A Postcolonial Curriculum Investigation in the Course "Instrument – Acoustic Guitar" of the Federal University of Bahia

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ABSTRACT

Regardless of the field, the establishment of a curriculum is intrinsically connected with discussions that incorporate struggles from broader social contexts. A scrutinizing analysis of a music course's curriculum can disclose complex power structures that interfere with the social perception not only of the courses' direct stakeholders but also with the perception of general members of society. In this context, the current article has as its main aim to reflect on possible connections between the establishment of the curriculum of an influential higher education music institution and the general social perception toward different types of musical knowledge. Influenced by a postcolonial perspective and focused on Salvador, a Brazilian northeastern city, this investigation has three specific aims to support the general purpose: 1) to review the literature which discusses the connections between social struggles and curriculum development; 2) to contextualize the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) in the Salvador city by presenting their main characteristics that are related to the presented discussion; and 3) to examine the curriculum of the course "Instrument – Acoustic Guitar" offered at UFBA. Supported by the aforementioned aims, this inquiry employs the "Qualitative Document Analysis" methodology to analyze academically relevant sources that can support and foster the proposed reflections. Likewise, this paper intends to contribute to the ongoing scientific debate about the impact of social structures in the curricula of higher education music courses and to stimulate conscious and active participation of higher education organizations in the promotion of fairer societies.

Keywords: curriculum studies, higher education, music education, postcolonialism, Salvador city

1. Introduction

Independently of the study area, the construction and establishment of a curriculum are intrinsically connected with discussions and reflections that incorporate struggles from broader social, political, economic and historical contexts. A scrutinizing analysis of a music course's curriculum can disclose dynamic and complex power mechanisms that interfere with the social perceptions not only of the courses' direct stakeholders (e.g. students, professors, administrative staff, coordinators) but also with the perceptions of general members of society.

In this context, the following article has as its main aim to reflect on possible connections between the establishment of a course's curriculum in an influential higher education music organization and the general social perception toward different sources of musical knowledge. Influenced by a postcolonial perspective and focusing on Salvador, a Brazilian northeastern city, this investigation incorporates three specific aims to support the general purpose: 1) to review the literature which discusses the connections between social struggles and curriculum

development; 2) to contextualize the School of Music (EMUS) of the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) in the Salvador city by presenting their main characteristics that are related to the proposed discussion; and 3) to examine the curriculum of the course "Instrument – Acoustic Guitar" offered in the EMUS-UFBA, based on a postcolonial standpoint.

By examining the aforementioned curriculum and reflecting on its reasons, processes, aims and possible implications for social appreciation, inclusive education and identity formation, this paper intends to contribute to the ongoing scientific debate about the impact of social structures in the curricula of higher education music courses and – at the same time, in light of the cross-feeding correlation between society and higher education institutions – to stimulate more conscious and active participation of higher education organizations in the promotion of fairer and emancipated societies.

2. Methodology

This research employs the Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) as the methodological approach to examine materials that can contribute to the development of the knowledge that will support the presented discussions. Bowen (2009) defines the QDA as an approach to systematically review files and a process to evaluate documents from electronic or printed sources. The author stress, among an array of other possibilities, five main potential benefits for the adoption of document analysis' procedures in a research scenario:

> first, […] documents can provide data on the context within which research participants operate – a case of text providing context […] second, information contained in documents can suggest some questions that need to be asked and situations that need to be observed as part of the research […] third, documents provide supplementary research data. Information and insights derived from documents can be valuable additions to a knowledge base […] fourth, documents provide a means of tracking change and development […] fifth, documents can be analyzed as a way to verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources (Bowen, 2009, pp. 29–30)

Therefore, the Qualitative Document Analysis can be defined as a chain of procedures for the search, examination and systematization of the information included in different forms of materials (Bowen, 2009; Wach & Ward, 2013). In this direction, the following article employed the aforementioned methodology for two main purposes: 1) to follow a set of procedures to consistently review the literature connected with the construction of an appropriate theoretical background for the analysis of a music course's curriculum and its connections with broader social elements; and 2) to systematically examine the chosen curriculum and courses' syllabus in light of the developed theoretical background. As previously mentioned, this article aims to investigate the curriculum of the acoustic guitar higher education course offered by the School of Music (EMUS) of the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA). Therefore, the main sources of data (i.e. curriculum and courses' syllabus) could be found among the public documents on the website of this higher education organization.

