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## **NOTES ON THE SOCIAL STUDY OF COLLECTIVE SENSIBILITIES THROUGH MUSIC**

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### **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

Both authors contributed equally. Author AS wrote the first section related to the analytical framework. Author RSA wrote the second section on the musical case. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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### **ABSTRACT**

The sociological research on bodies, emotions and expressiveness provides us an opportunity to recognize creative ways connected to music as a source for the social phenomena analysis. Our goals in this article are twofold: a) explore the connections between social research, creativity and a social studies approach to bodies/emotions and b) explain how this can be an effective and efficient strategy in the development of a doctoral dissertation. This paper is divided into two main sections. The first is a review of the literature on a panoramic consideration of Art Based Research as methodological strategy of our work, and a theoretical exploration of the emotions/bodies from a sociological perspective. The second main section presents a description of reggae music in San Andrés Island as part of doctoral research. It seeks to analyze the relation between musical practice and the social rhythms that open the way to cultural resistance and alternative emotional tuning. Our argumentation tries to highlight how creativity allows us to explore ways to be more autonomous social scientists and help us to listen -with more flexibility- to the people that make part in our studies.

**Keywords:** Expressiveness; sensibilities; sociology of emotions; music; art based research.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This article refers to an experience of creativity applied to a PhD dissertation as part of a research program on bodies, emotions and expressiveness. We seek to share how improvisation, involvement with others and expressiveness can configure a creative strategy to obtain reliable knowledge about social reality. The experience of conducting research in the sociology of bodies and emotions, in dialogue with the Art-Based-Research approaches, opens interesting ways to learn -through the voice of members- the structuration processes of a society in general.

The experience presented here is the result of crossing two types of knowledge: that of the amateur musician and researcher in sociology of bodies and emotions. The relations between these two sets of knowledge are based on a political and pedagogical decision: supporting creativity as a strategy of inquiry. In this context the aim of the article is twofold: to illustrate the connections between social research, creativity and an approach of bodies/emotions; and to indicate how this can be an effective and efficient strategy for the development of a doctoral project.

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## 2. ANALYTICAL CONTEXT: EMOTIONS, EXPRESSIVENESS AND ART BASED RESEARCH

The present work springs from the theoretical and empirical articulation of three axis of investigation: body, emotions and music. This articulation is rare although studies on each of them individually abound in music and the social sciences. From the classic reflections of Mauss [1] on the “techniques of the body” and the biopolitics of Foucault [2] to the present state of research on the body, explorations of the human body as the center of processes for production and reproduction of society have been institutionalized in the social sciences.

There are diverse ways to organize the theoretical orientations on which the studies on the body are based. Keeping in mind the Latin American context, they include (among others): a line of work connected to Foucault [2,3] and his concepts of control, discipline, and technologies of the self; Bourdieu’s [4,5] notions of habitus, body *hexis* (it refers to the social structuration of body movements), and social fields; investigations in the area of biopolitics conducted by Esposito [6], Agamben [7], Negri and Hardt [8]; and the studies that, from a post-colonial vision, take up corporality to nurture anti-hegemonic thought.

A different perspective toward understanding the theoretical traditions that usually support the studies in this field of inquiry is to turn to the classic authors on the theme: Nietzsche [9], Merleau-Ponty [10], Spinoza [11], and Marx [12]. An additional view is gained in the presence of contemporary authors of sociology such as Goffman [13], Simmel [14] and Elias [15], from the philosophy of Derrida [16], Butler [17] and Deleuze [18], or the psychoanalysis of Freud [19], Lacan [20], and Zizek [21].

Social studies on emotions have also been the object of diverse treatments from Darwin [22] passing by Sartre [23] and arriving to the proposals of Collins [24], Hochschild [25], Kemper [26], Scheff and Retzinger [27], just to mention some of most recognized reference points. There are also disciplinary and thematic approximations (for studies on both bodies and emotions) as are, just as an example, Csordas [28] (*embodiment*) and Ingold [29] (materiality and skill) in Anthropology, and those of James Jasper [30] and Helena Flam & Debra King [31] related to the connections between emotions and collective action.

