Rhythm Politics in a Changing Brazil: A Study of the Musical Mobilization of Voters by Bolsonaro and Haddad in the 2018 Election

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This article investigates the role of music in presidential election campaigns and political movements inspired by theoretical arguments in Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis,* John Dewey´s pragmatist rethinking of aesthetics and existing scholarship on the politics of music. Specifically, it explores how musical rhythms and melodies enable new forms of political awareness, participation, and critique in an increasingly polarized Brazil through an ethnomusicological exploration of how left-wing and right-wing movements used music to disseminate politics during the 2018 election that culminated in the presidency of Jair Messias Bolsonaro. Three lessons can be learned. First, in Brazil, music breathes life, energy, and affective engagement into politics—sung arguments and joyful rhythms enrich public events and street demonstrations in complex and dynamic ways. Second, music is used by right-wing and left-wing movements in unique ways. For Bolsonaro supporters and right-wing movements, jingles, produced as part of larger election campaigns, were disseminated through massive sound cars in the heart of São Paulo while demonstrators sang the national anthem and waved Brazilian flags. In contrast, leftist musical politics appears to be more spontaneous and bohemian. Third, music has the ability to both humanize and popularize *bolsonarismo* movements that threaten human rights and the rights of ethnic minorities, among others, in contemporary Brazil. To contest *bolsonarismo*, Trumpism, and other forms of extreme right-wing populism, we cannot close our ears and listen only to grooves of resistance and songs of freedom performed by leftists. We must also listen to the music of the right.

Keywords: Musicology, Ethnomusicology, Popular Music Studies, Politics of Music, Brazil, Bolsonaro, Populism

Introduction

What is the role and impact of music in presidential election campaigns and political movements? More specifically, how do musical rhythms and melodies enable new forms of political awareness, participation, and critique in an increasingly polarized Brazil? This article explores these questions through an ethnomusicological exploration of the ways in which left-

wing and right-wing movements used music to disseminate their political values both before and during the 2018 election that culminated in the presidency of Jair Messias Bolsonaro. Through a combination of different qualitative methods (including visual, textual, ethnographic, and musical analysis) applied to ethnographic data gathered in Brazil between 2016 and 2018, I show how music matters in contemporary Brazilian politics.

To provide a conceptual frame for the study, I develop the new concept of *rhythm politics*, inspired by, in turn, Henri Lefebvre's social interpretation of "rhythm" in *Rhythmanalysis* (Lefebvre, 2004), John Dewey's pragmatist rethinking of aesthetics (Dewey, 2005), and existing scholarship on the politics of music (Born, 2010; Frith, 1998; Guilbault, 2007; Hawkins 2017; Hennion, 2015; Street, 2013). The concept of *rhythm politics* allows me to conduct a rich contextual analysis of the ways in which musical rhythms and melodies activate other Lefebvrian "rhythms" (such as psychological, biological, historical and social ones) and thereby mobilize political sentiment, values, and visions through aesthetic means. My Lefebvre-inspired analysis draws attention to how different spatial and temporal dimensions interact in articulations of musical politics. This understanding of *rhythm politics* can be situated within a broader 'sensory and historical turn' in music anthropology and ethnomusicology (Erlmann, 2020; Feld and Brenneis, 2004; Finnegan, 2003, Reily 2006, Meyers 2015), which underscore the importance of integrating different forms of diachronic and synchronic analysis to show music matters socially, culturally and politically in complex ways. As such, it calls for new interdisciplinary dialogues between the musical and the social sciences. Before I delve into the implications of *rhythm politics*, however, I must supply a short description of this study's polarized Brazilian context.

Twenty-First-Century Brazil: From a Harmonious Democracy to Polarized Politics

After thirteen years of a labor party government that erased hunger and contributed to a collective class journey lifting millions of Brazilians out of poverty and into a rapidly rising middle class (Singer, 2012; Singer and Loureiro, 2017), the *lulismo* project was brought to an end with the impeachment of then President Dilma Rouseff in 2016. Massive demonstrations filled the streets of Brazil in the following months (Bøhler, 2017a p. 120-121; Neves 2016; Snyder, 2020 36-40), as both right-wing and left-wing populism came to life. Right-wing populists accused the labor party government of rampant corruption and argued that prior president Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva [hence Lula], and the labor party, had destroyed the

Brazilian economy (Solano, 2020; Solano, 2019). Left-wing populists, on the other hand, argued that the impeachment of Rouseff was a disguised parliamentary coup that threatened to return Brazil to authoritarianism and even military dictatorship (Bøhler, 2017b). Contemporary Brazil remains polarized to this day, and massive demonstrations have filled Brazilian cities since the largest protest in its history took place in São Paulo , in June, 2013 (Avritzer, 2017; Saad-Filho, 2013; Saad-Filho and Boito, 2016).

Into all of this political agitation arrived right-wing populist candidate Jair Messias Bolsonaro, who used a number of speeches and public events to talk extensively about the importance of reconstructing a lost fatherland that, according to him, had been destroyed by a corrupt labor party (Bøhler, 2018a, 2018b, Dias and Fernandes 2020). Bolsonaro sought increased governmental collaboration with the military and the privatization of the public sector in the interests of "freedom, liberty and prosperity" (Almeida, 2019; M. G. Saraiva and Silva, 2019) for the Brazilian people and aimed to fight what he called the 'communist threat' (Paludo, 2020; Ribeiro, Lasaitis, and Gurgel, 2016). In November 2018, Bolsonaro was democratically elected to be Brazil's next president. Bolsonaro´s argument was not new, and many Brazilian right-wing politicians have historically mobilized the masses through critiques of corruption by evoking a sense of Brazilian Mccarthyism that demonizes the left (Pereira 2005, Stepan 2015, Skidmore 1990, Ansell 2018). While corruption is indeed a systemic problem in Brazilian politics, there is, however, no evidence that suggests that leftist politicians are more corrupt than their right-wing counterparts (Ames 2018, Dellasoppa 2005, Power and Matthew 2011). This summary describes the broad historical and political context within which I carried out my fieldwork. Next, I will introduce my theoretical framework and the concept of *rhythm politics*, especially in relation to existing scholarship on the politics of music across the musical sciences.[i]

Rhythm Politics as a Conceptual Frame

In *Rhythmanalysis* (2004), Lefebvre introduces "rhythms" as a device through which to study how everyday life operates in modern capitalist societies via specific interactions among biological, aesthetic, and social structures. Lefebvre emphasizes these structures' interplay and develops different methods of analysis to study the feedback loops among the various rhythms that make up life (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 12–26)—that is, multiple spatial and temporal rhythms at different scales of abstraction that converge in specific contexts (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 33–53). Lefebvre compares and describes the interactions among the rhythms of, for example, a song,

a demonstration, a social movement, and a historical period in tandem with, among other things, the relevant biological and psychological rhythms as well. His arguments therefore recall those social, political, and philosophical theories that underscore the relational nature of social events, aesthetic sensations, and cultural practices across disciplinary boundaries.[ii]