On the other hand, it was comprehended as necessary the gathering of additional data to support the understanding of the manners the curriculum and subjects' contents impact in academic life. In this way, some interviews were conducted in order to ensure an appropriate amount of data to fulfill the needs of the current investigation. By contemplating stakeholders' direct perceptions, the interviews can extremely contribute to the study by filling the gap between the text established in the analyzed official documents (i.e. curriculum and courses' syllabuses) and its effects on the lives of two main impacted groups: students and professors in the music department of the Federal University of Bahia. The interviews were guided by the procedures adopted in Semi-structured interviews (SSI). SSI's mix of structure and flexibility, fixed aims

and topic variation, and closed-ending and open-ending questions could, simultaneously, assure the collection of the sought information and enlarge the research's possibilities (Adams, 2015; Fylan, 2005; Kvale, 2007).

The interviewees were selected supported by the procedures defended by "maximum variation sampling". Creswell (2013) asserts that this approach suggests: 1) the determination of some criteria that will distinguish groups of participants before the selection per se; and 2) that participants in each group should be as different as possible. As stated by the author, "this approach is often selected because when a researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives - an ideal in qualitative research". (Creswell, 2013, p. 157).

Likewise, four interviews were conducted: two in the group of university professors and two in the group of undergraduate students. Among the students, were selected as participants one freshman and one senior student; among the professors, were selected as interviewees one professor of a subject that is only relevant for the course "Instrument – Acoustic Guitar" and a professor that teaches a subject that is relevant for multiple bachelor courses at the EMUS-UFBA. It was expected that by applying these criteria for the selection of participants in the aforementioned groups it would be possible to grasp the most appropriate comprehension of the examined course, considering that interviewees, based on their characteristics, could have different opinions and experiences regarding the university life.

Regarding the analysis of the interviews, this inquiry was systematically guided by procedures suggested on the spiral of five looping cycles, as proposed by Creswell (2013). According to the author, the data analysis can be understood as the process of moving between the analytical cycles of 1) data organization; 2) reading and memoing; 3) describing and classifying the data into codes and categories; 4) interpreting the data; and 5) representing and visualizing the data. Supported by these cycles, the audio of the interviews, conducted based on the SSI's procedures, were qualitatively examined. Additionally, it is important to stress that to ensure ethical principles such as confidentiality and anonymity, the interviews were only audio-recorded; therefore, no image was captured during the data collection process.

3. Curriculum Studies

The curriculum manifests the course's orientation, presents the content choices and the desired learning outcomes. More than selecting and sequencing study contents, the curriculum is designed to allow students to develop some sets of required knowledge, skills and attitudes that are related to the course's aims. According to Nóvoa (1997, p. 15), the curriculum can be understood as "discourses that build our possibilities (and impossibilities) that always mark the predominance of certain points of view (and interests) over competing points of view (and interests)". Similarly, McLaren (2003, p. 86) affirms that curriculum goes beyond "a program of study, a classroom text, or a course syllabus. Rather, it represents the introduction to a particular form of life".

Silva (2001, p. 13)[1] affirms that in the traditional way to understand, the curriculum is seen as "a non-problematic process. It is assumed: 1) a consensus around the knowledge that must be selected; […] 2) a passive relationship between who knows and what is known; 3) a static and inertial nature of culture and knowledge". In this view, the supposed "neutrality" and "naturality" attributed to curricula have an important function in keeping the systems (e.g. educational, social, political, etc.) in the same path they are. By accepting that curriculum is valueless and unbiased, the adopted knowledge will be treated as "the" knowledge itself

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(Santomé, 2001). Harmonically, Sá (2019, p. 137)[2] defends that "the inclusion and exclusion of content involve social and power relations that are capable of hierarchizing knowledge and conditioning curricula to a unique narrative about the history and culture of a country, […] excluding the knowledge concerning minority groups". Concomitantly, Arantes & Costa (2017, p. 181)[3] affirm that "the curriculum is not a logical process, but a social process in which logical, epistemological and intellectual factors live side by side with 'less noble' social determinants".