In the specific case of the social study of emotions in music, Simmel [14] and Elias [15] developed

stimulant works; while they are not the only ones who have advanced with this kind of inquiry they are useful as an example. On one hand, Simmel proposes that music is more than a strategy of sexual approach as Darwin [22] suggested and is, rather, a fundamental form of social communication. Simmel argues that music has coexisted with human language from the “beginning” and also has served as a way to exteriorize affections and feelings, whereby music can be framed as a form of social organization of sound [32].

On the other hand, Elias [33], meanwhile, argues a *second nature* existence in humans that is generated by emotional control. This kind of *nature* implies a management of impulses and violence at different levels of social interactions. From this point of view, this author suggests that musical dynamics should be seen as a phenomenon immersed not only in the conjugation of socio-historic conditions but also in the processes of emotive figurations [15]. Emotional regulation, collectively exerted and individually interiorized, has a fundamental musical shape in human language and as such it can be the basis for other musical constructions [34].

### 2.1 Experiences, Creativity and Expressiveness: Some Introductory Lines

The creativity of human beings is a recurrent issue for social sciences. The brief summary presented here is directly connected to the reflections on creativity and imagination made by Lev S. Vigotsky [35] and Mikhail Bakhtin [36] amongst others.

Experiencing creativity as the potential to capture and transform the world, qualitative inquiry exposes and rebuilds pathways to see the world with members and along with others involved in research. In creating, members inscribe different ways to express their emotions and sensations on multiple surfaces. If creativity is used as the logic of inquiry, what emerges from members, what interests the researcher, and those aspects which are not evident, are mutually put in tension. These findings are formed into a knot which connects and allows articulation of what the researcher is looking for and what the subjects do.

Expressiveness is just making explicit what was implied; it is an unwrapping action, a de-compression. In the expressiveness the tacit -what is assumed according to social bearability mechanisms and devices of sensations regulation- manifests itself, becomes present. The expressiveness of the subjects unpacks what is tight, concentrated in the silence, in a contrast to the differential appropriation and uses of words as the only way of speaking. It implies a

fundamental assumption referred to the body as a primary source of sense where “the original text is perception itself” [10,p.21].

The contingent relations with the (natural, social and subjective) world present the different positions of being-in-the-world as itinerant mediations that result from lived life. These sets of mediations are social experiences. Social subjects shape their biography in a network of everyday life that is lived from the class positions and conditions. At the same time, the flow of life as experience is formed at the intersection and re-assimilation of sensations produced by that life and the emotions that those sensations trigger. The passage from the experience to the narrative of the aforementioned social experiences can be captured through a network of expressiveness [37].

The social subjects have social evaluation and answer ways to make the connections between social conditions of experiencing and their individual aspect, biological and physical. Such connections are made possible by the fact that what appears to be individual sensations is a social construct. By paying attention to these facets of the actualization of lived experience, qualitative research is gaining ground on what reproduces in/through the body yet only being seen as mere individual coincidence, or extreme classification of dramatic performance in terms of research subjects’ class positions and conditions.

The reflections presented here are related and anchored in what for some time now has been discussed under the frame of qualitative research as research based on art. But art is not exactly what motivates these investigations. While it is true that, as argued by Maggie O’Neill “Art makes visible experiences, hopes, ideas; it is a reflective space and socially it brings something new into the world—it contributes to knowledge and understanding.” [38,p.21]. Human creativity also presents such features without necessarily transforming that practice into art. It is precisely the potential of creating and imagining what makes socio-emotional-musical research possible and, in fact, makes it worthwhile.

It is important to review some of the most common strategies to bring emotions, experiences and social practices together, to point out that they work as a platform for development of the study presented here.

## **2.2 Strategies of Expression-perception of Emotions, Stories and Representations**

From visual anthropology to visual sociology, from ethnomusicology to popular culture studies, various disciplines have tried to capture what individuals want

to express from a close up rather than from single verbal narration. Considering the proposals analyzed here, we present a summary on the uses and powers of photography, video filming, visual arts and various forms of stage effects that may be seen as resources for our practices of inquiry. These examples function as a prelude for access to the review of the musical case of San Andrés Island.

### **2.2.1 Photography**

Since the classic work of Goffman and Barthes the photograph and reading of images produced by society in its daily making of itself has caught the attention of social scientists. As Becker says, “visual sociology, documentary photography, and photojournalism, then, are whatever they have come to mean, or been made to mean, in their daily use in worlds of photographic work. They are social constructions, pure and simple.” [39,p.5].