In the context of the present study, Lefebvre's arguments inform in-depth research into how musical sounds and practices (that is, musical "rhythms," understood broadly) shape political subjectivities and build social communities. What I am calling *rhythm politics* involves both conscious and subconscious processes (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 44–55), the former including the ways in which people sing and drum their political visions, values, and beliefs during street protests and public events, and the latter including the ways in which political parties use jingles to mobilize voters during election campaigns. In short, Lefebvre's arguments invite us to unpack, in great detail, the modulating impact of musical practices upon people's perceptions of politics and broader social formations as he invites us to move beyond disciplinary boundaries and combine methods with different levels of synchronic and diachronic abstraction (e.g., combine musical transcriptions of melodies with ethnographic transcriptions of social events and socio-political descriptions of historical narratives).

Recent scholarship on how politics works musically evokes part of Lefebvre´s mentioned arguments by revealing the complex links between music and politics (Guilbault, 2007; Manabe, 2015; Negus, 1997; Street, 2013; Tausig, 2019).[iii] Much of this work is inspired by theories of mediation (Born 2010; Born and Barry, 2018; Hennion, 2015; Hawkins & Richardson 2017; Williams, 1983) that underscore the fluidity of musical meaning within social, cultural, and political dynamics. In one sense, this notion of musical mediation resembles Lefebvre's argument that his various "rhythms" are fluid and constantly in motion, spatially and temporally. The rhythm of a sung melody during a street protest may, for example, be linked with the broader rhythms of a political movement (e.g., associated with particular parts of right-wing and left-wing politics in Brazil), which in turn shape, and are shaped by, the broader rhythms of Brazil´s political history. More importantly, such different rhythms at the macro-level are always conditioned upon rhythmic interactions at a micro-level as biological and aesthetic rhythms feed into each other through acts of singing together while protesters partake in a musical narrative that gives life and energy to musical expressions of political critique.[iv] Instead of studying music as an isolated aesthetic object, then, the presented arguments suggest that we should look at how music matters aesthetically and politically in context (Frith, 1998; Negus, 1997; Street, 2013) and through practice (Eyerman and Jamison,

1998). Importantly, such an aesthetic approach has less to do with Kantian perceptions of disinterested experiences of the beautiful (Kant, 2008, p. 75–84) than with John Dewey's pragmatist rethinking of works of art as rich sensory experiences grounded in everyday life (2005, p. 35–58) that are capable of carving out new ways of being-in-the-world both socially and individually.[v] Such experiences range from the "fine arts" to popular culture, nature (e.g., beautiful scenery at a mountain), and everyday interactions. Dewey's pragmatist interpretation, that is, turns aesthetics into a prism for a broader cultural analysis that anticipates the ways in which Lefebvrian rhythms are aesthetically linked through practice. These arguments suggest that we should investigate how aesthetic, social and political factors interact in musical practices as grooves and melodies matter to people in complex ways.

Rhythm politics, however, also differs from the aforementioned approaches in two important ways. First, while both Lefebvre's work and much existing research on the politics of music tend to privilege subaltern critiques by uncovering manipulation and/or different forms of resistance through the arts, my approach to rhythm politics is more expansive in seeking to compare musical political dynamics across the political binaries of left and right. While I am highly critical of Bolsonaro's presidency and his multiple attacks on minorities and violations of human rights (Hunter and Power, 2019), I believe we still need to look carefully at how he mobilized voters musically in tandem with how leftist movements used music to voice their own political visions, critiques, and general participation at the time of the 2018 election.

Second, while Lefebvre wields quite broad categories and notes unabashedly that "This little book does not conceal its ambition. It proposes nothing less than to found a science, a new field of knowledge [*savoir*]: the analysis of rhythms; with practical consequences" (Lefebvre, 2004: 3), my aims for rhythm politics are more measured. In short, I take inspiration from Lefebvre´s ideas in order to carry out an ethnomusicological exploration of how musical practices give rise to new forms of political awareness, critique and participation among right-wing and left-wing movements in a Brazil marked by increased polarization. Before I apply rhythm politics to my two empirical case studies, I will first describe the methods and data sources upon which I rely here.

Methods and data for studying rhythm politics in Brazil

I arrived in Brazil to do ethnomusicological fieldwork in July 2016 and spent nine months studying how leftist movements used music to articulate their political views. I documented my engagement using field notes, video recordings, sound recordings, and interviews ranging from

"informal ethnographic conversations on the spot" (Spradley, 2016) to explore the link between music and politics in protests to longer, more systematic semi-structured interviews with a clearly defined guide (Kvale, 1996).

My engagement with cultural data as a participating observer of various dynamic social realities forced me to constantly revise my research questions and hypotheses about music and politics in Brazil (Barth, 1980, 1998). After a while, I realized that it was not sufficient to study music in exclusively leftist mobilizations; to understand the situation in Brazil, I also needed to explore how right-wing movements used music. Afterward, I decided to return to Brazil to undertake two short follow-up ethnographic studies of right-wing movements for a month at the end of 2017 and during the last two weeks of the second round of the presidential elections in 2018, respectively. Throughout this process, I worked closely with my good friend João Augusto Neves Pires, a PhD student at the University of Campinas interested in related issues; he provided great support to the work of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting my data.[vi]

The present analysis zooms in on four moments of musical-political interaction that arose during my fieldwork: (1) my participant observation of how jingles worked during the 2016 municipal elections in Campo Grande, a working-class neighborhood on the outskirts (*perifería*) of Campinas; (2) a political meeting organized by the right-wing organization Movimento Brasil Livre at the University of Campinas in November 2017 that featured a speech by the up-and-coming leader Kim Kataguiri; (3) the time when protesters sang together against the impeachment of Dilma Rouseff in the streets of Rio de Janeiro during the Olympics in 2016; and (4) the musical-political mobilization of both Bolsonaro and Haddad (the leftist candidate) supporters on Avenida Paulista in São Paulo during the second round of the 2018 election.

At all times I conducted my ethnomusicological fieldwork and documented events through video recordings, sound recordings, fieldnotes, and interviews.[vii] My Go-pro cameras, which I often placed on my head, and iPhone camera were vital to capturing videos that allowed me to revisit events systematically afterward in dialogue with my fieldnotes. My ethnographic study adhered to national guidelines related to research ethics established by the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) and Brazil's National Institute of Research Ethics. As a result, I have used pseudonyms to protect the identity of my informants. I also asked for, and obtained, informed consent from the people and communities that I researched after explaining the purpose of this study to them.