Backgrounded by these reflections, investigations about the content of a course cannot be disassociated from the discussions which deal with deeper social issues. The establishment of a curriculum is the result of the struggles of different groups that aim to express the knowledge they consider valid. Silva (2001), defends that the conflicts around "the social" and "the political" are unfold and concentrated in the curriculum. According to the author, "it is through the curriculum, conceived as a discursive element of educational policy, that the different social groups, especially the dominant ones, express their worldview, their social project, their truth" (T. T. da Silva, 2001, p. 10). The curriculum disputes can act not only perpetuating the knowledge valued by certain groups but also devaluating the knowledge of others. The preference for a content and its consequential social acceptance can contribute to the construction of an inferior image of other kinds of knowledge (Figueiredo, 2019; Grosfoguel, 2008; Sá, 2019; C. L. Silva & Pires, 2015; Walsh et al., 2018).

Diverse authors have noted the curriculum's tendency to privilege contents that represent valuable knowledge for the hegemonic cultures and dominant groups (Arantes & Costa, 2017; Figueiredo, 2019; Sá, 2019; Santomé, 2001; T. T. da Silva, 2001). In this direction, Santomé (2001, p. 161)[4] assert that in the curriculum "the cultures or voices of minorities and/or marginalized social groups that do not have important structures of power continue to be silenced, when they are not stereotyped and deformed".

4. An Overview of the Salvador City

The city of Saint Salvador (SSA) was originally founded by Portuguese settlers because of its strategic location in Brazil. Mainly due to its geographic position, geomorphology and natural vegetation, the Portuguese colonizers understood that the region that today is included in the Salvadoran city center was a promising land to establish an economic, political and administrative center for the colony. Thereby, from its foundation on 29 March 1549 until 1763, Salvador hold the position of Brazilian capital (Ramos, 2013).

When the Portuguese empire realized the economic potential that could be explored in Brazil, it became crucial to develop structures and mechanisms to establish, ensure and keep control over the "conquered" territory. In general terms, it would mean to start creating and developing diverse sectors, segments, organizations and institutions to support the establishment of a society. As examples, it is possible to mention the need for populating the territory with individuals who share the same values as the empire, the necessity of establishing political organizations, creating an economic administration, establishing a military power, constructing structures for the transportation of people and goods, to establish mechanisms of communication and to ensure that all of these structures are under the rule of the Portuguese leader.

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Considering that the first Portuguese caravels arrived on the coast of Brazil in 1500 and, since then, the colonizers started establishing structures to intermediate the exchange of goods between the native Brazilians (indigenous) and Portugal, even before its official inauguration the Salvador city has been going through complex processes of cultural exchange (Albuquerque & Fraga, 2006). After a brief cordial and friendly period in which both peoples (indigenous and Portuguese) exchanged goods (Usually the Colonizers exchanged products with a small value for the European society – such as small mirrors – for high-valued goods in the Portuguese context – such as gold), the settlers started to enslave the indigenous population to work both in the production (e.g. planting, harvesting, raw material extraction) and in the construction of the city itself (Dornelles, 2018). However, due to the catholic church's influence allied to the indigenous capacity to resist as a result of their knowledge about the region's geography, nature and terrain, the enslavement of the indigenous population was replaced by African slavery (Calabrich et al., 2017). The Portuguese colonizers started to bring African people, particularly from the sub-Saharan region, to work as staves in several parts of the Brazilian territory.