From these classical forms of photography, come more contemporary modes, such as Freidenberg expressed in 1989, to consider photography as a trigger for in-depth interviews, interpretative social objects, or as social witness mediated by photo albums. “...Photography can be a catalyst to tap important events and emotions which straightforward interviewing may inhibit or actually miss...” [40,p.167]. One way or another, the use of photography -especially what has been called social photography- has been converging with participatory forms of research and recognition among individuals that have ended up revealing its strong social and political potential, and that moves it beyond being a mere vehicle for observation.

The appearance of image is a compelling circumstance on which to speculate because it shows what the eye-camera can see, and in fact sees. In spite of being evident, it is the visible side of the subject-in-position in relation to a landscape. The capacity to make sense and to increase social modes of observing and observing (oneself) that photography has, put it as one of the most outstanding candidates when it comes to re-considering sensations. We consider that photography can be useful not only in a theoretical and methodological way, but also in proximity to what recently some authors -such as Croghan et al. [41]- have suggested of that practice: a possibility of promoting expression.

### **2.2.2 The video camera**

The digital video camera is more than a merely technological tool when it functions as a center of mediation of different points of view and it helps to

expose the socially constructed character implied in any vision of the world. As suggested by Shrum, Duke and Brown: "At this point we accepted the camera as an actor and shattered our invisible wall, adopting digital video as a methodological practice in order to begin thinking about the ways the technology mediated our interactions with colleagues, subjects, and collaborators." [42,p.9].

The various uses of video footage have also set up different positions for the subjects involved: observational view of the recording subject, the subject's response, auto-reflection of the subject, recording the subject [43]. In this way it is possible to feel how the researcher and the subject of inquiry can go gliding through various positions ranging from an observing researcher serving as spectator, to the appropriation of instrument by the subject, making it a springboard to their eyes on what is researched.

From this perspective we can understand as well, as Rosenstein claims, "[t]he video is clearly well suited for such triangulation, either by having multiple viewers of one video clip or by having multiple viewing sessions by the same, or multiple observers. Furthermore 'reality' checking can be conducted with the subjects of the videotape themselves." [43, p.26]. Experiences of video and video recording promote the emergence of sensations and emotions as they raise expressive skills.

### **2.2.3 The plastic**

"Aesthetics as much as economics guides the interpretation of social life." [44,p.2]. Visual arts in all their manifestations are the nodal points of intersection between aesthetics and politics. The artistic expression in its various forms, from painting murals to graffiti on walls, capture the subject in the act of putting value, expressing, giving shape, color and intensity to experiences. Allowing subjects to participate in the elaboration, interpretation and/or observation of plastic expressions implies returning the forgotten and socially neglected crossings between the aesthetic and the configuration of the social. A politic of valuation, production and reproduction of the aesthetic is an important chapter of politics of self-perceptions that are part of the grammar of action. Creativity exposed into a collage, a graffiti or simply painted walls operates as a pivot to launch sensible and emotional forces (conflicting and uncertain) [45].

### **2.2.4 Theater and the staging**

It is true that, as Rosenstein argues, "...the language of motion defines love and hate, anger and delight, and other qualities of behavior..." [43,p.23].

Therefore, is it possible to break and re-take the linguistic metaphor to describe and understand the logic of staging? The possible answers to this question do not involve transforming social research in a way to do theater, dance or dance troupe, but to take into account the potential that staging has to redirect inquiries and re-invent their limits and functions [46]. This reflection help us to think on creating conditions to allow, if only for a moment, life of both subjects and researchers become a theater box, stage, street. They become established, presenting, and representing mutual relationships among those subjects and their material conditions of existence.

The staging of bodies in social presentation, the appropriation of the body *hexis* and their potential power can be considered from theater to parade, and from ritual dance to folk dance. Popular drama and theater may be understood as a creative dramatization of emotions. These kind of arts allow the use of drama in research and intervention, as seen in the attempt of a critical ethnography made by Barbara Dennis, who states, "it serves as an example of the use of Theater of the Oppressed in a long-term critical ethnography through which change was to be understood and documented. I also discuss the blurring of traditional methodological distinctions between data and analysis, real and imaginary, and researcher and participant." [47,p.67].

These are some of the used procedures, which cross expressiveness, art and sensibilities that currently occupy a prominent place in qualitative research, and are the methodological and conceptual framework in which our musical study is embedded.