To analyze this rich ethnographic material, I combined textual interpretation and different narrative techniques (Eisenhart, 2006) with selected musical analyses of transcribed events and an in-depth study of the images I gathered during my fieldwork. These various analytical approaches allowed me to reproduce the affective force and complexity of musical-political dynamics. I will begin with my study of how music and politics converged in the leftists' critiques of the impeachment of Dilma Rouseff.

Musical Critiques of a Parliamentary Coup

According to my leftist friends, the removal of former president Dilma Rouseff in August 2016 was not legal, despite what the Western media concluded about it. For them, it was a parliamentary coup. When I asked my informant Roberto about this at a bar in São Paulo, he was defiant:

> You know, Brazilian politics is very complicated. But let me try to explain. What Dilma did was basically just moving money from one bank account of the state to another bank account of the state to pay out social welfare, or something else—I don't remember exactly what. But the point is this. Let us say that she needed to have money on the "social welfare bank account" to pay out the *bolsa familia* [cash benefits for the poor], and then, for some reason, which may be technical, bureaucratic, or economic, or whatever, there was no money left on that bank account. Then she transferred money from another bank account of the state—let's call it the "agricultural account"—over to the empty account, so that she could pay the *bolsa familia* to the poor. This act is technically illegal. However, it has been common practice in Brazilian politics for decades. It was what they called a "sleeping law" before. However, because of all the protests against Dilma since 2013 and the corruption charges against the labor party, different right-wing parties decided to use this anti-labor party sentiment [*anti-petismo*] to change government. That is what they always wanted. This year they decided to attack. But you have to understand that this was not a legal impeachment. It was a very well-organized parliamentary coup, because just after Michel Temer was inaugurated as president, the new government changed the law. So, if Temer were to do the same thing, it will be legal. There was no reason to remove Dilma in the first place. But this is Brazil. It is just like Machiavelli. (Conversation reconstructed as fieldnotes one day later, Oct. 2016, São Paulo)

As I learned more about the Brazilian situation, I realized that the 2013 protests, which brought millions of Brazilians out to the street (Saad-Filho, 2013), together with the massive corruption scandal known as "Operation Car Wash" (Hunter, 2019), had turned Brazilian politics upside down by spurring massive antipathy toward the labor party. From there, it was not much of a leap to the so-called impeachment processes.

Roberto was not the only one who interpreted the removal of Dilma as a coup. In fact, most of the people I met while doing fieldwork on musical activism among leftist groups between 2016 and 2017 echoed his take. This, in turn, led to numerous street protests and demonstrations against the non-elected president Michel Temer that usually included amateur musical performances. One performance involved five middle-aged woman whom I encountered singing the following words at the top of their voices as they walked by the metro station Gloria in Rio De Janeiro in July 2016.

Portuguese	English
Eu quero democracia não aceito golpe não	I want democracy. I don't accept the state coup!
Eu quero democracia não aceito golpe não	I want democracy. I don't accept the state coup!
Volta Dilma, volta querida, pra presidência do Brasil	Come back Dilma, come back beloved, to take back the presidency of Brazil.
Eu quero democracia não aceito golpe não	I want democracy. I don't accept the state coup!

To set their political statements, they chose the melody of the chorus from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the Ode to Joy. This chorus supplied affective force and rhythm to their words, and more and more people joined in because it was familiar and moving. It also accompanied their march down the street, as we can see from the sonic events that animated the words:

Example 1: Transcription of the women's interpretation of Beethoven.

The stepwise movement of the melody, combined with its clear major tonality and strident rhythm, allowed the extemporaneous performance to spread through the crowd with great speed and power. The more we repeated it, the more people gathered in the affective walking and singing community. Beethoven's melody was doing important political work in the streets of Rio De Janeiro almost two centuries after Beethoven passed away, demonstrating the power of music (and especially singing) for these leftist protesters.

In light of rhythm politics, this is a clear example of the interaction of rhythms in a Lefebvrian sense. First, the melody fed into both biological and affective rhythms by setting the pace for the crowd's progress down the street for around 300 meters, according to my fieldnotes, as illustrated in the blue line from Gloria to Largo da Carioca in example 1:

Example 2: The route of the walking-singing community.

Second, singing Beethoven's melody with fellow protestors made people happy, as is clear from my fieldnotes and photos from the event of people smiling and exulting while they were singing and walking together. The sentiments grew ever stronger as the biological, social, and musical rhythms interacted.

One day earlier, other musical sounds joined in the fight for democracy organized by leftist groups and different musicians and artists at Circo Voador. The *maracatu* orchestra Baque Mulher called for Temer's removal via its polyrhythmic Afro-Brazilian grooves by establishing an engaging call-and-response dialogue where people where singing "Fo-ra Temer [out with Temer]". During the same event a performance of Chico Buarque's song " Cálice" reminded protestors to reject any potential return of the military rule that had governed Brazil from 1964 to 1985.[viii] For many Brazilians, Buarque's lyrics expressed their own deeply held commitment to democracy and critique of growing military influence upon Brazilian politics. Both performances mobilized historical rhythms through musical means, evoking the parliamentary coup carried out by white males that marginalized blacks and other minorities while perpetuating Brazil's colonialism and widespread racism.

Other musics were performed at protests and events in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in the following months. In general, these performances seemed to hold together a rather fragile and quite heterogeneous Fora Temer [out with Temer] movement consisting of different leftist groups that otherwise often fought amongst themselves. When I asked Maria why she had participated in almost twenty protests in a single month, she said:

> For me, going to these protests is almost like a catharsis; I feel less stressed afterward. It gets rid of some of the burden. And also, I believe it is crucial to fight against this return to totalitarianism and all the dangers associated with the rise of right-wing politics here. And all the singing, and the rhythms, the shouts and the screams [which also had rhythm], the walking, the movements, everything—it makes it joyful in a strange way. I feel free. (Interview with "Maria", October 2016, São Paulo)

I also noticed a strange surge of energy, relief, perhaps even catharsis after participating in protests and singing political chants that came to recall those performed in football stadiums. Others clearly felt it too. Music, sounds, movement, and rhythm gave life to the protests and

brought more people into the streets in a way that transcended the exclusively musical *or* political.

