

## Music Between Work and Leisure: The Case of a Collective from Fortaleza, Brazil

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**Citation:** Menezes, P. (2023). Music Between Work and Leisure: The Case of a Collective from Fortaleza, Brazil, *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 8(2), 12. <https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/14065>

**Published:** December 30, 2023

### ABSTRACT

Lado B is a collective of musicians from Fortaleza, Brazil, that holds monthly festivals in a public cultural center. Aiming at some self-sufficiency, Lado B organizes its festivals according to a kind of adiabatic circuit, which works as follows: at a given festival, each member of the collective is in charge of a function that is necessary for the realization of that particular event. At each new festival, each member of the group performs a task different from the role played at the previous festival; that is to say, members alternate themselves in the many roles as the festivals go on, until each individual has gone through each duty at a given festival. Once everyone has done everything, the cycle restarts. Music is not the main activity of any of those artists, so they all need to keep a day job. This situation creates a divergence on Lado B: while some see the collective as a second job, others face it as a leisure activity. In other words, one segment creates a relation of continuity between life and art, submitting music to the logic of routine, and the other faction establishes a rupture between life and art, as if culture was the ordinary world upside down. Based on interviews with members of Lado B, I ask: is music a job or a leisure activity? I intend to inscribe this question within the broader debate about the relationship between life and art, everyday life and culture, routine and spirit, asceticism and pleasure, functionalism and rebellion, pragmatism and madness. Thus, in a broad sense, I question: what is the relation between life and art? Are they irreconcilable or interdependent? Equal or opposed? Do they struggle against or reinforce each other?

**Keywords:** leisure, independent music, day job

### INTRODUCTION

This article deals with the discussion on how musicians who need to keep a day job view their artistic careers. Given that they have the means to earn a living, how do these artists face their activities in the cultural field? As the following analysis demonstrates, there are two main ways for those who need to combine day jobs and music: in the first case, the music career is a continuity of the job, another job, a business; in the second, music is seen as a rupture from the job, a denial of the job, a kind of leisure.

From a comprehensive perspective, I intend to enroll this specific question in the broader debate of the relation between life and art, quotidian existence and culture, routine and spirit, asceticism and pleasure, functionalism and rebellion, pragmatism and madness. According to this wider view, I ask the following questions: what is the relation between art and life? Are they irreconcilable or interdependent? Equal or opposite? Are they mutually reinforcing or dueling against each other?

In order to materialize so ethereal, almost existential, questions, I will analyze the dilemmas in a concrete case study: The *Lado B* (B-Side), a music collective from Fortaleza, a metropolis with a population of approximately 2.6 million people, located in northeastern Brazil.

Finally, I would like to question the supposed centrality of a factor that is hurriedly regarded as a determinant in this problematic: money. When dealing with the controversy between a profitable work and music (in this case, an unpaid activity that is either regarded as development or as a denial of the day job), supposedly money would play a defining role. Actually, it is considerably important. However, as I will explain, it is not the only or the prevailing variable in this equation. Not only the excess but also the lack of money provides good reasons to make music either as continuity or rupture from the realm of labor.

According to what will be demonstrated, among those interviewed for this article, some musicians have considerable sums of money, while others have very scarce financial resources. However, in both groups, there are some artists who view their careers as a job and others who consider their work as leisure. So, by associating the financial variable with the way the musicians perceive their activities, we can divide our empirical outline in four parts: more money/music as a job, less money/music as a job, more money/ music as leisure, and less money/music as leisure.

Before delving into this debate, it is important to mention some theoretical and methodological considerations.

### **Methods and Techniques**

This article is a development from my doctoral thesis, defended in May 2023. In my broader research, I studied the Centro Cultural Belchior (CCBel), a public cultural facility dedicated to music and located in Fortaleza, capital of the state of Ceará. My main concern was to understand the affinities and tensions between the three participants in charge of CCBel: the municipality, that founded the center in 2017, finances the activities, and owns the premises; the Instituto Cultural Iracema (ICI), a civil society organization hired by the local government to manage the center; and the musical collectives that provide the house's prime cultural product – the free monthly live music festivals. Obviously, the Municipality - ICI - Collectives triangle that supports CCBel is only one instance of the configuration found in other cultural facilities: the State – organized civil society – artists.

Several data collection techniques were employed for the research. Two of those tools relate to the content of this article: the semi-structured interviews and the reconstruction of biographical trajectories.

Altogether, fifty interviews were conducted with members of the local government, of the ICI, and of the musical collectives. Unfortunately, the length of an article does not allow me to quote extensively from a wider range of transcriptions, but my conclusions are based on the statements of the musicians.

The four categories mentioned above that associate the financial variable with how the musical activity is perceived are examples of Weberian ideal types (Weber, 2012 [1922]). Therefore, their value is rather heuristic, archetypical, and methodological, than empirical, concrete, and ontological; that is, they are arrows and not footprints on the sand, unidirectional possibilities and not trails effectively followed in tortuous and erratic ways. To make up for the coldness of these analytical categories, I decided to fill them with cases that illustrate these typologies more or less faithfully. I sought in the biographical trajectories the best concrete and substantial materialization of our models. Summing up, the ideal types are the form, and the biographies are the contents that embody, incarnate and give life to those frames.

### **An Old Debate**

The discussion about work and leisure seems trivial; however, each of these commonly used words evokes its respective glossary of concepts, dear to the sociological theory. Work represents functionalism, utilitarianism, asceticism, pragmatism, finalism, and rationality (Weber, 2007 [1904]). Meanwhile, leisure embodies the opposite of those notions: gratuity, uselessness, excess, lack of purpose, or the end in itself (Bourdieu, 2007 [1979]; Veblen, 1987 [1899]).