## **2.3 Politics of Emotions: Some Conceptual Approximations**

Perceptions, sensations and emotions build a tripod that allows us to understand where sensibilities are founded. Social agents know the world through their bodies. Thus, a set of impressions impact on the ways subjects "exchange" with the socio-environmental context. Such impressions of objects, phenomenon, processes and other agents structure the perceptions that subjects accumulate and reproduce. Perception, from this perspective, constitutes a naturalized way of organizing the set of impressions that are given in any person [48,49].

This weaving of impressions configures the sensations that produce what can be called the internal and external world, social, subjective and natural world. Such configurations are formed in a dialectic tension among impressions, perceptions and their results, that give sensations the meaning of a surplus or excess.

Sensations, as a result and as antecedent of perceptions, locate emotions as an effect of the processes of adjudication and correspondence between perceptions and sensations. Emotions, understood as the consequences of sensations, can be seen as a puzzle that becomes action and effect of feeling something or feeling oneself. Emotions are associated with socially constructed forms of sensations.

At the same time, organic (ergo biological) and social senses also enable what seems unique and without repetition as are the individual sensations, and elaborate the unperceived work of in-corporating social elements turned into emotions. Thus, politics of bodies form the strategies that a society accepts and in relation with the social availability of individuals, they constitute a significant chapter of power structuration. Such strategies are tied and strengthened by politics of emotions tending to regulate the construction of social sensibility.

Human beings learn primarily and fundamentally through the body, which implies a permanent but contingent crossing between perceptions, sensations, and emotions. The ways to construct, distribute, and reproduce this knowledge operate from individual memory (as a subject), social memory (as a subject belonging to a class), and collective memory (as a subject belonging to a class with particular identities). The ways to produce, store, distribute and reproduce social knowledge directly affect the connections between memory, emotions, and body, these three being the *locus* and space where these connections are made flesh [50].

### **3. ON MUSIC AS A STRATEGY TO RECOGNIZE DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL CREATIVITY AND EXPRESSIVENESS**

The personal experience of music could be considered a strategy to suggest nuances of how the popular songs describe social relations. "Popular" [i] Means here the music that most people listen or play in a specific socio cultural context [ii]. In this line, the musical practice could permit some reflections on how the individual actions are modulated under group structuring. We have addressed this issue from an art-based-study (using art practices as a medium to social research) that has been developed with a group of reggae musicians in San Andres Island; in this place we experienced the musical culture and observed other groups of the same genre. The study had a fundamental base on the first-hand experience: as an amateur musician and social researcher dancing with the community. It allowed us to move forward on some issues that we consider relevant. For example,

we reflect on the local constitution of a sound order, on the order of instrumental positions and social differentiations, on the senses of group and social sensibilities around the sound.

The research experience had five moments that were supported with a previous historical, musical and bibliographical revision; it also included informal and exploratory meetings with local artists in hotels, tourist bars and cultural events promoted by the government. In all this process we developed a participatory observation on the bodily and emotional dynamics present when people shared music collectively. We recorded the interviews and we wrote a field diary with our impressions, descriptions, findings and reflections. We contacted around twenty five musicians, twelve cultural promoters and thirty seven artists (among actors, painters, craftsmen and dancers).

The first research moment consisted of meetings with some musicians and cultural promoters to explore memories about island music. The second one was the organization of a cultural workshop week to produce an artistic hubbub that was performed for one day on the main street of the island (with music, theatre and dance). All this work was supported by the local university, organized with the community and with an academic team coordinated by Sánchez-Aguirre. The third was informal talks with musicians who allowed us to play guitar in their own rehearsals. The fourth was to assist in local bars and cultural activities, to dance, sing and to know the social dynamics directing island music. The fifth was the discussion with local researchers and the doctoral tutor about our impressions on this experience as the basis of the research report.

The analytical exercise was founded on three dimensions of the body suggested at the first part of this paper: individual, subjective and social [48]. We have to remember that the individual body refers to an organic-environmental level, subjective body alludes to self-reflections on our direct experience, and social body refers to interactions with others as a way to structure the bodies. For our argumentation, we assumed that human musicality is rooted into the three body dimensions mentioned before. On one hand, individual body is a font of organic sounds that conform basic rhythms and harmonies; equally, subjective body implies reflections about our incursion to the world of life and the interaction with other beings and sonorities. Social dimension implies the configuration of collective rhythms and group harmonisations that delimit bodily forms and accepted behaviors.