"Democracy, Yes, Haddad, Yes": Leftist *Rhythm Politics* during the 2018 Elections

During the final round of the 2018 presidential elections, the carnival group Agora e Haddad organized a political protest on Avenida Paulista, São Paulo's main street. Around two hundred demonstrators came out to express their sympathy for Fernando Haddad, who was running against Bolsonaro to become Brazil's next president. The group activated a very Deweyan aesthetic matrix in the sounds of its singing voices, low-pitched *surdo* drums, saxophones, and other Afro-Brazilian percussion instruments. The sounds interacted with beautiful costumes and adorned posters. Altogether it lent visibility and even beauty to the candidacy of Haddad, a professor at the University of São Paulo who needed all the popular support he could get to counter the critiques of many situating him amongst an intellectual elite that did not represent the workers or the poor.

When I asked Christina, one of the event organizers, why they assembled music, costumes, and the graphic arts in support of Haddad's candidacy, she argued:

> Sometimes the other leftists criticize us for being party leftist [*esquerda festiva*]. Traditional leftist groups are critical of our focus on music, dance, and arts. But for us, this is important. What distinguishes us from the others is that we use drums and colors and compose a lot of songs and dances in the form of a Bloco [carnival group]. We believe that this communicates very well to the young people. We believe in happiness [*alegria*] and that the leftist movements should not be characterized by old grumpy people. [. . .] A good song, or a good rhythm, gives visibility and presence to the candidate. It is really powerful. It inspires people. [. . .] Music is a way to get our political message out there. We sing it. You also have to know that this is what characterizes us as a Catholic organization, because music is one of our most important ways to communicate with God. We are a carnival group that emerged out of Levante Juventude, which is a Catholic organization. Music has always been very important to us. (Interview with Christina during and after the protest)

While we talked, other members were handing out flyers with song lyrics that the carnival group was about to perform. The following pictures of flyers I received my illustrate:
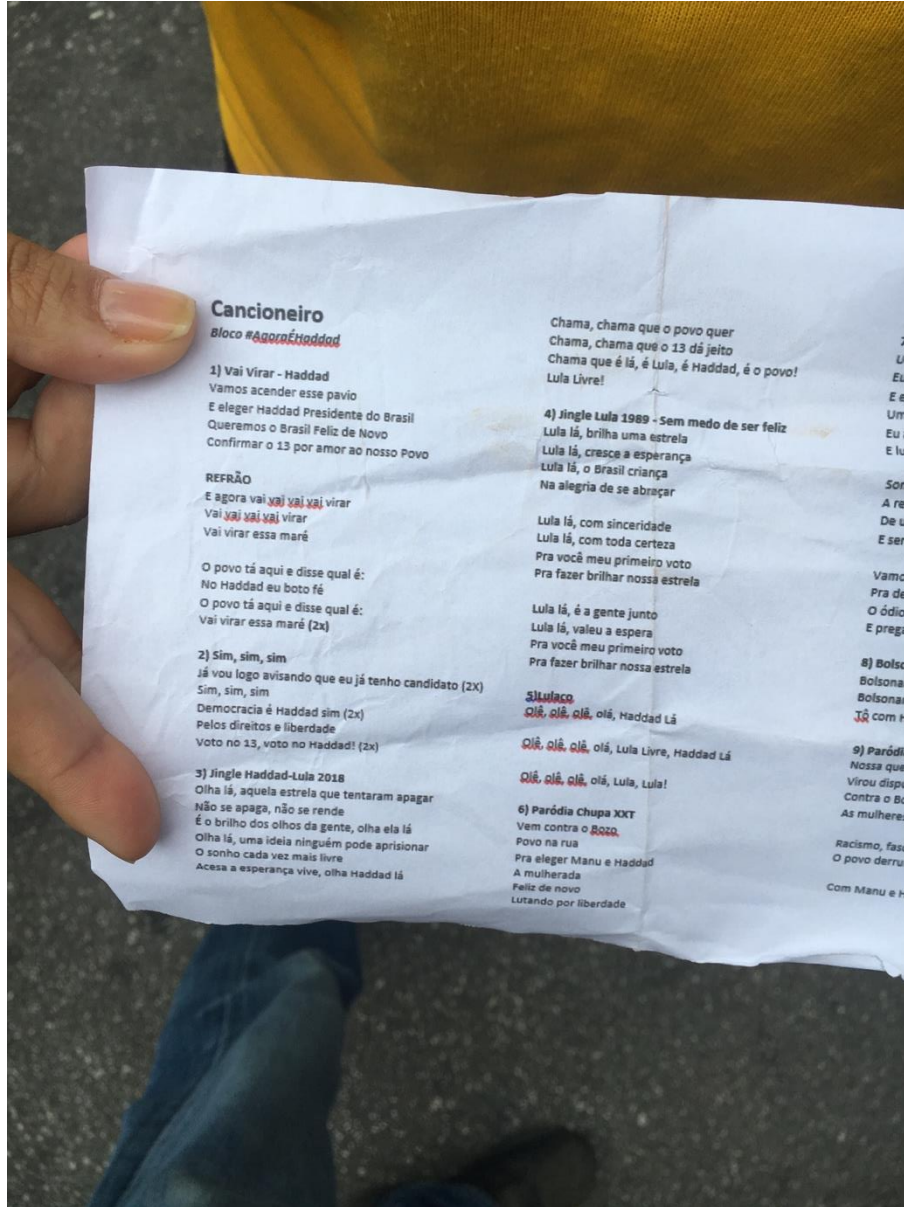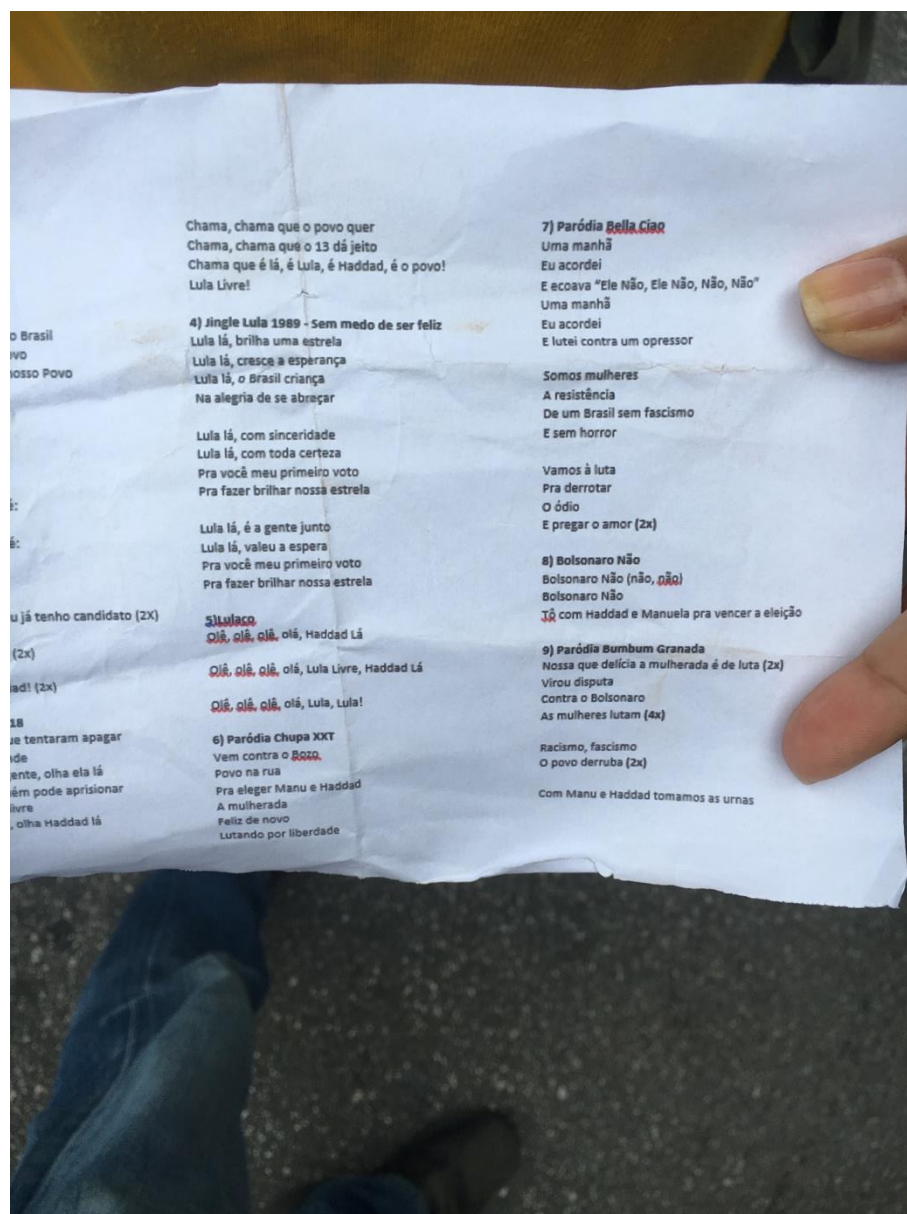
Example 3: Two phots of a flyer with the song lyrics.

