARD 2016). The following excerpts give an account of how DIY is present in the activities and lifestyles of these social actors.

I think what lasted longer from my involvement with hardcore is the DIY culture. If you want to do something, instead of waiting for the system to box you in somewhere, you go out and do it. [...] So I think that at times it could be in the nature of people, but I’m also sure that it was in living in this hardcore setting, and engaging with underground culture that drove me to this. – Rui, 36 years old, Incomplete Bachelor’s or equivalent (Level 6), Photographer, Almada.

I organize concerts, have bands, if I wanted to do a European tour I could do it easily – I don’t need to be a stupidly well-known band for that. If I want to go and play in the US, I can also do it, and that’s something most bands in other genres and styles can’t say. DIY for me is the organization of concerts, because I had never dreamed when I was little of organizing a concert, it never occurred to me. But with DIY I saw it wasn’t that difficult. I don’t need to have anyone’s support or ask the state for money or go after sponsorships. I need only myself and a couple of people working with me. – Anselmo, 20 years old, Incomplete Bachelor’s or equivalent (Level 6), Musician / student of computer engineering, Lisbon.

We had an alternative space there which didn’t have people in it, which had a cultural environment where people did cool projects. You had talks over vegetarianism, veganism, indigenous resistance, police brutality, etc. I went to a lot of those talks. You had a rehearsal stage, a library, you could eat there once or twice a week. It was a very DIY culture; I didn’t have to go to a club to pay to play when I had my own place and it’s not bothering anyone. The house had a special feeling because it was somewhere that, if you wanted to do a concert, you didn’t have anything going against you, it was a peaceful way to live. – Xavier, 37 years old, Upper Secondary Education (Level 3), Bank employee, Lisbon.

In the same way that it was important to understand what the manifestations of the DIY ethos were in local punk scenes in Portugal, it was also crucial to understand the reasons that brought the social actors, at least discursively, to this way of doing things. The first set of reasons points to a need to remain independent (doing what they want, how they want it) seeking a logic of authenticity in contrast to the dominant order of major labels and profit. Here, DIY comes as a crucial symbolic nexus, intended to promote a better world. Second, nearly half of the interviewees noted DIY as an economic necessity in the face of scarce resources. More than that, DIY is a matrix for personal realization regarding a certain anxiousness for life and doing things fast. It is also presented as a personal and social matrix of development, namely in terms of how it can help people to grow mentally, getting them to know other realities, other worlds and
other people. Finally, DIY is also a political matrix that contradicts capitalism, the common order, constructing an alternative form of being, more anarchist and less hierarchical, which, at least, attempts to shun political clienteles and leaders. These reasons are based on DIY references, determinants to changing position, and lifestyle.

It is interesting to note that participants in club cultures, who Thornton (1995) defines in terms of their possession of ‘subcultural capital,’ have been able to obtain jobs as artists, remixers, and producers in the music business, as well as store clerks in subcultural environments. Likewise, Høigaard (2002) analyses how graffiti artists have been able to transform their subcultural capital to find jobs in graphic arts and publicity. In the same way, the manifestations of the DIY subcultural capital of Portuguese punk are visible particularly in careers and jobs as composers, musicians, and singers; graphic designers; communication and multimedia professionals; visual (plastic) artists; radio or television technicians involved in radio communication or similar; mid-level technicians of cultural and artistic activities; photographers; journalists; conference and event organizers; decorators; cooks; specialists in publicity and marketing; filmmakers, stage staff, producers and directors connected to cinema, theatre, television and radio; barbers and hairdressers; actors; other artists and creative interpreters of performance art; product designers; textile, fashion and interior design professionals; gallery, library, archive and museum technicians; sport and culture centre directors and managers; cooks and chefs, and so on.

Effectively, more than half of the interviewees developed their careers in, and currently hold jobs directly connected to the development of the DIY ethos and participation in the underground music scene. Ageing has meant that they engage in subcultural life in a different way, directing it towards the development of work-related practices where the DIY ethos is fundamental (HODKINSON 2011, 2013). More than simple distractions, these identifications become a part of the individuals’ identities in adult life, affecting their choice of careers. I should also note that many of these social actors are now collectively referred to as ‘creative workers.’ In this role, they recognize that they ‘mostly have to take care of themselves,’ taking on an entrepreneurial view of their own careers (McROBBIE 2016). This means taking on more tasks that formerly were controlled by firms and specialized technicians, as well as having to engage in widely distinct parts of the creative process in a cross-cultural or interdisciplinary mode (STEVENSON 2014). This means that, while profoundly attractive in terms of market-entering fees and costs, the DIY
artist is laden with labour market risk and uncertainty about the use value of their cultural productions. It then becomes more than an ethical choice; it is a systemic condition and precondition of these systems.