In this way, music can be understood as a certain order socially conferred to the sounds, "their terms are the terms of their society and culture, and the terms of the bodies of human beings that hear, create, [dance] and execute it" [32,p.25]. In music natural and cultural factors intertwine; the first ones correspond to human physiology such as heart rhythm or acoustic form of the mouth; and the second one relates to sound learning and discursive factors that involve self-reflection and interaction with others. Both sides overlap each other in such a way that, for instance, there is a process of vocal conditioning experienced by children (body maturation [iii]) Who, through their relationship with adults, have models of access to spoken language.

In this context, music is a concern that matters for humans; it is a style of combination of sounds that has varying degrees of interdependence with the configuration of social relations. It would be inaccurate to claim that music is a mere reflection of a society, but rather it acts as a testimony - and power for transformation - on social forms of interaction and on sensibilities marked by sound. Such musical testimony can be easily recognized, for example, in lyrics and dances, just as it is found in different forms of human groups' pronunciation and vocal accentuation. In these cases we can recognize social paths related to collective dynamics and emotional tendencies.

### 3.1 The Case of Reggae Music in San Andrés

Reggae music was the sound that accompanied and influenced the process of independence of Jamaica in the late 1960s. For this reason it has been viewed as a strong political entity and has been linked to the Rastafari movement of the Island [51]. However, as suggested by Giovannetti [52], these features have been questioned since it has been said that the political issue was not the only topic addressed by reggae music and should not be denied their links with Rocksteady music, a genre with strong allusion to romantic (love) and considered as the birthplace of reggae sound issues. Similarly, some researchers have disconnected the Rastafari movement as axis of this music and as the exclusive source of the lyrics [53].

It is important to emphasize that contemporary Jamaican society is basically of African descent, whose ancestors were enslaved and who had to survive strong repression and cultural denial. In this sense the dominant sounds in the island were connected to the choral work lead by Protestant masters. The black people developed Caribbean and Africanized forms of religion known as the Church of Zion's Revitalization. At the same time and in the shadows of a colonial society, other cultural practices

were maintained as Kumina or Pokomenia. Sounds and dances were influenced by this socio cultural context and they constituted a source of varied social resistance as rituals Obeah (spells and management of the supernatural) or Anancy stories or African percussion music games [54-56].

All this tradition in which the Jamaican culture was imbedded also produced a particular form of thrust, a particular dynamism: sound discrepancies that marked the reggae music and their influence in all Caribbean islands. The idea of discrepancy was suggested by Charles Keil [57] to talk about the *participatory discrepancies*, this concept tries to link senses of rhythm, vital impulse or swing with tone qualities, timbres, among others. He also sustains that "in order to produce a personal involvement and be socially valuable, the music has to be «untimely» and be «out of tune»." [57,p.261]. Thus, the music in the Jamaican context and in much of the postcolonial Caribbean islands allowed the participation of the community in a relaxed way: following a syncopated rhythm that is conjugated in the exercise of the affirmation of a sense of group identity beyond the tempo set by the colonial establishment.

On San Andres Island, a Colombian territory located 643km from Jamaica, the reggae music is lived in a particular way. There, by the influence of popular musical genres such as champeta, vallenato, reggaeton or salsa, exists a social tone tied to new conjugated discrepancies. Due to the continued prohibition of drums, exerted during different times of island colonization, it is easy to find traces of that heritage today; many of the bands produce their sound mixing sonorities of calypso and reggae with a format that includes guitar, mandolin, maracas, donkey jawbone and the *tinaja* (tub-bass, also known as washtub bass), avoiding the use of drum.

If we focus on San Andrés dominant musicality in recent times that marks the local social rhythm, we must refer to the process of "exoticism and Caribbean touristic promotion" led by the Colombian government [58]. However, beyond the musical and touristic business, other musical practices have been developed to constitute open spaces for parallel voices. In these, alternative cultural grammars and social syncopations are stimulated [59,60].