As illustrated by the photos, the carnival group planned to perform eight songs, but the first two were so catchy and joyful that we all spent most of the time simply repeating them. The second, "Sim, Sim Sim" [Yes, yes, yes], was particularly popular as it was based on the song "Din Din Din" by Ludmilla, which topped the charts in Brazil at the time. Juan kicked it off by walking around in a circle while playing a melody on his saxophone. The melody's subdivisions and diatonic movement in a minor tonality lent it a hypnotic character and induced bodily movements and aesthetic engagement that inspired the political gathering.

The melody was accompanied by a funky *carioca* rhythm that ornamented the musical subdivisions and quarter notes with rich syncopations and recalled other street parties in Rio de

Janeiro, where funk *carioca* was the most popular dance music at the time. The saxophone melody was short and lasted only four bars (around 5-6 seconds), then it was answered by call and response singing from the crowd. Thanks to the flyers (see example 3) and the saxophone's repetition of the melody, it was easy to sing along with the refrain: "Yes, yes, yes to democracy, and yes to Haddad" [Sim, sim sim, democracia, Haddad, sim]. These musical structures did important social and political work by giving voice to the demonstrators and part of their sonic organizations can be illustrated in the following music transcription:

Example 4: Transcription of the musical structures that mobilized people politically at Avenida Paulista. The first line shows the melody, while the second line shows the accompanying funky carioca rhythm. Bar 1-5 was played by the saxophone, and had a hypnotic character, while bar 5-8 was sung by the protesters. The melody is based on the refrain from "Din Din Din", by Ludmilla Feat. MC Pupio and MC Doguinha, which topped the charts in Brazil in 2018.

Several musical rhythms interacted in the example. First, the melodic rhythm engaged listeners by providing a space for musical participation (e.g. singing along and in call and response dialogue). Second, the percussive rhythm that accompanied it (see the six repeating strokes in the second line) brought a sense of joy, pleasure and festivity to the protest and evidenced Christina´ emphasis on the political force of happiness. In one sense, these musical sounds were performing specific forms of "local musicking" (Reily and Brucher 2018, p. 1–4) as musical practices gave life, sentiment, dispersion and durability to politics among Haddad-supporters

that day. For them, musical rhythms fed into social, political and historical rhythms, among others, as the leftists aimed towards a broader political change and used music to make that argument audible, social and affective.

When I asked Christina about why they decided to sing this melody, she replied:

"Sim, sim sim, democracia Haddade sim" reminds the people that Haddad is the only way back to democracy. It reminds us of the parliamentary coup against Dilma Rouseff and the democratic recession represented by Temer's policies when he shut down everything Lula had built [e.g., the ministry of woman's rights; the ministry of human rights]. These people [Temer and Bolsonaro and other right-wing politicians] have always exploited different minorities. Now, Lula in prison, so we have to fight against Bolsonaro by supporting Hadddad. That is why we sing.

Through the aesthetic power of a funky *carioca* groove with its origins in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, Agora e Haddad created and inspired a new political community on Avenida Paulista that also engaged social, biological, psychological, and historical rhythms in a Lefebvrian sense. The social rhythms involved the final group of roughly two hundred protesters, according to my fieldnotes, that were affectively engaged as they sang and danced together. Those dance movements also activated biological and psychological rhythms in the crowd's responses to the syncopated groove, the hypnotic melody, and their fellow dancers, which were evident in the goosebumps, smiles, and general good vibes. Still, it was perhaps the convergence of the musical and certain historical rhythms that mattered most here, because the particular songs performed by the carnival group reminded the crowd that the present election was in fact part of the fight for democracy and social equality (recall Roberto's interpretation of Dilma Rouseff´s impeachment as a camouflaged parliamentary coup).

Of course, Brazil remained polarized throughout this time, and it was equally moved by other social rhythms that sought different possibilities regarding the fight for the country's political future. One such rhythm was captured by the right-wing movement Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL).

Music in Brazilian Right-Wing Politics

During a large meeting at the University of Campinas organized by MBL almost one year before the 2018 election, I heard the following speech by one of its upcoming leaders, Kim Kataguiri:

> We have to take the music! We have to make our own music. So that the Brazilian people can hear us. To show the Brazilian people why we need to change and to end the corrupt labor party government [*governo petista*]. To give people the freedom they deserve. All the musicians are communists and leftists. Because the Brazilian people love music, it is time that we make our voice heard through music. We have to make our own songs to get our message across. Songs about freedom and democracy to disseminate the pride of being Brazilian, which they [the labor party] have destroyed. (Summary based on field notes from the event. Nov. 2017.)