Between the end of the XVI century (when the Portuguese started to slave Africans to work in Brazilian land) and the middle of the XIX century (when the "import" of slaves was officially prohibited), two main African ethnic groups were brought to Brazil: Bantos and Sudaneses. It is important to stress that both Banto and Sudanese are oversimplified classifications based exclusively on the roots of their language. In other words, despite sharing linguistic backgrounds, the ethnic groups that are categorized into Banto and Sudanese classifications hold different habits, values, religions, culture, music, beliefs, culinary and also speak different languages. Concomitantly, Calabrich et al. (2017, p. 26)[5] state that "the Sudaneses were very numerous because their peoples were at war and prisoners of war were almost always sold as slaves. Thousands of people arrived in Salvador, speaking different languages and with different habits, values and religions". Due to this period, the Bantos and the Sudaneses are broadly recognized as the main African peoples for the formation of the Brazilian society (Nigri, 2014; Prandi, 2000). Accordingly, Prandi (2000) asserts that,

> The Sudanese are the peoples located in the regions that today range from Ethiopia to Chad and from southern Egypt to Uganda in the northernmost part of Tanzania. [...] below, the central Sudanese group, formed by numerous linguistic and cultural groups that made up different ethnic groups that supplied Brazil with slaves, especially those located in the Gulf of Guinea region and which, in Brazil, we know by the generic names of Nagôs or Yorubás (but comprising several peoples of the Yoruba language and culture, including the Oyó, Ijexá, Ketu, Ijebu, Egbá, Ifé, Oxogbô, etc.). [...] The Bantu, peoples of Southern Africa, extending to the south, just below the Sudanese limits, comprising the lands that stretch from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean to the Cape of Good Hope (Prandi, 2000, p. 53)[6].

Additionally, it is important to stress that at the time of colonial Brazil, the enslaved population (mostly formed by African-heritage people) were legally and officially considered "things". Besides not being considered citizens, or even people, for most of the colonial period, the slaves could not testify in court or own any kind of private property (Albuquerque & Fraga, 2006; Amaral, 2011). Taking into account the massive "importation operation", the African culture played a significant role in the formation and consolidation of Salvadoran traditions. Furthermore, it is possible to note an expressive participation of African descendants in the

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formation of the Salvadoran population: around 85% of the population is formed by blacks and mestizos (Calabrich et al., 2017; Guerreiro, 2017). Considering the entire world, this number gives to Salvador the status of the city that incorporates the biggest percentage of Afro-descendants, outside the African continent (Ramos, 2007, 2013). Hence, even considering the enormous influence of the African population in Brazil (Konopleva & Pereira, 2020; Pereira, 2020; Pereira et al., 2022; Pereira & Konopleva, 2018), it is possible to realize how the Salvadoran culture is particularly and especially impacted by African-heritage traditions, values and beliefs. The Federal University of Bahia and all of its music courses are inserted into this incredibly rich intercultural scenario.

However, as will be presented in the next section, the acoustic guitar higher education course still faces some hindrances to incorporate non-western musical knowledge into its curriculum.

5. A Postcolonial Examination of the Curriculum of the Course Instrument – Acoustic Guitar

Throughout the study of world's history, it is possible to note that, in several time periods and at diverse geographical regions, different groups employed political, military, economic, social, philosophical and psychological domination mechanisms (e.g. colonialism, imperialism, neocolonialism, etc.) upon other groups (Castro-Gómez, 1998; Gandhi, 2018; Loomba, 2005; Pereira, Konopleva, Do, et al., 2021; Sá, 2019; Said, 2003; B. de S. Santos, 2006; Young, 2001). In order to make sense of these possible scenarios, the term postcolonial can incorporate different meanings from the period that starts after the proclamation of a certain country's political independence (holding the meaning of "post" "colonial period") until the set of theories and perspectives to study, investigate and examine the current world's situation as a consequence of the colonial and imperial past (Akkari, 2012; Asher, 2009; Bertens, 2008; Castells, 2014; Coulthard, 2019; Leite, 2010; Loomba, 2005; Nkrumah, 1965; Pereira, Konopleva, Nyamkhuu, et al., 2021; M. Santos, 2016; Sawant, 2011).