The rebellious nature of reggae alludes to an emotional geo-culture that is an essential component of this music, it take advantages from a common suffering history as a power for creativity and social orientation [61]. In a particular way, the sociomusical shaping in San Andrés refers to a practical knowledge -a *praktognosis*- that is connected with correct forms to play and dance reggae and calypso. This distinction

of knowing or not knowing is very important when taking into account moral precepts, when examining the development of the social ethos of the community of San Andrés. Such know-how is tuned with the history made body: oral traditions, dance steps, food (dishes), customs and musicality. In this direction musical *feeling* could indicate body knowledge obtained from dance and, for instance, through the guitar that is marking accents and intensities to recreate a tradition -playing with the silence and exalting their voices. In this way social sensibilities are elaborated as we mentioned in a previous section of this paper. To a large extent it consists in sound reconfigurations where popular tactics are also encouraged, and other relationships of knowledge are open.

If sounds are organized socially and they modulate “particular categories of feeling and action” [62, p.332], then, for example, to create an environment with the guitar more than a pure individual knowledge, it is through that guitar and syncopated form of strumming that is amplified as social history: ways of feeling and acting as a group. Steven Feld criticizes many studies whose axiom has been that “when sound is not complex in the material aspects of acoustics organization it can be assumed that social meaning is essentially superficial” [62, p.332]. Feld considered that simplicity did not mean superficiality. In the case of reggae generated in San Andrés the simplicity of his structure is itself the source of creation of meanings and resistance; it is a cultural space where there are safeguards and where enhanced perspectives for the community are developed, far from superficial meanings. It is in this sense that the experience of creativity that was shared in the inquiry process of the thesis can be understood from two perspectives. First, the experiences of creativity provide a methodological moment that allows the music creators to access and know the community and its life. Second, it is an interstitial practice which is formed from a shared sensibility [iv].

Reggae music groups in San Andrés have a similar musical format as rock music: bass, drums, guitar, vocals and lead vocals; in any case, it includes keyboards and calypso instruments such as donkey jaw, the jar, mandolin or violin. Although it is not easy to be a foreigner trying to participate in local musical bands because of historical prejudices and preventions against continental visitors, it is possible to construct a social nearness from the recognition of the history of the island. When musicians realize that the visitor’s intentions are out of the scheme of tourist consumption they feel puzzled and curious –this was what happened in our encounters with the artists.

Similarly, when people feel a common passion for the music, an interest of discovery and practice, then social walls are smoothed and flowing sound soaks personal interrelationships [63]. The knowledge and interest in reggae includes in this case, in the life of the island, a special attraction to the dance as a central *practognosis*. It is also where cultural forms are stressed because there are 'ways of being' assigned to the Colombian Caribbean (Costeños) or *Andino* (Cachacos) people, social allowances weighing in sustaining social differentiation and positioning [v]. When the researcher tries to be out of such frameworks -playing and dancing music- the limits start to slide and the musical exchange flows in new ways (sharing sounds and corporal movements).

In this sense musical art is way of accessing to understand the local society. This dynamic of encounter, approximation, linkage and recognition orientated to music, to the sonic patterns, is also an experience of the community social and emotional ethos [62]. When we dance and we flex knees at the rhythm of the syncopated reggae guitar, we experience the personal-social engagement to hold the base, to hold the place from which musicians and dancers will perform improvisation in San Andrés.

Although the songs have defined lyrics and duration, the enlargement of them occurs amid of the tuning achieved from the construction of a collective sonorous wave; it produces affections and linkages between participants; it creates an environment that stimulates collective movement from the movement of musicians performing songs (and vice versa). This dynamic makes people participants in building a common social atmosphere. So, you can easily hear a “whisper” converted in chorus repeated by the audience that says: |-- -- -- -*Wo/yo o o -wo/yoyo yo yo --*/. The reiteration of this sound creates an impression shared for all persons; it produces in everyone a particular feeling related to ‘come and go’; a sensation of sailing calmly is produced in groups by the interaction between musicians and the voices of the community [54,64].

Everything happens with the support of the common feeling, from the cohesion of the musical base as a way to confirm a social experience of the surrounding world: air, beach, water, sounds and body movement. The feeling is generated between the movement of the hand to reach a precise strum, the instrumental conjugation and the listeners performing dances and voices. The experience of sharing and to be co-author of the music / dance with the others allowed us to explore a methodology via that which is located on an edge that ethnography often cannot allow. Research

based on creativity is a means to go beyond the mere narration about what others are saying and doing.