Those are the terms that are at base of Max Weber's (2007 [1904]) theory of rationalization, which, we must recall, the sociologist applied to the language discussed in this article: music (Weber, 1995 [1956]). According to Weber, rationalization is marked by two dynamics: internal and external. Internally, there is homogeneity and levelling: rationalization struggles to create a "flat" and "indivisible" space within its perimeter. Though externally, there is heterogeneity and rupture: when relating to other processes, rationalization seeks to distinguish itself from them by reinforcing its boundaries and reassuring its typical, native and exclusive traits. Ultimately, rationalization protects its own characteristics, the ones that make it what it is and not what it is not (or what others are). So, rationalization generates differentiation, not sameness. As we can see, the differentiation dynamics of rationalization in relation to other regimes happens through retreat, not spreading; through concentration, not dispersion. In other words, to be what it is, rationalization will not project itself over other spheres and try to conquer them. On the contrary, it will remain enclosed within itself, keeping inside its walls the autochthonous elements other spheres lack and that make it what it is. So, as we intended to demonstrate, rationalization will not

generate universalization, homogeneity, and expansion, but particularity, heterogeneity, and restriction. Rationalization creates specificity, a typicality constrained by centripetal forces, not a generality liberated by centrifugal forces.

The described dynamics of rationalization is the one discussed in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber, 2007 [1904]), Weber's groundbreaking work, in which the author broaches not only the emergence of the objective distinction between work and leisure, but also deals with the constitution of the subjectivity to suit this new structure, and, finally, shows how both interlace.

Often, we come across the mistaken conclusion that the sociologist has said that the Protestant ethic "caused" the spirit of capitalism. It is unnecessary to delve into Weber's book to rectify such a statement, for the chronology of the historical facts by itself clarifies the matter: Protestantism could not have generated capitalism because it did not precede capitalism. Actually, according to Weber, the relationship between Calvinism and the modern phase of the capitalist mode of production (to which the sociologist applies the concept we focus here: rational) is not that of cause and consequence, but of "elective affinity", that is, of mutual approximation between a given subjectivity and a certain structural order, or, to mention Bourdieu (2007 [1979]), between a vision of the world and the world itself. By deliberately trying to create the ideal type of Protestant, "unwillingly", Calvinism ends up forging the archetypical capitalist soul or the individual with the adequate mentality for the rising rational phase of that production mode. As stated by the author, the disillusioned world that arose from the theory of predestination, associated with the stimulus to methodical work and ascetic frugality as a means to promote the salvation of souls, even if applied to religious purposes, conjured up not only the sole, dispassionate, conscience, but also the call to rational and disciplined action regarding work and spending, aiming at enrichment. Such volitions are nothing but the ingredients of the "iron cage" (Weber, 2007 [1904]) in which lives the capitalist ideal type.

Still in German sociology, the binomial work/leisure is also an object of Adorno's studies (2008 [1974]). Adopting his own negative dialectics, the author claims that this supposed distinction is, in fact, a nondifferentiation, since the separation between work and leisure submits the latter to the logic of the former, reducing idleness to a mere preparative whose main purpose is returning us to the job.

Switching from Germany to France, we find the subject in Marcel Mauss' essay about the gift (2017 [1925]). Analyzing the object exchange ceremonies in different cultures – Kula among them, widely discussed by Malinowski (2016 [1922]) – Mauss points out that the exchanges dismiss the utilitarian calculations of commercial trades and are fit for ceremonial and symbolic purposes. The Potlatch type ceremonies are emphasized because, in general, the loser is the one who gains the most: in a given exchange of artifacts, the less interested in earning or acquiring material benefits is distinguished as morally superior to the opponents.

Utilitarianism and disinterest as insignia of social and symbolic distinction is a central problem in Pierre Bourdieu's sociology (2007 [1979]). To the author, while the heirs of the Calvinist ethics analyzed by Weber (2007 [1904]) are proud of their methodical asceticism, others have transformed hedonism, waste, idleness, and indifference for the mundane dynamics in emblems of aesthetical and ethical superiority. Here, Bourdieu continues Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1987 [1899]), in which these questions had already been introduced.

It is especially interesting to this article that Bourdieu (1996) has shown how the cultural field adheres to this logic (illogical for those who do not share it) of disinterest. According to the author, the cultural field is an "upside down world" ruled by a kind of "anti-economy", that is, instead of adopting the principles that organize the quotidian life (pragmatism, functionalism, finalism, profit maximization and loss reduction), art stigmatizes these values and fosters their nemeses (gratuity, uselessness, waste, madness). To the sociologist, it so happens because the art field is in search for autonomy and, as such, it needs to nurture its own capital and expel the capital of other fields. By revering traits the common sense rejects and repelling characteristics the "real world" praises, the art field tries to establish its own autonomous field, with its own capital and rules, different from those of the other fields, notably, the economic field. If economy celebrates the accumulation resulting from rational calculation and condemns the expenditure derived from improvidence, art operates the other way around, awarding irresponsibility and ridiculing the ascetic prudence. In fact, it is not as if economy is sane and art, senile; they both are guided by reason, but each one has its own reason, which is the other's unreason (Bourdieu, 1996 [1992]).

I intend to dialogue with those theories when discussing work and leisure with a musical collective in Fortaleza.

## THE ADIABATIC CIRCUIT

The seed of the *Coletivo Lado B* (B-Side Collective) is the *Rock Sim, Ele Não* (Yes to Rock, Not Him) music festival that took place on October 27th of 2018, in protest against the far-right presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro. Thirteen bands and solo musicians performed at the event: Berg Menezes, Caike Falcão, Cid, Indigo Mood, Jangada Pirata, Lemori, Mad Monkees, Musavenal, Ouse, Pulso de Marte, Rematte, Void Tripper and Zéis. *Rock Sim, Ele Não* (RSEN) was entirely organized by the artists themselves, with no external funding or sponsorship: while someone was playing, the others were backstage, taking care of the ongoing show. After each

performance, the musician would take over a task behind the curtains and someone else would step on the stage. And all they did was hire an electric generator and play at the public promenade of *Praia de Iracema* (Iracema Beach), the most famous picture-postcard place in Fortaleza.

In the afterglow of RSEN's great success, the musicians who organized the event decided to keep setting up festivals in that same pattern. And, so, *Coletivo Lado B* was born. Thus, we can say that the collective turned perennial and systematic the union and the action that at first seemed ephemeral and specific.