4. Another Type of ‘Holidays in Cambodia’: DIY Culture in Brazil

In Brazil, marked by deep social inequalities and shocking levels of poverty (OECD 2018; OXFAM 2017), DIY appears to be sharply more ubiquitous in the lives of participants of the underground music scene: it was not a life choice, but a life circumstance. To better understand this phenomenon and the DIY strategies of the Brazilian interviewees, I must begin by highlighting two crucial factors: their socioeconomic strata and the gender issue. Most of these social actors come from very disadvantaged social strata marred by multiple social stigmas. Above all else, however, comes gender. In a particularly misogynistic environment, I found three defining characteristics: first, a pulverisation of gender frontiers (SHARP/NILAN 2017), as in the case of Linn da Quebrada, who is a true amalgamation of different categories of oppression in a single person (black, trans, poor). Her music reflects exactly that: it is an expression of a reality where multiple oppressions and inequalities intersect, and, simultaneously, an attempt at building a bridge to others whose life experiences are like her own. The second characteristic is connected to body and identity politics at the musical compositions’ core. Turning back to the example of Linn da Quebrada (<www.linndaquebrada.com>), she positions herself as a gender terrorist, given that her work is political and her body is political resistance, in itself, by virtue of existing. Finally, there is a close relationship between artists and social media, in particular, and with the Internet, in general.

Lopes (2009) points out that since the 1980s the favela (Brazilian slum) has come to be the opposite of the city, the opposite of civilisation. All its residents are potential criminals and must be treated as such by security forces. In addition to a very harsh social reality, including poverty and violent crime, there is a withdrawal by the State, which has effectively been replaced by the police and, increasingly, the army. Thus, faced with unemployment/under-employment or employment in criminal organizations as their only options, DIY is seen as one possibility for escaping a trajectory of poverty for these actors; the other is to become a professional football player.
The reality of the favelas in Brazil is far from what is usually encountered when we talk about DIY practices. And it is precisely because of this that it becomes useful to study the reality of activating DIY strategies in a geographic context that moves away from the Western world (SANTOS 2014). In the Brazilian favelas, we have an extreme version of the art of existence. The resistance is not in relation to the musical mainstream, but rather to an immediate social context: those who control the favelas, the criminal gangs. Moreover, it is an art of existence, not in the sense of trying to avoid a trajectory of precarious jobs, but rather to avoid a trajectory of poverty and violence: the inevitable path of survival. It is important to emphasize that these are young people who have come from families with low incomes, and therefore live in a vicious cycle. This is where DIY opens a whole universe of possibilities, with all its creativity and strategies to make the wannabe artist visible and, if everything goes according to plan, able to escape the vicious cycle of poverty.

Another Brazilian feature intrinsically related to DIY practices is the consumption of online music. Because they share YouTube videos on their home pages or on specific sites, such as Funk Neurótico (<www.novo.funkneurotico.net>), funkers are able to embark, at least initially, on a musical journey without the intervention of major labels or even independent publishers, and in this way are able to secure a position in the funk music scene. Another strategy developed by DJ Batata (<www.youtube.com/channel/UCRBf27Yr1F2DGGHTSo4SPSg>), for example, consists of developing a home studio, taking advantage of new technology (RICHARDS 2013, 2016) which is mostly free, taking into consideration funk’s particularity of needing only an electronic drum kit and a sampler. DJ Batata has developed a whole musical career (also as a radio broadcaster), because a group of previously unknown musicians, including MC Mingau, Koringa, Naldo, Anitta, and Buchecha, quickly began to use his studio. DJ Batata’s case is particularly interesting as it combines two types of DIY strategies: the first involving endless hours of learning at home with the mini drums his father gave him and frequent visits to the Portinari nightclub, where he met DJs and began mixing. The second strategy involving a level of technological and digital expertise that allowed him to seize the opportunities brought on by changes new technologies introduced in the musical production model. This is, therefore, a central element, a node in the DIY ‘full of experts’ community which bloomed from the innovative appropriation of new technologies (RICHARDS 2013, 2016).
Another example of harnessing the potential of new technologies, as well as an enhancer of DIY practices, is the profusion of various applications for recording and editing music. This was precisely the strategy developed by Sany Pitbull, born in a slum in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro, who imagined and produced the iFunk-se smartphone application, which enables a whole generation of funk beginners to edit and release songs.