Kataguiri´s speech was not about music but politics. Still, he was interested in the music´s popularity, and its ability to move people and create new communities, as that musical force could help get MBL´s message across and convince Brazilians that were fed up with corrupt politics that a change was needed. As the movement write on their current Facebook page, that new political community should be structured around the following values:

> The MBL, Movimento Brasil Livre, is a movement without commercial interest that aims to bring citizens together in a shared fight for justice, prosperity, and freedom. We defend democracy, the [Brazilian] republic, freedom of expression and a free press, and the free market, the dismantlement of the state, and the reduction of bureaucracy.[ix]

The emphasis on justice, prosperity, and freedom—as well as importance of defending Brazilian democracy against corrupt politics; the autonomy of the republic; and, above all, freeing the market through massive privatization—were key parts of Kataguiri's speech that aligned themselves to the messaging power of music.

Kataguiri was himself a great performer. He had obviously learned much about political communication during his studies in the United States, and all of the attendees at the meeting, including me, were readily engaged, and almost hypnotized.[x] Through his "aura" (Benjamin 1969, p. 4-7), he was bringing about a new political community to opposed the Brazilian labor

party, *lulismo* (Singer, 2012), and the various leftist movements that, according to Kataguiri, threatened to create a communist dictatorship similar to Venezuela's that undermined national independence. Kataguiri was considered a rising star in right-wing Brazilian politics (Duque and Smith, 2019). Young, charismatic, and Japanese Brazilian in his background, he was thought to be a key figure in the arrival of this new political community.

Most in the audience were young men—probably students at the University of Campinas—but there were also some older men in their fifties and sixties. There were few women. According to my fieldnotes, there were about eighty people in all, closely grouped together in one of the bigger auditoriums at the university. Additional followers listened from the corridor outside the open door.

As I listened to him, I was more and more puzzled by Kataguiri's emphasis on music. After all, this meeting was about politics—promoted weeks in advance through social media to recruit participants and supporters of the MBL movement to mobilize for the election next year. Yet Kataguiri would not abandon his conviction that Brazilian music was a political force that could be used by the movement (as it had by many famous leftist Brazilian musicians already).[xi] Then I realized that I had witnessed part of that force for the right wing as well when I was doing fieldwork on the role of jingles in the 2016 municipal election in Campo Grande, outside Campinas. Back then, Thiago, a campaign manager and organizer of 'sound cars' (cars with massive loudspeakers that drive around in neighborhoods with jingles or commercials on repeat) related to a conservative party, had articulated the importance of jingles in election campaigns to disseminate right-wing candidates:

> These jingles are very powerful, you know, because they get into the people's head [*ficar na cabeza*]. I think this is much more important than flyers and other forms of marketing, because when we give people flyers, we see the flyers afterward in the trash can. But good music gets into the people's head. Music kind of gets into your body, whether you like it or not. For our candidate [a right-wing politician], *sertanjeo* music is the best, because that is the music of our people. [. . .] And you have to remember that it is mandatory to vote in Brazil—I don't know how this is in your country, but here, people have to vote; if not, they lose social welfare benefits and other things. That is why it is so important to play the jingles here in the *periferia* [suburbs with working-class Brazilians], because these people cannot

afford to lose these benefits, and they have low levels of education, so if a jingle can get into the people's head, I believe it can influence their voting.

When I asked him to tell me more about how jingles work in practice, he continued:

After the new law, we cannot play the music on YouTube or the radio anymore, because each party can only have a certain amount of time on the official media channels. But we can drive around with our sound car in the neighborhood during the forty-three days of the final round of the election from 8 AM to 5 PM each day, and that is what we do. We drive our routes, playing the same jingle, which last around fifty seconds, every day from 8 to 5. That is my work.
(Interview carried out in Campo Grande, Campinas, September 2016,)

Example 5: Picture of a 'sound car' in Campo Grande)

In the context of Thiago's arguments, Kataguiri's speech made more sense. Poor Brazilians had to vote, even if all the candidates were corrupt.[xii] In such conditions, an earworm could well do vital political work in helping people to pick a certain candidate on voting day.

Rhythm Politics of *Bolsonarismo* during the 2018 Election

Both Thiago and Kataguiri's arguments were validated during my fieldwork at Avenida Paulista in São Paulo in the second round of the 2018 election. The political atmosphere was polarized. Jair Messiah Bolsonaro had just won the first round with 46 percent of the votes. He was competing against the leftist candidate Fernand Haddad from São Paulo, who had received 26 percent. MBL had embraced Bolsonaro as its candidate. To get their message across, participants in the movement, together with people from other right-wing organizations, came together on Avenida Paulista to sing the national anthem. I joined the group —according to my field notes, more than one hundred Bolsonaro supporters were packed together on the street, many wearing the Brazilian football t-shirt and some waving Brazilian flags. A middle-aged woman stood on a chair and led the singing with hand movements, marking the pulse with her right hand as she recorded the event with a camera in her left. Her yellow T-shirt imitated the Brazilian football t-shirt but instead showed the Bolsonaro campaign slogan "My Party is Brazil" [MEU PARTIDO E O BRASIL] written in green letters. An older man, dressed up as a priest, sang into a microphone that was boosted through cracked loudspeakers, and another woman (with two children beside her) placed a microphone in front of the loudspeakers as well to amplify the singing further. Youths were also participating in the singing, probably in their early 20s, and most were similar T-shirts. In all, the different age groups (children, adolescents and middle aged people) gave the impression of a happy singing family, brought together to share the following lyrics on Avenida Paulista:

English	Portuguese
Intro:	**Intro:**
O beloved country, worshiped. Hail! Hail	Ó Pátria amada, Idolatrada, Salve! Salve!
Verse	**Verse**
Brazil, be a symbol of eternal love	Brasil, de amor eterno seja símbolo
The banner that you bear with stars	O lábaro que ostentas estrelado,
And let the green of your streamer proclaim	E diga o verde-louro dessa flâmula

- Peace in the future and glory in the past.	- Paz no futuro e glória no passado.
Variation	**Variation**
But if you raise the strong gavel of justice,	Mas se ergues da justiça a clava forte,
You will see that your son does not run away from the fight,	Verás que um filho teu não foge à luta,
Nor do they fear, those who adore you, their own death.	Nem teme, quem te adora, à própria morte.
Bridge	**Bridge**
Beloved land	Terra adorada
Amongst a thousand others	Entre outras mil
It's you, Brazil,	És tu, Brasil,
beloved homeland!	Pátria amada,
Coda	**Coda**
Of the children of this soil	Dos filhos deste solo
You are a kind mother,	És mãe gentil,
Beloved homeland,	Pátria amada,
Brazil!	Brasil!