From a practical point of view, *Coletivo Lado B* can be defined as a net or cooperative of musicians, similar to a "band of bands" who gathered to unify their demands, to increase their presence and visibility to the audience and the public sector, and, mainly, to become self-sustaining. Actually, the net or cooperative work that defines *Coletivo Lado B* operates as following: the collective organizes periodical festivals and each member takes on a necessary task to set up that particular event. At every new festival the musicians are responsible for different roles from the position they had in the previous event. So, they take turns in a rotating schedule and the cycle restarts when each individual has experienced every single task it takes to set up the concerts. For instance, hypothetically, at a given festival Berg Menezes plays, Caike takes care of the soundboard, Zéis does the lighting, and Pulso de Marte applauds from the audience. On the next event, Pulso will perform, Berg will do the audio mixing, Caike will take over the lighting, Zéis will join the public, and so on.

For operating in this closed system or adiabatic circuit, *Coletivo Lado B* does achieve a relative self-sufficiency, due to the fact that the group needs only its own members to organize the festivals, without any external help or support. According to this pattern, the participants are, alternately, professional colleagues, rivals, clients, bosses, employees or even the audience, in a reciprocal way (Bourdieu, 1996 [1992]).

It is relevant to emphasize that what I call "the collective's adiabatic circuit" encompasses not only the active work of organizing a festival (playing, taking care of lighting and soundboards, logistics concerning catering and transportation, and all the bureaucratic red tape), but also the passive role that is the very essence of a concert, one the show cannot happen without: the audience that attends the festivals. So, besides taking turns accomplishing the productive tasks required to set up the festivals, the musicians alternately join their colleagues' audience as well. So, by completing the chain that starts on stage, goes through all backstage chores, and finishes in the audience, the collective members intend to work in a fully independent way.

The adiabatic circuit, a system that is closed in itself in order to achieve self-sufficiency, was not created by *Lado B*. In fact, it is a rather traditional artistic strategy. In the music field, it appears more explicitly in the American (Azerrad, 2018 [2001]) and British (Hesmondhalgh, 1997; King, 2017 [2012]; Ogg, 2016 [2009]; Reynolds, 2019 [2005]; Strachan, 2017; Worley, 2017) post-punk scenes, more precisely from 1978 to the mid 1980s. During this period, artists, regional scale labels (managed either by the musicians themselves or by daring entrepreneurs who, allegedly, were more strongly committed to ethical and esthetical rather than financial values) and small distributors tried to articulate a net to operate in parallel to the mainstream music industry, an extremely lucrative, exclusionary business, and also an oligopolistic market controlled by big record labels, the so-called "majors" (Hesmondhalgh, 2019).

Shifting the view from music to other artistic fields, the specialized literature registers far more ancient occurrences of such tactics of creating an enclosed whole whose parts alternately perform the necessary functions to maintain its existence, regardless of any external support. Sticking to the Bourdieusian sociology, there we find the adiabatic circuit in the so-called "society of artists" that marked the French literary field in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Bourdieu, 1996 [1992]).

But the society of artists is not only the laboratory where this very particular 'art of living', which is the artist's life style, the fundamental dimension of the artistic creation enterprise, is invented. One of its main purposes, yet always ignored, is being to itself its own market. It offers to the audacities and transgressions writers and artists introduce not only in their work, but also in their existence, conceived too as work of art, the most favorable and understanding welcome (Bourdieu, 1996 [1992], p. 75).

Though theoretically it seemed to be a good idea, *Lado B*'s adiabatic circuit faced some hardships when practically applied.

### **The Adiabatic (Short) Circuit**

The first *Lado B* Festival happened on December 15<sup>th</sup> of 2018. From this day, every month, a new edition of the concert took place. All was done as it had been in RSEN, the milestone of the entire undertaking. All but one important detail: while the concert against Bolsonaro had happened at a public urban promenade, the *Lado B* Festivals were hosted by Centro Cultural Belchior (CCBel), the aforementioned cultural facility owned by the local government, located very close to the site where RSEN had occurred.

Since the first edition at the premises of CCBel, bands and artists who had not participated in the RSEN concert were able to perform at the *Lado B* Festivals. Given such expansion it is fair to ask: which and how many musicians

belong to the *Lado B* collective? Though apparently simple, this question arouses a heated debate. Before providing an answer, it is important to learn what an artist should do to be considered a *Lado B* member. Or even before that: what does it mean, to “belong” to *Lado B*? In interviews with different musicians who performed at the *Lado B* Festivals, I asked if and why they regarded themselves as full members of the group. The answers were widely different: there are as many musicians who openly associate with the collective as there are artists who feel they do not belong in the team. In both cases, the definition of what it means to be or not to be a part of the collective was based on the same criteria: in or out of *Lado B*'s boundaries, all musicians agree that belonging to the collective means abiding by the adiabatic circuit system applied to the festivals. Therefore, those who go through the entire chain of functions are the actual members of the team, while those who just play in the concerts and do not return to support their colleagues' performances in the following editions are not. This definition of collective is generally accepted: those who take turns in assuming the multiple tasks in the chain see themselves as members of the collective and question the actual belongingness of others, that come by, occasionally, just to play. The latter, on the other hand, humbly admit their affiliation with the team is rather questionable for the same reason and acknowledge that the ones that go through the whole adiabatic system are the legitimate warriors of the group.

Despite the fact that many musicians admit, with no embarrassment, that they approach *Lado B* with the sole interest in just playing, ignoring the work behind the curtains, such attitude is strongly criticized by those who participate in all tasks. In other words, the ones who obey the adiabatic circuit resent the others who don't.

Vitor, from the band Canil, goes as far as creating a difference between “hard core of the collective”, to which he supposedly belonged, composed by the artists that are strongly committed to the project and respect the adiabatic circuit, and the “outskirts” for the others, to whom the whole idea of *Lado B* does not make very much sense.

According to Vitor's concepts, to the hardcore, the one thing that impairs the collective's viability is the satellites' lack of commitment to the adiabatic circuit; to the satellites, it is the hard core's demands for submission to an exhausting work regime that implodes the group. Paradoxically, the primacy of the union is, by itself, the factor that generates disunion. But, after all, who is right? In elaborate terms: is *Lado B* commitment or entertainment? Work or pleasure? Business or leisure?