Moving away from the extreme example of Rio’s funkers, let us focus on other cases from different regions: the Northeast Brazilian cities of Fortaleza and Recife. One example is Fernanda (34 years old) who began her DIY career by printing fanzines, which circulated only among friends in Fortaleza. Next, she created the *Missiva* [Letter] fanzine, which had an innovative particularity: it was sent by letter to people from Fortaleza that Fernanda wanted to meet or to get to know better and it was about the things Fernanda had in common with the person to whom she was writing. In 2000, she was invited by a university to teach a *Zines Workshop*, which she continues to do today. Similarly, in 2002 she began Zine-se, a project for fanzine enthusiasts to meet and exchange ideas. At the same time, she fronted a band called Devotchkas and, later, Alcalina. They did not play very well having started with covers while playing some songs of their own. To record their music, they organized a crowdfunding event before crowdfunding platforms existed: they would perform concerts to sell t-shirts (with artists’ drawings) to obtain money to record their album. Those who bought five t-shirts got the record (which did not yet exist) at the end as well. Those who bought ten t-shirts would get three records. When they obtained enough money, they chose to record at home. They opted to buy a ‘mega computer’ from a young man they hired to make the recording. They had a launch party to deliver the record to their supporters and sold the equipment used to record the album to have enough money to make more copies of it. After the end of the fanzines and the band, Fernanda continued her creative trajectory autonomously with *Loja sem Paredes* [Shop Without Walls].

4 It should be noted that this Brazilian band called Devotchkas has no relation with the American punk rock band formed in 1996 also called Devotchkas.

5 For more information about this project, follow the link: <https://www.facebook.com/Loja-sem-Paredes-380497008693933>.
clients. However, like in Portugal, it is difficult to live only on art and/or music (BENNETT/GUERRA 2018).

The trajectory of Marília, a photographer from Fortaleza, is a very particular example of this type of philosophy of intersectional struggle. Refusing to work according to traditional norms, that is, photographing baptisms and for companies and brands, Marília’s work is of an autobiographical nature in a collective called Descoletivo. The way she is able to perceive the multiple inequalities in the photographic world, and the ‘advantages’ she benefits from as a white woman, is uncommon. Assuming that the photography in Ceará is heterosexual, white, masculine and cisgender, since the equipment is too expensive for underprivileged layers of society, her reaction is extreme as she tries to reduce this gap:

Nowadays, I only hire women, blacks and homosexuals to work in my networks. I do not open my network to the oppressor, to those who have the power... But now women have united more. We search for a place of mutual support and collective growth. And a place to empower other women, to share with them, to rise up with them, as long as white women give way to black women, while cis women give way to trans. Make this a movement of restitution, both within the women’s group and to people outside. – Marília, 35 years old, Master or equivalent (Level 7), Portuguese, photography teacher, photographer, Fortaleza.

One last example of a DIY project, which intersects with the struggles for gender equality and feminists, is present in the trajectory of Hannah Carvalho. She began with concert photography in 2014, at the age of 16. She developed a project by taking polaroids of bands after their concerts. Thus, she began to meet people within music scenes and become more interested in their production and organizational dimensions. In 2016, she founded the independent label PWR Records with Letícia Tomás, in which they perform the entire editing and dissemination process in a DIY way. This project germinated following one of their joint projects: mapping the indie bands in Brazil that had at least one woman. In doing so, they were confronted with the difficulties women face in entering the music world. For this reason, Hannah Carvalho and Letícia Tomás decided to establish a label that only releases works by women or by bands with women:

Guys usually have everything in their hands. It is much more complicated for a person to trust women. I see this happening to this day. There’s gotta be a lot of guys

6 For more information about this project, follow the link: <https://www.facebook.com/descoletivo>.
7 For more information about this project, follow the links: <https://www.facebook.com/pwrlabel/> and <https://pwrrecords.bandcamp.com/>.
saying that this girl sucks... With men, that doesn’t happen. – Hannah Carvalho, 20 years, Master or equivalent (Level 7), Photographer and music producer, Recife.

In the same vein and with the same goals, is the Sonora – International Festival of Composers. Founded in 2016, it aims to promote women’s artistic production. Created from a hashtag, #mulherescriando [#womencreating], the festival recognizes the unequal participation of women in the music world. In order to combat this situation, a network of women who had organized the festival was formed. This is an international festival, and its first edition in 2016 was held in six countries and in more than 20 cities.