Example 6: Lyrics in Portuguese and Spanish. Translated by the author.[xiii]

According to my fieldnotes, they sang the anthem seventeen times in an hour and kept on singing throughout the day, as well as in the days that followed as they gathered each day at Avenida Paulista to make their voice heard. Thanks to its particular musical nature and organization, the anthem stood out sonically from the competing sounds of political speeches coming from loudspeakers elsewhere. To all of us in this singing community, the melodic organization of the anthem carved out a musical space of political participation in the heart of São Paulo that itself interacted with the banners proclaiming "Bolsonaro, our president."

As I followed the anthem's performance, I was curious as to why the organizers of this demonstration had chosen to skip the first part and sing only the second. Upon reflection, however, this part's verse, variation, and the bridge—"peace in the future and glory in the past"; "beloved homeland"; "you are our kind mother, we the children of your soil"—clearly furthered Bolsonaro's overall political emphasis on family values, nation-building, and national pride. Likewise, the final strophe of the variation captured Bolsonaro's combativeness toward what he called corrupt labor party communism: "You will see that your son does not run away from the fight, nor do they fear, those who adore you, their own death." Singing these words on the street at this time brought people together in something much bigger than an election— that is, reconstructing a lost fatherland that had been destroyed by corruption after thirteen years of labor party government. And even though Bolsonaro had been a member of the congress and the senate for almost twenty years and represented various parties, most of his supporters still saw him as an outsider to the political establishment. When I asked Carlos, who wore a Brazilian flag around his neck and the football T-shirt of Neymar to express his allegiance, why he wanted change, he said:

> Bolsonaro is a man of the people; it was the people who brought him into this position against his will. He is just following the people. We cannot have more years with this corrupt communist labor party government. That will turn Brazil into a new Venezuela! (Short interview with Carlos at the Avenida Paulista demonstration)

Numerous Lefebvrian rhythms interacted as people sang the national anthem that day. First, a powerful historical rhythm linked Bolsonaro's fight against Haddad to the broader struggle for Brazilian independence and numerous conflicts with different Marxist movements in Brazil and elsewhere. Singing the anthem linked rhythms such as these together. First, the sounds were produced by and reentered into singing bodies, activating neurotransmitters that allowed joy, pleasure, and politics to converge in experience (these are biological and psychological rhythms). Second, the experience of singing both amplified and consolidated the demonstration's social fabric, recalling Robert Putnam's (2000, p. 411) argument that singing together creates new communities that otherwise would not exist (these are the social rhythms). Third, for many singers it was a beautiful experience to sing together, wave Brazilian flags, and wear the national football t-shirt, and this sense of beauty was transferred in turn to Bolsonaro's

project (these are the aesthetic rhythms). In all, Bolsonaro's fight against corruption and neo-liberal policy proposals (e.g., "liberating" the market and dismantling state institutions) were promoted and amplified by the act of singing that day.

Other forms of music also played a vital role. A number of street musicians performed their own pro-Bolsonaro songs and invited participants to sing along to well-known football chants and popular songs with new words. Often, these melodies were accompanied by samba rhythms and funky carioca grooves, among others. And there were Bolsonaro jingles broadcast through massive loudspeakers adorned with Brazilian flags and banners that were placed on top of trailers:

Example 7:   Massive sound cars broadcasting jingles for Bolsonaro on Avenida Paulista, October 2018.

The banners focused more on anti-labor party sentiment than on exactly what change Bolsonaro would bring about (see, for example, PT Nao [no to the labor party] and Fora PT [out with the labor party]). The jingle "[Military] Captain, Raise Up" by el Veneceo was played the most frequently. It is a pop song with a sparse and engaging beat and pronounced autotuning in the

sung melody. The refrain compares Bolsonaro to a military captain who should rise to the occasion:

Captain, get up	Capitão levanta-te
Because the Brazilian people need you	Porque o povo brasileiro precisa de você
Captain, get up	

Example 9: Refrain of Capitão levanta-te by El Veneceo and Vhero.

This jingle recalled Bolsonaro's emphasis on increased collaboration with the military and reminded potential voters that Bolsonaro used to work for the military.[xiv] He insisted that thirty-eight years of corrupt democracy had proven that collaboration with the military was necessary to bring forth the "Ordem e Progreso" that was written on the Brazilian flag (from 1964 to 1985, Brazil had been governed by the military). A number of Brazilians agreed, and this Bolsonaro jingle mobilized broader social, cultural, and historical rhythms to emphasize the urgency of this political change—after all, it was about the very future of the Brazilian nation.

Concluding discussion

The aim of this article was to explore how musical sounds and practices create new forms of political awareness, participation, and critique among both right-wing and left-wing movements in a Brazil marked by increasing polarization through study of ethnographic data gathered in Brazil between 2016-2018. I did so inspired by Henri Lefebvre´s argument that different "rhythms" interact through cultural practice (e.g., musical, social, political and historical 'rhythms' of different kinds) and developed *rhythm politics* as a conceptual frame for my analysis. By studying musical-political dynamics through the prism of *rhythm politics*, I was able to describe how music mattered politically in context by activating and interacting with larger social, cultural, and aesthetic rhythms in a Lefebvrian sense.

Three lessons can be learned from the present study. First, in countries like Brazil, music breathes life, energy, and affective engagement into politics—sung arguments and joyful rhythms enrich public events and street demonstrations in complex and dynamic ways. This finding invites further research into how particular organizations of musical sounds afford and mediate political critique and participation in Brazil and elsewhere. Studying such processes through the prism of *rhythm politics* paraphrases recent work on "musical mediation" (Born

2010, 2013, Born and Barry 2018, Hennion 2015), which, among other things, draw attention to how "music mediates wider social relations, from the most abstract to the most intimate: music's embodiment of stratified and hierarchical social relations, of the structures of class, race, nation, gender and sexuality [...]" (Born, 2010, p. 232). By using Lefebvre´s concept of "rhythms" as a frame for a broader cultural analysis of musical political dynamics we can reach a deeper understanding of the multiple ways in which music shape, and are shaped by, multiple contexts as different rhythms feed into each other in practice (e.g. musical, social, historical and political "rhythms" of different kinds). Second, music is used by right-wing and left-wing movements in unique ways. For Bolsonaro supporters and the MBL movement, jingles, produced as part of larger election campaigns, were disseminated through massive sound cars in the heart of São Paulo while demonstrators sang the national anthem and waved Brazilian flags. In both cases, the events were organized in advance by leaders and campaign managers to influence voting behavior on a subconscious level—right-wing politicians and movements in Brazil appear to use music strategically to enhance their political visibility, voice, and presence. In contrast, leftist musical politics appears to be more spontaneous and bohemian. While the Haddad supporters had planned and rehearsed their musical-political work and reflected on the importance of bringing musical joy and arts to the political sphere, they also embraced the moment and whatever it might bring. Syncopations, call-and-response singing, a carnivalesque vibe and broader sense of hedonist joy also brought a different life to musical articulations of politics among the left compared to Bolsonaro supporters who seemed more up-tight and military in their performance of the Brazilian national anthem.