## LEISURE AND BUSINESS

Considering the discussion mentioned above, we may summarize the debate in the following conclusion: the inner circle of *Coletivo Lado B* is composed by the musicians who respect the adiabatic circuit, that is, who perform on their own concerts and work backstage for their colleagues' performances. They reaffirm the collective's existence and limits and are acknowledged by themselves and all others as the legitimate members of *Lado B*. The outer circle of the collective is formed by the artists that do not go by the adiabatic circuit: they just deliver their own performance and do not work backstage for the other musicians' concerts. Those of the outer circle do not have a clear understanding about the collective's boundaries and do not see themselves as part of the team. But why do some abide by the rules of the adiabatic circuit and others do not?

On the contrary of what a quick look would suggest, followers and traitors of the adiabatic circuit are equally interested in music. Both groups regard this form of expression as the most important dimension of their lives, but they show this devotion in different ways: those who go by the rules of the closed system, as well as those who do not, are all driven by the love for music. The difference between the two ways this shared love is displayed is based on how each member relates to their music career and day job. Let's go back to this.

Not one member of *Lado B* makes a living out of music. Actually, the truth is quite the opposite: they all spend on their art more than they earn from it, so they need a job to provide for their lives and for their music careers. The way each musician relates the lucrative job to the unprofitable onstage work is a major determinant of the participant's engagement to the adiabatic circuit.

To both kinds of profile of those affiliated with *Lado B*, money and pleasure have always been divorced: music gives satisfaction, but does not put food on the table; work fills the stomach, but empties the spirit. This is true not only for those who adhere to the adiabatic circuit, but also for those who do not. The difference resides in how each one deals with the loose ends: the first group brings them together, the latter draws them apart. For those who go by the circuit, music is a synonym and a substitute for work, it replaces work: it is business. For those who disobey the collective dynamics, music is the opposite, the alternative to work, it is beyond work: it is leisure.

For the practitioners of the work chain, the ease of the rebels toward the music career disrupts the labor discipline they want to impose on *Lado B*. For those who dislike the task carrousel, the bureaucratic strictness (Weber, 1968 [1946]) it brings to art drains all the joy of the great entertainment and fun *Lado B* represents to them.

Looking at this dispute through the lens of the Weberian sociology, we can state that the efforts of the adiabatic circuit defenders in order to take *Lado B* as a profession is an attempt to give music a mundane feature, strip off the charm, and, ultimately, rationalize music (Weber 2007 [1904]): art is an awakening, it is life itself. On the other

hand, those who disagree with the system and turn the collective into their narcotic intend to keep the exceptional and extraordinary character of music. So, they feel the need to protect it from the rationalism of the first group, from the blade that levels and flattens work and pleasure, better yet, that makes the former colonize the latter: art is a dream. It is the opposite of life.

It is fair to say that the first trend functions in the same way as the Los Angeles Times astrology column, that, according to Adorno (2008 [1974]) tries to impose the rational and utilitarian logics of labor on the free and disinterested realm of pleasure.

The words said by Carlos, from Musavenal, Juliana, from Ouse, and Álvaro, from Rematte, represent the second movement very well. Musavenal's lead vocalist stated that music makes him forget about the world and his job at a car dealer; Juliana defined her band as her weekend "escape valve"; finally, Rematte's drum player describes his feelings when he is performing as "in rapture" and "able to exorcize his demons".

It's complicated. Actually, not really. It's a serene feeling: I love music, dude! I love, I love music! I think it affects some hormone in your body, you know? To me, man, music is entangled with me in a way I can't explain. What it does to me is like the same as oxytocin does to the body, get it? I can't even speak, but, to me, now, I get really happy with music...really very happy. Sometimes, when I'm with music, I forget about the world. I don't even remember I have another job [laughing a lot]. But I take it very seriously". (Carlos Lopes)<sup>1</sup>

"I always say: I don't wanna be famous, rich, like many people out there who think they're gonna be a great hit. No! It's hard to make money with music. I don't make a living out of music, I make a living for music. The money I make on my day job, I invest in my music career. To me, Ouse is my escape valve, it's my weekend. Sometimes I come across bad news, something that makes me feel bad, and the band is my communication device, you understand?" (Juliana Costa)<sup>2</sup>

"Every job is stressful. I'm always stressed with the band, chasing things. But it's a good stress, that doesn't compare with the one from a regular job, you know? I don't know if you play, but being on the stage is...there is no feeling close to it, there is no better place, dude. It could be just for a drunk bum, enjoying from under the stage, but it's really something else: it's where I'm able to exorcize my demons, get rid of anger, and bring me positive energy. It's not a 100% altruistic feeling. It's just a feeling of mine. (Álvaro Abreu)<sup>3</sup>

But, either as profession, reason, and ways of acting within the world (Weber, 2007 [1904]), or as entertainment, madness, and ways of escaping from the world, music is central to each of the two perspectives. As I said: the same feeling, two different ways of showing it.

Berg and Cid are two paradigmatic examples of each tendency. Lindberg Bezerra de Menezes, known as Berg, age 38, majored in Music at the Universidade Federal do Ceará (Federal University of Ceará), is a certified technician in Music from the Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica (Federal Centre for Technological Education), and left the Universidade Estadual do Ceará (State University of Ceará), where he studied History, before completing the course. Besides his academic education, Berg is a tenured civil servant at the State District Attorney's Office. His stable job as civil servant allows Berg to provide for himself and for his music career. Cid Saboia de Carvalho Filho, Cid, age 47, holds a Bachelor of Laws degree, but for over 10 years worked at Cidade, a local TV station affiliated with Record, a nationwide television network. At Cidade, Cid assumed several different positions and carried out many tasks in the audio department, from technical activities to creating jingles. However, his main income derives neither from the TV station, where he has not worked for years, nor from music, in which he actually spends his money. His earnings come from the rent of a real estate property he owns. While Berg's youth, in his own words, is divided in two periods: one of "fat years", and the other of "lean years", when his father lost his job, Cid was raised in an environment intersected by different kinds of capital (Bourdieu, 2007), though the coups in Brazil have left deep scars on his family. His grandfather, Jader Carvalho, was an important left-wing politician and intellectual. He was named Prince of Poets in the state of Ceará and was a member of the Literary Academy of Ceará. Jader was a lawyer, founded controversial newspapers, gave lectures, published fiction works and was incarcerated in two dictatorships: first, by Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo*, for disseminating the ideas of the Brazilian Communist Party, and later by the military dictatorship, until his release, in 1979, due to the general amnesty law. Cid senior, Jader's son and Cid's father, was also an intellectual and politician. He became a senator once the military dictatorship was over and the Congress installed the constituent assembly to write a new constitution for the country. Senator Cid was one of the authors of the current post-dictatorship Constitution,