As Brazil is a large country with a multiplicity of substantially different socioeconomic and cultural contexts, the analysis of the cases presented serve to underpin three main findings. First, there are significant differences in the ways in which DIY is experienced in relation to Anglo-Saxon and European countries. In Brazil, more than resistance, DIY is assumed as a way of survival. Second, the analysis also reveals that this way of experiencing DIY has different forms. In the case of interviewees from the favelas or from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, DIY is expressed through the creation and publishing of amateur videos on YouTube, the creation and development of amateur competitions, the amateur organization of parties, the creation of homemade recording studios, or the creation of free websites and free apps to make and record music, as well as the creation of homemade clothing, accessories, jewellery, and hair and beauty salons. In this sense, DIY is a means of escaping from the context of invisibility and/or social failure of the favela and from the social stigma caused by living there; it is therefore very pragmatic, based on the needs imposed by the scarcity of resources. In the case of the women interviewed from Northeast Brazil, DIY is also a survival strategy, but here more closely associated with the creation of alternatives that overcome the difficulties experienced in terms of entering the artistic field professionally, merely because they are women and, in some cases, part of the LGBTQI community. Thus, DIY manifests itself through the creation of their own platforms for cultural production and dissemination, whether it is a travelling shop to sell artistic creations, or an independent music label that gives opportunities to artists who would otherwise find it difficult to edit their work. Therefore, DIY provides channels to create something that does not already exist, to do something people really like, away from the normative school and professional circuits, a means to remain independent
(doing what they want, how they want it) and a way to challenge and/or provoke the established circuits of the Brazilian music industry. At the same time, and highlighting a notorious difference in relation to the Portuguese punk scene, markedly male from its beginning to the present day, the examples of Brazilian women show the importance of DIY and their experience as a strategy to overcome the difficulties they face daily in a strongly misogynistic society like Brazil. In fact, they report a constructivist understanding of gender, much instilled in Butler (1990), to the extent that the renegotiation of gender identity is at the heart of redefining roles in alternative musical, artistic, and creative scenes.

Hence, it is an authentic art of existence that combines gender and artistic practices. This leads to our third point: the fact that the inevitable option for a DIY culture structurally shapes these social actors, whether they come from Rio’s favelas or are women from Fortaleza and Recife. Unlike Portuguese punks, these individuals’ participation in music (and artistic) underground scenes is a life inevitability, due to the dynamics of social segregation, ghettoization, or due to gender discrimination. The mark of exclusion separates these young people from normative, conventional society, and their creativity flows almost spontaneously from their life experiences, thus proving to be an art of existence.

5. ‘Different Angels With the Same Dirty Faces’: Final Remarks

After examining the Portuguese and Brazilian cases, it is possible to point out some similarities and differences between them. The big question is whether the same thing is meant by DIY. That is, DIY practices exist in both places, but is their inherent logic the same? Let us look, for example, at clothing. The punks make their own at home, in a subversive appropriation of various styles; the funkers also make their clothes themselves, or buy counterfeit versions, but the logic is different: it is the imitation of an opulent and ostensible reality that is desired in funk. This is not to say that there is not a high dose of irony in this mimic, but the lyrics are full of references to high-end brands. For example, there are reported cases of a nightclub where anyone who shows up wearing Ed Hardy designs will get a discount. Even when posting amateur video clips on YouTube, what is evident is not so much an ethos but more a necessity – a way to try to get out of their (difficult) situation and reach the largest number of people possible. In a society in which there is a low degree of social mobility and a great deal of uncertainty, these DIY
strategies are an alternative path – if not the only path – to a professional career in the world of music. In the Brazilian reality, there is a clear inclination towards the art of existence (and not so much the art of resistance). Also considering the examples of women who build their careers in different artistic fields, I perceive DIY as an art of existence, not as a response to an unfavourable socioeconomic situation, but as the alternative means to ensure their existence as women, and as artistic women, in a deeply misogynistic society with enormous gender disparities.

In the Portuguese case, there is a clear predominance of an art of resistance. As described, the Portuguese case is of great interest for the study of the intrinsic and complex relations between DIY and punk. Given the historical specificities of Portuguese society, a majority of the interviewees did not have the chance to be only punks. Despite the existence of punk scenes in Portugal since the 1970s, the density and intensity of subcultural belonging was always different from the realities of Anglo-Saxon countries, due to: the incipient development of the music industry and the inexistent punk phonographic dynamic; the exiguity of venues (only available in Lisbon and Porto); the lack of supply of subcultural youth goods and services; and the inexistence of a subcultural and leisure-related consumption practice. Nevertheless, DIY punk in Portugal has been a space of upcoming possibilities, starting by the cosmopolitanism that it brought to the cities, their nightlife, and leisure activities. About half of the interviewees, although not practicing music and art-related professions, carry out (to varying degrees) intellectual and scientific professional activities, or have pursued creative careers. It is quite possible that the proclaimed authenticity of DIY ethos is more visible in the young generations’ professional careers in worlds like fashion, street art, video and cinema, graphic design, DJing, or even cuisine.

Regardless of these differences, the creative practices associated with underground music (and artistic) scenes in both Portugal and Brazil are clearly illustrative of their importance as elements in contemporary collective dynamics. Most of all, though, they aid in upholding the thesis that creativity will make the difference at an economic, social, cultural, humanitarian, and ecological level, being ultimately a decisive part of quality of life. A greater breadth of international perspectives is needed to offer critical engagements in the cultural and creative sectors. In addition, I believe the approach I have developed here is crucial to ‘re-differentiate’ cultural and creative activities focused on the understanding of the specific problems of a global set of young people’s (and young
adults’) global networks and working identities, who move (existing and resisting) through underground music scenes.

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