Therefore, the expression postcolonial can be applied to refer to a systematic chain of thoughts that mainly aims to observe, study and understand the dynamic and complex connections between different segments of a given society and the mechanisms of power and dominance that were built based on colonial structures. As stated by Pereira et al. (2021, pp. 39–40) the Postcolonial Theories (PCT) "seek to analyze how colonial or imperial mechanisms continue to operate in 'self-governed' states […] PCT can be comprehended as a tool to analyze a big range of social, gender, political, ethnic, anthropological, historical, artistic, economic and music structures". It is important to stress that the PCTs are not restricted to the analysis of oppressed and former colonized countries. It can also be applied in the examination process of social, political and economic relationships within former colonizers and/or countries without a colonial past. As stated by Young (2001, p. 65) "postcolonial theory is designed to undo the ideological heritage of colonialism not only in the decolonized countries but also in the west itself […] decolonize the west, deconstruct it".

As cited above, the Postcolonial Theories' perspectives will guide the knowledge development, the reflections and the discussions throughout this article. Thusly, it is important to stress that the investigation and analysis of the curriculum of the higher education course entitled "Instrument – Acoustic Guitar" offered by the music department of the Federal University of Bahia will be oriented by a postcolonial perspective.

Before starting the curriculum analysis per se, it is important to make some considerations regarding the reason for selecting this course for the current investigation. Even though all of the courses' official name is "instrument", after the entrance exam the instrument courses are divided into three different curricula: 1) orchestral instruments – which is further sectioned into

several musical instruments such as violin, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, viola and clarinet; 2) piano; and 3) acoustic guitar. Considering these groups, the acoustic guitar is both the one with the lowest orchestral tradition and the one with the highest "popular music" tradition in the Salvadoran society. Despite the countless possible rationalizations and conceptualizations for this expression, in the realm of this study, the term "popular music" refers to several music styles, rhythms and genre which encompasses since instrumental music (including musical pieces for solo players) to mass-media musical initiatives (which usually includes a singer and a musical group). As employed in this article, the expression "popular music" denote music styles and genres that are able to achieve a significant number of listeners in different political, cultural and economic groups, particularly in the underrepresented segments of the society.

Following this vein, from a postcolonial perspective, it would be expected that the curriculum of this particular course had incorporated some contents related to the acoustic guitar's common applications in the music business. Considering Acoustic Guitar application in the Brazilian society and in the Brazilian music industry, it would be expected a bigger impact of popular-oriented content when compared to the other instrument groups' curricula.

Due to recommendations and restrictions related to the extent of an academic article, this investigation is focused on the core curricula of the course. In other words, only the mandatory subjects will be considered for the discussion. However, it is extremely relevant to stress that the acoustic guitar course is conducted supported by mechanisms that allow a certain level of flexibility within the university. Besides the mandatory subjects, the students are obligated to participate in at least 306 hours of "optative" subjects and 357 hours of "free-choice" subjects. At EMUS-UFBA, the course's coordination provides the list of subjects that can be taken as "optative" (the optative courses are commonly directly connected to music and offered by the university's music department). On the other hand, the "free-choice" subjects can be chosen among all the courses offered in the university, including subjects from other departments like nutrition, physics, mathematics and medicine. Considering both optative and free-choice subjects, around 27% of the total credits that need to be gathered during the tertiary-level studies can be flexibly chosen by the students themselves, depending on their main professional, personal and musical interests. Moreover, it is relevant to reiterate that the aforementioned number of hours corresponds to the minimum; the students have the chance to participate in more optional and "free choice" subjects if they wish.

36 mandatory subjects are distributed in the four years of the recommended course's length. Some of these disciplines are sequential and preserve the same general name at the same time that they change the complexity level (e.g. Musical Perception I, Musical Perception II, Musical Perception III; Instrument Seminar I, Instrument Seminar II, Instrument Seminar III). Taking into account only courses' general names (disregarding the complexity level), there are only 12 courses: Correpetition for Guitarists; Music history (I to II); Guitar Literature; Literature and Musical Structuring (I to IV); Chamber music (I to III); Guitar Pedagogy (I to II); Musical perception (I to IV); Supplementary Piano (I to IV); Group practice for Guitarists (I to II); Group Practice: Choir (I to II); Instrument Seminar (I to VIII); Thesis Preparation (I to II).