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<sup>1</sup> Carlos' words were transcribed from the interview made on 17/04/2021

<sup>2</sup> Juliana's words were transcribed from the interview made on 17/08/2020

<sup>3</sup> Álvaro's words were transcribed from the interview made on 15/04/2021

enacted in 1988. Due to his father's term as senator, Cid Filho moved to Brasilia in 1986, when the rock scene was taking off in town. In the Brazilian capital, the Carvalhos' apartment was close to the epicenter of that musical effervescence, the Beirute Bar, where young Cid was in close touch with musicians that would soon become great Brazilian music stars. As Cid himself acknowledges, it was due to his father's influence, spotless reputation as a radio broadcaster, lawyer, writer, and politician, already preceded by that of his grandfather, old Jader, that he got his job at Cidade TV station. Not surprisingly, the artist refers to this big communication conglomerate as an "almost familiar business".

I worked there for about 10, 12 years and I quit when I went to São Paulo. But I worked there because it was an... almost familiar company, you know? It belongs to a very close friend of my father's, so I'd always quit and go back, 'till there came a time when I said 'shame on me' and left for good. (Cid)<sup>4</sup>

Even not mentioning each other, it is obvious that Berg and Cid are antipodal: their opinions are clearly and radically opposed. The statements below illustrate the divergence between the two conceptions: While Cid repeats his dislike for discussions that are necessary to keep the adiabatic circuit, Berg underlines that it is the commitment to professionalism that keeps the bands together, not aesthetical affinities. In fact, though under the comprehensive aegis of rock, the bands have significant differences in style. One funny detail synthesizes this immiscibility: while Berg confesses his resistance in working with mad people, Cid calmly admits his own madness.

This festival thing got started, didn't it, dude? And the, there was this, this...this rotating band schedule! Then it got too messy: there were too many bands! Then you'd have to keep always feeding the *Whatsapp* group, talking, then it's too many things and I get a little lost in the group, among things to do, so I ended up moving away a little. A crazy thing of my own, actually. (Cid)

If the movement may not be about musical unity, it should be about a similar idea, will, and intention. The union is not for style, it is for something else. For instance: I deeply respect anyone, with whatever vision of the world, willing to experience or do anything, but I have a hard time working routinely with very fucking crazy people, regardless of all due respect. So, in the collective, we don't have anyone with such a profile. They are all people I can work with, without making an appointment with the guy and then the guy just vanishing, or setting up a concert and, at the scheduled time, the guy passes out because he's too crazy, understand? So, everyone can do whatever they want with their lives, but I think people who are in the collective, the bands that are in the collective should be people of a kind of profile who see music in a certain way, professionally. So, what they do in their private lives is their private lives, but we have a strong commitment on schedule, putting things together, making things work fine, avoiding problems along the process...In a way, it makes me think: 'ok, it'll be alright'. At least to me, this is important. I think the bands in the collective share the same vision. (Berg Menezes)<sup>5</sup>

At another moment, Berg looks surprised by the fact that he, who works in and out of the music scene, seems to be more committed to the stages than those who are exclusively dedicated to music (there is no such case in *Lado B*, we must remember). However, now we notice, nothing is contradictory here: his mood toward music results from his routine as a civil servant, for that which is called "stimulus" is nothing but applying to the music field the rational logic of bureaucracy (Weber, 1968 [1946]) or of the bureaucratic capital (Bourdieu, 2007 [1904]).

Despite all this time working as a civil servant and a musician, I always expected a lot more from music than from the civil service, that pays my bills, but is very boring. But I feel that people who work just with music seem to be less stimulated than me! (Berg Menezes)

Exactly because the day job "pays the bills", but is "very boring", Cid needs music, that "doesn't pay the bills", to be enjoyable, at least. The job brings money, but not happiness, so since music brings no profits, there has to be pleasure. Otherwise, what is it worth? While Berg intends to turn music into a second shift of his work, Cid embraces art to flee the office. If, as the Italian poet says, "*lavorare stanca*" (Pavese, 2022), may poetry soothe us.

I'm a Bachelor of Laws, my father is a lawyer, my brother is a lawyer, my other brother is a lawyer, my brother's son is a lawyer...I thought 'No, dude. This is everything I don't want', I got out. I think that if I were right now in a suit, having to solve someone else's problems, I'd be very pissed, get it? I'd rather be making my music...art is very cool! I like it a lot: I wake up and go to sleep just thinking about it. Perhaps if I were right now in a law firm, I'd be just thinking about playing a guitar. In this case, I

<sup>4</sup> Cid's words were transcribed from the interview made on 14/07/2020

<sup>5</sup> Berg's words were transcribed from the interview made on 07/07/2020

wouldn't be there or here. At least, here, making music, right now, I am where I am. I'm doing what I'm thinking of. (Cid)

This antagonism is also illustrated by the already mentioned statements from Carlos, Juliana and Álvaro on one side, and Berg's words, on the other. In tune with Cid, Carlos talks about forgetting the job, Juliana refers to the band as the "weekend escape valve" and Álvaro thinks of the concerts as a sort of "rapture" that exorcizes his demons. Berg, on the contrary, believes there is something "educational" about the collective and that the musicians are "understanding the logic of a field of work" and "learning how to become a music professional".

Following about the idea of art as an "upside-down world" compared to "real life" (or, more specifically, economic life) (Bourdieu, 1996 [1992]), Susan Sontag (2009 [1961], 2009b [1961]) stated that we do not value an artist by his/her work or by its content, but for the intensity, radicality and madness of the creator as he gives in to his creation, whatever it may be. Regardless of what the artist objectively did, what matters is that he/she has done it intensely, with some dose of "unhealthiness" (Sontag, 2009 [1961])

It is hard to read the analyses by Bourdieu, Veblen, Mauss and Sontag and not remember Cid and the others who also see music as the "upside-down world" (Bourdieu, 1996 [1992]), for which they have feelings that, even to themselves, are unspeakable and inexplicable, almost pathological (Sontag, 2009 [1961]). As Cid said, wrapping up: "the artist has to be different".