The third, and perhaps most important, lesson to be learned from this study is that music and the arts have the ability to both humanize and popularize *bolsonarismo* movements that in fact threaten human rights and the rights of ethnic minorities, among others, in contemporary Brazil. To oppose such movements in the future, it is important to understand how they use jingles, national anthems, and other forms of music to mobilize voters. To contest *bolsonarismo*, Trumpism, and other forms of extreme right-wing populism, we cannot close our ears and listen only to grooves of resistance and songs of freedom performed by leftists. We must also listen to the music of the right.

Acknowledgements:

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Notes

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[i] My notion of the musical sciences is informed by Kofi Agawu (1997) and is a broad term that draws attention to music scholarship carried out within ethnomusicology, popular music studies, musicology, and music theory.

[ii] Such arguments have been put forward in, for example, Deleuzian interpretations of arts and music (Moisala, Leppänen, Tiainen, and Väätäinen, 2017; Raghuramaraju, 2018; Stover, 2017, 2021), Latourian studies of actants grouped together in heterogenous assemblages informed by Actor-Network Theory (Bøhler, 2021; Latour, 2013; Sonnenberg-Schrank, 2020), Karen Barad's reinterpretation of agency as relational (2003; 2007), and Jacques Rancière´s rethinking of a politics of aesthetics as relational processes that constantly redistribute "what is common to the community" (2013, p. 12).

[iii] Despite the relatively few references to Lefebvre in the musical sciences his ideas were influential among some popular music scholars in the 1980s, see, for example, Chambers (1982) and Berland (1990). The last decade, music scholars have found increased inspiration in his work, see, for example, Atanasovski (2015), Still (2015), Saffle and Yang (2010), Born (2013). Still, Lefebvre´s theoretical work has yet to have a substantial impact on the musical sciences, and the present article provides steppingstones to integrate Lefebvrian theory into music research.

[iv] Based upon recent research in music and neuroscience this probably also activates more specific physical rhythms by releasing dopamine, serotonin and endorphins, as well as other neurotransmitters, however, in-depth study of such "rhythms" are beyond the scope of the present study.

[v] Some interpreters of Deweyan aesthetics have described it as a precursor to phenomenological aesthetics and situated it adjacent to Heidegger's emphasis on the in-depth interpretation of different forms of being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1996) as well as Merleau-Ponty's development of phenomenological thought (Merleau-Ponty and Smith, 1962). However, this discussion is beyond the scope of the present study.

[vi] In addition, other researchers and students at the University of Campinas improved my understanding of musical political dynamics in Brazil; in particular, I would like to thank José Roberto Zan, Suzel Reily and Cacá Machado. I would also like to thank Jaqueline Da Sá Ribeira, Felipe Camargo and Dr. Geraldo Adriano Godoy de Campos as well as Dr. Juan Diego Díaz, and the anonymous reviewers, for giving vital comments, suggestions and critiques related to the study. I would also like to thank Prof. Jocelyne Guilbault for stimulus conversations about this topic that have informed my interest in studying musical political dynamics across established political binaries.

[vii] All translations from Portuguese to English in the text are by the author. However, I want to thank Dr. Juan Diego Díaz for helping me with translating parts of the national anthem.

[viii] Cálice is an iconic song in Brazilian politics and a good example of the long history of musical political interaction in the country as popular music have been shaped by, and shaped, a number of social and political movements throughout the twentieth century (Brune 2015, Garcia 2014). For broader description of musical political interaction in Brazilian history see, for example, Paranhos (2015), Ridenti (2016), Napolitano (2002), Zan (2001), Machado (2017)

[ix] Original: O MBL—Movimento Brasil Livre—é uma entidade sem fins lucrativos que visa mobilizar cidadãos em favor de uma sociedade mais livre, justa e próspera. Defendemos a Democracia, a República, a Liberdade de Expressão e de Imprensa, o Livre Mercado, a Redução do Estado, Redução da Burocracia (extracted April 22, 2021). See https://www.facebook.com/mblivre/.
[x] An American fellowship enabled Kataguiri to study in the United States.
[xi] Two obvious examples include Chico Buarque and Caetano Veloso, both of whom have expressed leftist sympathies and acted as what Street calls "celebrity politicians" (2012) associated with the labor party several times the last decades (Napolitano, 2002; Ridenti, 2016, Garcia 2014).
[xii] While it is possible to vote "blank" in Brazil, studies show that this is infrequent. People tend to go ahead and vote for someone, even when they dislike them all and have no faith in the political system—the clown Tiririca, for example, received a massive number of votes in 2010 and was elected to the parliament despite lacking either political background or platform (Aires and Câmara, 2017; C. L. C. Saraiva and Silva, 2012).
[xiii] I want to thank Dr. Juan Diego Diaz Meneses for helping me with parts of this translation.
[xiv] Bolsonaro was kicked out of the military for failing certain tests and exams, so the initial allusion was in fact a bit more complicated.

About the author

Dr. Kjetil Klette Bøhler is a senior researcher at the Institute of Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), at OsloMet University. He has published various articles and book-chapters on music and politics in international peer-reviewed journals. Currently he is finishing up a book on *Groove Politics: Pleasure and Participation in Cuban Dance Music*, that will be submitted for full review at OUP by 2021. In addition to Cuba, he has published extensively on the politics of music in Brazil, as well as the broader political change that characterize Brazil after the impeachment against Dilma Rouseff. Bøhler has also published in political sociology related to one larger EU project (financed by the EU´s FP7 program) entitled *Making Persons with Disabilities Full Citizens (DISCIT)*, withing the field of disability studies, and within one project funded by the Horizon 2020 called *Negotiate: Overcoming early job-insecurity in Europe*. Bøhler has received a number of grants including a Fulbright grant and two larger grants from the Norwegian Research Council within the category "Free Projects for the Humanities and the Social Sciences".