The majority of the subjects display a very concise syllabus that presents only a very superficial description of the course's aim. Some of them expose an initial bibliography and recommended content but a significant number of the syllabuses have these pieces of information missing. Due to the lack of deep information, just by reading the curriculum and subjects' syllabuses, it is not possible to be sure about the course's orientation. However, some elements can indicate a focus on traditional Eurocentric music: 1) among the 36 mandatory subjects, 29 are shared with the orchestral instrument group; 2) the specification of time intervals like "from

Renaissance to contemporary period" may suggest a categorization based on western traditional music; 3) the absence of the words popular, Brazil, Brazilian or any Brazilian region – the only exception are the subjects entitled Group practice for Guitarists I and II, in which the syllabuses affirm that there is no differentiation between classical and popular; and 4) when present, the initial bibliography tends to be western-music oriented.

None of the above-cited features can confirm the course's Eurocentric orientation but they are able to open the pathway for this kind of interpretation. For example, considering the shared subjects, it is more plausible that the acoustic guitar course be concert-music oriented than the bassoon course be popular-music oriented, especially considering that these courses were launched more than fifty years ago. The availably of the habilitation in acoustic guitar offered by the Popular music course may also be considered an indication of the Instrument-acoustic guitar concert-music orientation. Even if not conclusive, the presence of the habilitation in "Popular Music – Acoustic Guitar" can support the inclination of the course "Instrument – Acoustic Guitar" in another direction.

On the other hand, the interview process could add some relevant information to this discussion. Although on different levels, both students and professors suggest a traditional or Eurocentric-music orientation for the course "Instrument – Acoustic Guitar". During the interview process, both the freshman and the senior student strongly stated that the whole course seems to have been planned to focus on "classical music". The students were particularly emphatic about the Eurocentric orientation in some subjects that are constitutive parts of the curriculum of other undergraduate courses (e.g. Literature and Musical Structuring, and History of Music), and they demonstrated a clear dissatisfaction with the path adopted in these subjects. Despite that, both students seemed to approve the track adopted for the main subject of the course: Instrument Seminar (I to VIII). The participants, in spite of recognizing a traditional music orientation in the course, indicated that their professors usually make some efforts to include Brazilian popular music in their studies and they would also consider a personal repertoire change if it is requested by the students.

Even though they agree with that in general terms the whole undergraduate course has a Eurocentric-music orientation, the professors tend to be more cautious regarding conclusive statements. Despite the bibliographies presented in the courses' syllabuses, both respondents in the educators' group declared that in the investigated institution the professors dispose of a certain level of autonomy to select and apply different methodologies, methods and materials. These declarations decrease the perception of a "course's general bias" by sharing the responsibility of delivering a Eurocentric-oriented bachelor course with the professors that can choose the educational trails they want to apply to their groups of students.

Considering the subjects per se, both students and professors indicated a traditional-music orientation for a myriad of mandatory subjects such as History of Music (I and II), Literature and Musical Structuring (I to IV), Chamber Music (I to III) and Group Practice: Choir (I and II). The subjects "History of Music I" and "History of Music II" are the only ones with a clear and irrefutable Eurocentric orientation. As stated in their syllabuses, the former focus on "Western Music and its Society from Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages (c. 1450)" and the later focus on "Western music and its society from the Renaissance (c. 1450) to the end of the Baroque (c. 1750)".

Backgrounded by the perspectives defended in the realm of Postcolonial Theories (PCT), the Eurocentric inclination of the course entitled "Instrument – Acoustic guitar" can lead to some reflections regarding the colonizer function adopted by the course. As previously mentioned, colonization processes can encompass different influencing dimensions such as political, economic, philosophical, sociological, musical and artistic. The term coloniality has been

broadly used (especially in Latin America) to address the psychological dimension of colonial domination (Abib, 2019; Castro-Gómez, 1998; Grosfoguel, 2008; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Sá, 2019; Walsh et al., 2018).