Dude, it's like... the artist, dude, is a different being. If were to put it on paper, I wouldn't be an artist, I wouldn't be a musician. I'd be selling tires, coconut, 'cause all of that would give more money. The other day, I was talking with Daniel Groove [a musician from Fortaleza] and he said: 'we don't make music 'cause we're forced to. We are not forced. We do it 'cause we want to. If it weren't music, we'd be painting or making pottery!' That's what an artist is, dude. An artist is independent, lives from his art despite the rest, however hard, the artist insists. Everything in life has its hardship...and its pleasure. But it's hard to see a sad artist, isn't it? The guy is living, doing what he likes, so it's great: he's happy. If you put everything on paper 'I wanna have children, I wanna etc', you won't be a musician, or you'll suffer. Better be something else. Musicians, artists in general, need to have a bit of this detachment (Cid)

Thus, if it is true that the rational discipline of the adiabatic circuit followers is an evidence of their love for music, so is the anarchic irresponsibility of those who ignore that system. They are all subjects of music, not only the ones who make it their business, but also those who make it their leisure.

At this point it is fair to ask: would the artist's individual social and economic situation determine the choice for either respecting the adiabatic circuit and considering *Lado B* a business, or disrespecting the adiabatic circuit and regarding the collective as leisure? As widely known, how we relate to money is directly dependent on how much money we have (Bourdieu, 2007 [1979]), or how summed up in Philip Larkin's (2004 [2001]) poem, "Clearly money has something to do with life".

To understand this issue, it's necessary to compare the variable respect/disrespect for the adiabatic circuit to the members' social and financial position.

### The Many Sides of the B Side

Among the musicians who have played at a *Lado B* Festival, Berg and Cid belong to a more protected socioeconomic layer. Though sharing the same privileged condition, only the first respects the adiabatic circuit and recognize himself as pertaining to *Lado B*'s hardcore, while the other just presents his performance and does not feel as effective member of the group.

The same divergence between the "faithful" and "disloyal" participants that occurs among the more affluent members of *Lado B* happens among the financially vulnerable artists of the team, as well.

Despite their kinship in *Lado B* regarding to their socioeconomic stratum, Nathália and Letícia, from Pulso de Marte, and Itálo, from Aborígenes Viajantes, are on opposite sides concerning their commitment to the collective: the formers, like Berg, follow the circuit strictly, making music as a business, while the latter embraces his music career like leisure, in the same pattern as Cid. **Chart 1** clarifies the relations between the two variables: socioeconomic protection degree and respect for the adiabatic circuit.

It is not odd to find the two patterns of commitment in both socioeconomic layers of the collective, because either financial security or insecurity provides good reasons to accept or deny the adiabatic circuit: it all depends on how the artist connects these dots.

On the one hand, a source of stable income provides a rearguard that enables the artist to place his music as a job itself, reducing the profitable activity to a mere sponsor of the artistic career, considered, in this case, the real profession (1A). On the other hand, material affluence may lead the individual to conduct with discipline the job that pays the bills and keep music in a ludic and pleasant dimension that, like a hobby, should be moderately



**Chart 1.** Clarification of the relations between the two variables: socioeconomic protection degree and respect for the adiabatic circuit

	(A) INNER CIRCLE	(B) OUTER CIRCLE
(1) MORE PROTECTION	Berg	Cid
(2) LESS PROTECTION	Nathália & Letícia	Ítalo

enjoyed (1B). The trajectories of Berg and Cid respectively illustrate each of these positions: for the first, music is work, business; for the latter, it is entertainment, leisure.

It is not only socioeconomic comfort that puts the musician at a crossroads. For opposite reasons, a vulnerable financial situation may, too, place the artist at the same spot. The lack of a financial feedback from traditional activities may cause disbelief in the established ways of making a living and lead the musician to invest in his musical trajectory. The job was meant to be lucrative, though boring, while music would be pleasant, though not monetizable. However, if, besides being tedious, the conventional profession is underpaid, the musician will have two good reasons to quit the job and pursue his artistic dream: money and pleasure, or business and leisure.

If money is the case, in the face of financial restraints, music may provide the social and economic rise that more stable jobs did not. The frustration with the scarce earnings from the conservative path may lead to considering the stages not only spiritually interesting but also quite compelling from a pragmatic and economic point of view. Thus, changing the office for a music career becomes a very reasonable professional and financial choice. Starting from a different position, one may reach the same conclusion as Berg: music is business, fulfills the functions and takes the place of a job (2A). If pleasure is the issue, prioritizing music when compared to the quotidian struggle also seems logical: if money is insufficient despite the lousy job and the exciting concerts, then let's go for the music, for, at least, it makes us smile. In other words, if we're set to be poor, let's at least be happy. Again, coming from a different place one may arrive at the same destination as Cid: music is leisure, it is Carlos' amnesia, it is Juliana's escape valve, and it is Álvaro's rapture, it denies and it is out of the world of work (2B). Conclusively, the lack of money and pleasure in the day job will lead the individual to seek one or the other in the music career.

If at the top of Lado B's socioeconomic pyramid, Berg represents business and Cid embodies leisure, in more vulnerable strata of the collective, Pulso de Marte is the one who repeats Berg's stoicism, while Ítalo faithfully reproduces Cid's hedonism. As we did with Berg and Cid, let us focus on the other characters with a magnifying glass.

Nathália Fernandes Rebouças, age 30, quit college before finishing the Environmental Sciences course. The artist worked in a bureaucratic job at a union. During the pandemic, she lost her job but found another, an even more precarious one: a company that manufactured uniforms for hospital workers won a public bid issued by the local government to supply specialized clothing to doctors and nurses who worked in the city hospitals. Given the unexpected rise in demand brought about by the Covid pandemic, the company needed to increase its workforce. However, instead of formally hiring more employees, the company decided to outsource and hire autonomous professionals, paying lower salaries and legal benefits. Nathália and her girlfriend, Letícia, had to accept the unfavorable conditions and, using their own sewing machines, they began manufacturing the uniforms from home, in the peripheral Dom Lustosa neighborhood. Letícia de Sousa Monteiro, age 27, also quit college and left an unfinished Psychology course. Letícia's parents and part of the family work in the textile business; they are not great entrepreneurs, but tailors and dressmakers, working in their own sewing machines in an almost artisanal regime. In the face of Nathália's dismissal, the couple decided to borrow the Sousa Monteiros' sewing machines to make it through the storm.