The organization of the musicians on stage is similar to rock music (drums in the background, bass and guitar to the sides, singer in the centre), but in reggae music -in San Andrés- exists a main interest for the listeners' incorporation that reproduces the responsorial form of religious singing and vocal African games. This singing tries to merge musicians and audience for the purpose of a common virtue rather than exalt a purely artistic level. An ethos is activated with the musical practice and it also defines -at least- two ways of action for the community. The first one is linked to the personal presentation required under the commercial-touristic circuit, and the second one is related to strengths and maintains group cohesion both as promoting views and senses of life. On one hand, the community exposes an emotional costume strategically with established repertoires for the touristic consumers who ask for the 'typical products of the exotic island'; on the other hand, other cultural practices are reserved as components for the strategies and tactics of resistance to economical and cultural impositions.

The tensions that this situation implies can be considered through the balances of power between the individual and collective actions. This consideration could permit the recognition of the group influence on the assertion of personal actions. With our experience in San Andrés we have found that the musicality's configuration implies a personal/collective continual remake of the environment (cultural and natural). Equally, multiple social perceptions mediate into the individual approaches to the musical instruments and the musical interaction with the auditory generates an interweaving of sensibilities. Thus, music promotes senses of feeling and also facilitates fields of relationship and action; in this line the musical process makes 'body' as sonorous moral order. In the case of the island, we discovered the collective singing, the shared dance and musical practice as a social bond, as a source of social power. Playing music with others and dancing with others is connected not only with social strategies of resistance to devices that regulate sensations, but also it is a way of knowing the social world.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

At this point we have presented social research explorations in connection with the musical-collective-creative-expressiveness, to demonstrate how bodies/emotions are configured in the social process. Perceptions, impressions, sensations, emotions and sensibilities appear as a ground from

which sonorities and body movements are nodes to the social structuration of different senses. Our experience in a Caribbean island and our "experimental" approximations to the local music can be considered not only effective to recognize structural aspects of local sensibilities but also efficient strategies to detail aspects of the sonorous levels of the islanders' lives.

Social research based on creativity strengthens the possibilities of understanding the social world. Creativity involves at least three processes regarding the development of a doctoral thesis: a) allows the student to experiment with autonomous paths for proper and rigorous perspective on the issues that he/she wants to study, b) provides the thesis an open and multidisciplinary vision that enhances the ability to hear the voices of the subjects participating in research, and c) makes it possible to explore the edges that are often eclipsed in traditional ways for researching the social world. In this context creativity involves processes through which you can become a more autonomous social scientist and it also stimulates a more pluralistic approach where other voices (marginal people) are actually heard.

In relation to creativity and its potential to allow us to understand the social world better, three dimensions are possible: creativity is a feature of social practices in all social classes, genders and ages; this condition can permit the access to complex territories and often silenced contexts; creativity improves that which exists in all social research as collective practice; and creativity enables acceptance of the inclusion of the researcher in the field of inquiry.

In the framework of the foregoing, performing music with others has not only been an experience for a doctoral research linked to the ideas and motivations of a particular person; it clearly implies an excellent opportunity for learning more about us and those involved in this experience.

#### NOTES

- i. For a detailed explanation of this concept cfr. Scribano [65].
- ii. We are conscious about the diverse conceptualization of the term *popular*, in this case we assume his equivalence with music that liked by a lot of people (specifically, the music liked by a lot of San Andrés' people). However, we know that exist other ways to understand it. For example, Ford [66] suggested perspectives of popularization of Tango music from ethnography and cultural studies, Vila [67] proposed an analysis of the



- “social movement” of the Argentinean rock in relation with identities and discourses, and Margulis [68] work on the musical audiences.
- iii. It means bodily conditions developed by humans in a biosocial process: the vocal organs allow basic sounds in babies that function as base for future complex language in the midst of human interactions.
  - iv. Interstitial practice means here a way of interpersonal action out of the established forms of the touristic consumption and the capitalism exploitation, this practice is based on the reciprocity, the care and the collective hopes [69].
  - v. Costeños people are considered more impulsive and passionate while Cachacos are seen more auto-controlled and civilized. It is necessary to accent that modern west societies have given a high value to emotional self-regulation as a form to calm passions and a strategy to discipline people in order to sustain an economic and moral system. This way of civilization has been justified as a rational behavior while emotional and bodily expressions are considered nearest to animal condition and uncivilized behavior [33,70].

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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