The construction of curricula entails not only the selection of the content that will be taught but it also implicates in exclusion processes related to contents that do not worth being learned (Goodson, 1997; Nóvoa, 1997; Sá, 2019; Santomé, 2001). Regardless of the study field and the reasons for the selection/exclusion of certain themes, the subjects included in the curricula are considered as more valuable by curriculum developers. In this way, from a postcolonial viewpoint (also in light of the socially, politically and economically influential position of tertiary-level educational institutions and the privileged position the curriculum developers hold in these organizations), once the curricula or courses' contents are determined it starts to significantly impact not only in the individuals directly connected to the course itself (e.g. students, professors, coordinators) but also in the whole society.

Hess (2015), in her reflections about the tokenization of non-Eurocentric musics, asserts that Western music is usually responsible for the majority of content in music education programs and when other types of music are included they tend to be treated as peculiar, tangential or exotic. In this way, as stated by the author, "Western music in music education acts as a colonizer" (Hess, 2015, p. 336). Considering the general assumption that a curriculum and its contents are thought, developed and established based on "natural", "valueless", "uninterested" and "unbiased" processes (Perim et al., 2020; T. T. da Silva, 2001), the content chosen for the course "Instrument – Acoustic guitar" may be recognized as "the" worthwhile content, "the" valuable content and "the" natural content for teaching and learning acoustic guitar. Following this trail, by considering the effects of coloniality (psychological effect of colonialism), expanding Hess' (2015) reflections and applying them to the UFBA's context, it is possible to perceive a "tokenization" of a whole curriculum, in which: 1) the course "Instrument – Acoustic guitar" can be considered "the real", "the complete" or "the unbiased" instrumental formation; and 2) the course "Popular music – Acoustic Guitar" can be considered the exotic, the tangential or the token.

6. Conclusion

Launched in 1954 as the first higher education music institution (Oliveira, 1992; UFBA, 2020), the School of Music (EMUS) of the Federal University of Bahia, still maintain the position of one of the most influential music universities in Brazil. With courses at Undergraduate, Master and Doctoral levels, the university holds extremely important social, political, artistic, anthropological and musical functions in the Salvadoran scenario.

The establishment of the curriculum in a higher education course can have impacts that go beyond the lives of individuals directly connected with the course (i.e. students, coordinators, professors) and influence broader levels of society (Pereira et al., 2022; Pereira, Konopleva, Nyamkhuu, et al., 2021). Thus, the EMUS – by being based in a city in which around 85% of the population is formed by African-descendant people – holds an important role in the Salvadoran society, being able to contribute to the construction and consolidation of a more balanced society (Schmidt, 2005; Stanton, 2018).

The investigation of the mandatory subjects in the curriculum of the course "Instrument – Acoustic Guitar", offered at the Federal University of Bahia, indicates a structural inclination towards western classical music and a relative disconnection with the Salvadoran and Brazilian cultural backgrounds. As discussed above, this Eurocentric tendency in a course with no adjectivization (e.g. Western classical instrument, Traditional Instrument, Eurocentric

Instrument) can lead to negative effects for both the appreciation of non-Eurocentric knowledge and for the valuation of the "Popular Music – Instrument" course.

On the other hand, the interview processes had shown that the professors can count on a significant amount of flexibility in conducting their disciplines Due to the concise and relatively superficial description of the subjects in the syllabuses, the educators have the autonomy to choose and apply different methodologies, methods and materials, incorporating non-Eurocentric approaches and contents whenever they believe it is appropriate. Lately, it is relevant to underscore that the promoted discussions neither intend to question the artistic, theoretical or educational value of western classical music nor its suitability for higher education contexts. This article only promotes a reflection regarding the impacts of the unbalanced relation between Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric musical knowledge in higher education scenarios, especially focused on a city in which 85% of the population has ethnical connections with the African continent.

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