With no college degree, formal job, or any perspective of changing their lives through traditional ways, Nathália and Letícia started considering that, perhaps, Pulso de Marte could be their best opportunity. So, viewing the band as a passport to better days, the duo reduced their other activities to mere palliative emergencies, undeserving of further attention, and turned to their music career with all the discipline and diligence a profession requires.

We quit/dropped out of college, due to this music issue. It wasn't making very much sense at the time. And then we quit. I'm not sure I'll go back (Nathália Rebouças)<sup>6</sup>

The use of the phrase "make sense" is very significant. By saying that "it makes sense" to exchange college for music, Nathália is affirming that renouncing a traditional route in favor of an artistic career is not an inconsequent attitude of those who embrace ephemeral pleasures instead of professional stability, but a logical, rational, pragmatic, conscious, cold, and calculated decision, with the intent to acquire greater socioeconomic comfort (Weber, 2007 [1904]).

<sup>6</sup> Letícia's and Nathália's words were transcribed from the interview made on 07/07/2020

Their dedication to the adiabatic circuit comes from this conscious choice. By making *Lado B* their actual A-Side, the duo became highly admired by their counterpart in the upper socioeconomic layer of the collective, Berg Menezes.

The girls from Pulso de Marte are super dedicated, super organized. Letícia, for instance, is one of people I share my ideas with the most, here at the collective. She comes up to me and says 'Berg, it's not working, let's do different'. That is, we have a dimension we're learning how to become a professional in music and, for that, we need to do everything. Maybe this has reduced the number of bands in the collective. Today [to Berg] there are 9. Because people started saying 'oh, but I just wanted to play'. Then I say 'no, man, it's not like that, it's not just playing. There is a lot of things, there is release to do, there is a nice picture to take, we have to advertise on the papers'. Every now and then, there is a good article, some good stuff, and people say 'oh! The collective got all the space', that's how it goes, dude, we spend months organizing everything, trying to make this thing happen. (Berg Menezes)

Nathália makes it clear that the feeling is reciprocal and goes beyond: ratifying the argument of this text, the guitar player states that the view they share with Berg, in which music is business, reduces the socioeconomic gap and the spatial distance that separates them. If the bank account, the zip code, and the biography keep Berg apart from Pulso de Marte, the professionalism they both apply to their music careers builds a bridge over this social moat, bringing these individuals together.

I think we're getting even closer. Look, just think, if it weren't for this (the union, the collectives), I keep thinking, when would I ever meet Berg? Like, Berg is a wonderful person that I admire a lot, I like him a lot. He lives there... I don't know exactly, but he lives somewhere in Aldeota, Meireles, in the noble area. I'm here at the border of Fortaleza, close to Autran Nunes... and, I don't know, sometime ago, to me, this contact would be impossible. Although, we've made all efforts to be "recognized" [drawing quotation marks in the air with her fingers] in the noble part of town. Of course I have other friends here, from the periphery, that go to those other places (Praia de Iracema, etc), but it's a recent thing. Because some time ago, the gang from the periphery would just play at the periphery. Who was from Autran Nunes would play in Bom Jardim [a peripheral neighborhood], in Joao XXIII [also distant from central urban areas], anyway, other neighborhoods. But now, in case anyone organizes an important festival and asks 'do you have any bands to recommend, Berg?' No doubt, he'll recommend us. (Nathália Rebouças)

Considering the band the main professional activity and a potential source of income has proven to have been a good choice for Pulso de Marte. In 2016, Nathália and Letícia applied for the Festival de Música da Juventude (Youth Music Festival), a competitive event organized by Fortaleza's local government, but they did not go far in the competition. One year later, they applied again for the competition and, in Nathália's words, they decided to "try harder". And the results came in: Pulso de Marte won the 2017 festival and took home a 10 thousand reais reward, an amount of money they had never earned in their day jobs. So, as the traditionally obvious ways melt down, prioritizing the music career may be a very logic decision or, as Nathália said, a choice that "makes sense."

If the Protestant Ethics (Weber, 2007 [1904]) applied to music catapulted Pulso de Marte from Dom Lustosa to the affluent part of the Fortaleza, the tide that dragged Ítalo from Caucaia to Praia de Iracema was sex and nightlife.

Ítalo is 28 years old, and he is a tax analyst at an accounting firm where he works, in the area he majored from college. Dissatisfied with the cultural scene in Caucaia, a peripheral city of Fortaleza metropolitan region, the young man sought fresh air in Fortaleza's nightlife and engaged in Praia de Iracema's LGBT circuit. The only problem was distance! To find pleasure in Fortaleza, Ítalo had to drive to and from along the highway where the region's native people, the Tapeba, sold their crafts to make a living. Inspired by the indigenous people whose company he shared in his swinging migration movement, he named his band: *Aborígenes Viajantes* (Travelers Aborigines).

In the band, Ítalo took his epicurean commute as his muse. When the first lyrics were composed, the theme could not be different: the trips to and from between Caucaia and the nightlife of Praia de Iracema. According to what he confessed to me, *Uma Janela para Segunda* (A window to Monday), the band's first EP, is about a typical weekend of a young man split between the tiresome routine of an accounting office and the freedom brought by the ocean's salty water.

The order of the songs tells the narrative of a weekend in the character's life: *Edgar* brings joy to Friday, *Plebeu* is Saturday's nightlife, *Castelo Branco* arrives with Sunday's travelling vibe, and *Devaneios* ends with

the monotony and reflection of Monday, about that love, about the affair that happened during the weekend. The name of the EP was meant to tie the construction of the song sequence. (Ítalo Oliveira)<sup>7</sup>

*Uma Janela para Segunda* was released in 2018 but even before that Ítalo had created other songs about the evasive and escapist potential of Fortaleza's nightlife: *Mambembe*, single from 2018, was named after the nightclub Ítalo used to frequent, Tom Zé, from 2017, envisioned the theme of the window that opens to beyond the workplace, disclosing a horizon of redeeming promises. The EP cover shows the view Ítalo had from his work desk: two huge coconut trees, with palms blowing in the wind, outlined against a blue sky, very far from the office the young man was stuck to.

Fortaleza has deeply influenced my lyrics: that feeling of beach, of nighttime, meeting at bars, you know? That nightlife thing, that weekend you think of days on end. These experiences we have in Fortaleza by night are what inspire me the most. The prime example is *Mambembe*. I think it's interesting when the lyrics have some sexual connotation, but not so sexual, I mean, you understand? When the composer manages to tell that kind of intimate story, but in an abstract way, that can involve other people. Fortaleza inspires me a lot in that way. For instance, *Devaneios* is about a person I met through Grindr [a dating app that targets the gay community]. He lived in Cambeba [a neighborhood in Fortaleza] and I lived in Caucaia, and we talked...and I felt that platonic passion for him...so, when I started composing for the band, Fortaleza influenced me a lot regarding this issue of finding myself a gay man, this nightlife thing, how I started to understand my approach to Fortaleza's LGBT scene: Places like Mambembe, Praia de Iracema itself... These were the experiences I had from that time. All of this kept reverberating in the songs I wrote at the time. (Ítalo Oliveira)

Back to our argument, when Ítalo joined the band collective that would operate at the premises of a cultural facility located at Praia de Iracema, he would never take on the mission with an eye of a businessman, like Berg and Pulso de Marte, but with Cid's eagerness for life. The beach was not his factory, but his Wonderland, his Shangri-La, ultimately, his oneiric hideaway to where he fled on weekends, not to make business, but, on the contrary, to escape from that.

I don't belong to the collective. We really just played, so, we don't belong. Dude, *Lado B* was an invitation: It was like an invitation to be part of the concert, rather than to join the collective. My bond to the collectives is this: they invite me to play and I just do it. I don't work backstage. The links we have is just about the artistic part, really. Regarding management, we were never involved with any collective. (Ítalo Oliveira)

In this case, music is not the entrance door to the job market, but a window that opens way out of it, towards ecstasy.

## CONCLUSION

In a post-apocalyptic world, facing the lack of water, food, and fuel, mobs of remaining human beings live in a state of civil war. Amid the generalized barbarity, even before starting the battle for resources to fulfill basic needs, the survivors struggle to *style* themselves, to be distinguished from each other and from the oppressive environment that reduces them to the same miserable crowd. Clothes, fetishes, accessories, and adornments are improvised from the trash and waste left by a long-gone civilization. After creating a signature and recovering an identity through aesthetics, the individual, finally feeling as such, is ready to join the war for the means of subsistence.

Mad Max is not exactly *about* this, but this was the element of the film I had in mind while writing this article.

At home, at school, and in miraculous guidebooks on managing our own finances, we have all learned the hardly ever-obeyed moralist sermon that preaches: "first", we have to "guarantee" the "essential"; only then, "afterward", and even so, only if there happens to be some "spare" money, we can "spend" on the "superfluous". It is hard to refute this truism because this commandment is nothing but a tautology: of course, the primary comes first, and the secondary comes second. The questions the cliché ignores (and makes of such ignorance its main pillar) are: what is the "necessary" and the "unnecessary", the "non-disposable", and the "disposable" the "basic" and the "superficial"? Which goods or activities could contain each of these extremes? Where is the line that separates one side from the other?

Common sense tends to place under the aegis of the "fundamental" all that has a "function", a "practical application" and "usefulness", and to push to the "dispensable" pole all that regards idleness, leisure, pleasure and

<sup>7</sup> Ítalo's words were transcribed from the interview made on 11/07/2020

symbolic and spiritual life; in other words, in a comprehensive approach, all about the cultural realm. Actually, my own statement is contaminated with the preconception I intend to contest. After all, could not culture be “important”, with “function”, “application”, “usefulness”, and have an “end”, even if such a function is the lack of function, the usefulness is being useless, and the end is just an end in itself? As the Uruguayan writer says about his writing: “Because it is a useless work; for that exactly, I should do it” (Levrero, 2018 [2005], p. 536)

The belief in the supposed “irrelevance of culture”, rather than misconceived, is dangerous because it supports two directly related prejudices.

The first can be summarized in the adage that says that “poor people make poor choices,” especially about money: an insult generally targeted to low-income individuals who “dare” spend their scarce financial resources on cultural goods and services, or even on material items that are not among low-cost options. To some extent, this “argument” blames economically vulnerable people (and their consumption habits) for their own vulnerability.

The second derives from the first and implies expelling those with lower purchasing power from the cultural field, either as consumers or producers. As a consumer, the individual is ejected from the cultural field because, as the precept teaches, the “urgent” must be prioritized, and the “surplus” is kept aside for the “less important”. So, if culture is filed under the second category, and there is never spare cash, at the risk of being reckless and blamed for his own instability, one is sentenced to not consuming cultural goods and services. Regarding the producer, the outcome of the set of rules is that the “rich”, who have money already, are free to pursue their dreams, while the “poor”, who have not yet addressed the “most important” questions, should choose the most profitable job, despite liking it or not. So, participating in the cultural field is considered a divine right, a nobility title, a genetic trait, that is to say, an innate characteristic. Returning to our object, it is like ruling that Cid can be a musician, but not Ítalo.

Of all written here, this is the main conclusion I would like to point out: money (associated with values like functionalism, pragmatism, finalism, rationalism, asceticism) is an important element in our relationship with the cultural field, but not the only variable, nor the most relevant. An individual’s willingness and the right to participate in the cultural field are *not* colonized by the amount of money he possesses, nor are they directly proportional to the economic capital. Therefore, it is wrong to think or demand that a financially vulnerable person will want or should want less culture just because the “most relevant things” have not yet been acquired. Otherwise, if we believe that such “most relevant things” really exist, we should agree that culture is among them.

Parodying the final words of that which is probably the most famous manifesto in history (Marx and Engels, 2001 [1848]), we may conclude: “Workers of the world, unite! The idle, as well!”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This article was funded by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia de Portugal (FCT).

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