

Being a DJ is not just Pressing the Play: the pedagogization of a new *dream job*

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ABSTRACT – Being a DJ is not only Pressing the Play: the pedagogization of a new *dream job*. In this article, it is argued that the activity of DJ'ing is passing through a growing process of pedagogization, evidenced in the institutionalization of experiential knowledge traditionally produced and reproduced within the informal context of youth cultures under the form of school culture. The main hypothesis of this paper is that the process of pedagogization of DJ'ing is related to the increasing symbolic revaluation of this practice as a professional activity, currently a *dream job* for an increasing number of young people. On the other hand, it also results from the increasing accumulation and systematization of knowledge in the field of electronic music production, as well as from the increasing sophistication and complexity of the technological equipment handled by DJs in their practice.

Keywords: DJ. Dream Job. Mediatization. Artification. Pedagogization.

RESUMO – Ser DJ não é só Soltar o Play: a pedagogização de uma nova *profissão de sonho*. Neste artigo, argumenta-se que a atividade de DJ'ing tem passado por um crescente processo de pedagogização, patente na institucionalização de saberes experienciais tradicionalmente produzidos e reproduzidos no contexto informal de culturas juvenis, sob a forma de cultura escolar. A principal hipótese deste artigo é a de que esse processo se encontra relacionado com a crescente revalorização simbólica da prática de DJ'ing como atividade profissional, atualmente uma *profissão de sonho* para cada vez mais jovens. Por outro lado, decorre ainda da progressiva acumulação e sistematização de conhecimentos no campo da produção de música eletrónica, bem como da crescente sofisticação e complexificação dos equipamentos tecnológicos manipulados pelo DJ na sua prática.

Palavras-chave: DJ. Profissão de Sonho. Mediatização. Artificação. Pedagogização.

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Music, in all its most diverse styles and modes of enjoyment, is pervasive in the youth's life, following them in different daily situations, each one with its own sound track. Music not only dominates the youth's daily life, but also their social relations: the musical consumption among the youth is, in fact, a major marker of communities' taste and a sign of group differentiation (Miles, 2000; Webb, 2008), around which are structured micro networks of dense sociabilities, previously conceived as subcultures or countercultures, and nowadays usually known as flows, scenes or youth tribes (Ferreira, 2008; 2016; Pais, 2004).

Among the distinct musical styles currently available, the electronic music dance has been highlighted as one of the most relevant among the contemporary youth cultures, given the huge expansion and diversification of its production and consumption (Redhead, 1993; 1997; Thornton, 1995). Prolific in quite varied sub-styles (*techno, house, trance, drum'n bass* etc.), with historical matrices in constant expansion (Assef, 2010; Brewster; Broughton, 2006; 2010), the electronic music dance has in common the fact of creating sonorities with technological and digital equipment of sound production and synthesis, which have come to be more sophisticated - as samplers, CDJs, computers, controllers, sequencers, equalizers, synths, mixers and other tools that allow the clipping, the assembly, the creation and the overlapping of songs and sounds.

On the other hand, being fundamentally an instrumental and strongly rhythmic musical production, marked by the cadence of accelerated and constant beats, this music style also has in common the function of putting the bodies in movement. In fact, its basic modality of enjoyment assumes the exploring of pleasure of dance sensorial experience in multitude – an oceanic experience –, sometimes intensified using psychoactive products – an ecstatic experience (Malbon, 1999, p. 105-133)¹.

As the main responsible for the selection, mixing, sequence and, in some cases, production of music that make the bodies to move in the dance floor, the DJ has a unique protagonism in the electronic music cultures. Presently, their protagonism exceeds the more underground youth scenes, ascending to the limelight in the social landscape: in fact, nowadays, many DJs acquire the social statute of a celebrity, of a super star (Phillips, 2009; Brewster; Broughton, 2006; 2010). They travel all over the world in tours among the major clubs, parties and music festivals, obtaining money, pleasure, personal accomplishment and social recognition of their activity. This way, they are not only musical references for increasingly younger people, but also references of a life style identified by success, fame and glamour.

In this scene, Bara refers hyperbolizing, “[...] all the children born from the 1960's and the 1970's are potentially DJs” (Bara, 1999, p. 37). This means that in the scope of the most recent generations, the DJing

activity became very attractive not only from the point of view of the electronic music consumption, but also from the point of view of its production, exciting many young people to be DJs and trying its life style. The recent proliferation of DJing and musical production schools in Portugal, more concentrated in Lisbon and Porto, is quite illustrative of the current attraction of youth to the DJ's world.

Considering that traditionally DJing is an activity learned in the do-it-yourself (DIY) format, that is, in self-learning and informal learning frameworks among peers within the scope of youth groups (Araldi, 2004), how to explain the emergence of these training schools? It is argued in this article that this phenomenon expresses a pedagogization process (Beillerot, 1987) of the DJ activity, that is, the increasing displacement, appropriation, formalization and institutionalization of the experiential knowledge that constitute the DJ's know-how in forms of school culture, until now informally produced and reproduced within the scope of youth micro sociability. Which objective conditions fostered this process? Which subjective meanings does it acquire among its protagonists?

To answer to this set of questions, we depart from a theoretical referential anchored to the post-subcultural perspectives of the studies on youth cultures (Bennett, 2011; Ferreira, 2008; 2016). However, the glance on the practices that are developed in them is here dislocated, focusing them not as convivialist practices of consumption and leisure, producers of group identities, but as labor practices, with potential value of employability, as they can guarantee the subsistence and the existence of young people in the social world, and producing their professional identities.

In this perspective, it is explored the hypothesis that the DJing pedagogization process is related with the increasing symbolic and social revalorization of this activity, currently turned into a *dream job* for an increasing number of young people. Through DJing, the young people passion for music has a chance of being exerted as not only a leisure practice and music consumption, but also as a means of living and affirmation of their social existence, placing them in scene and living from the scene where they like to live. On the other hand, it also results from the gradual accumulation of knowledge in the field of musical production, as well as of the increasing sophistication and complexification of knowledge and equipment manipulated by DJs in their practice. It will be concluded that the recent placement of DJing in training schools will reshape the traditional *do-it-yourself* form in which the activity was learned, bringing it closer to a *do-it-for-yourself* configuration, considering the complexity and the sophistication of the (technological, theoretical and survival) skills demanded of a DJ in the present days.

The empirical material used results from nine individual in-depth, comprehensive interviews (Ferreira, 2014a), with young individuals aspiring to being a DJ, students in three DJing and musical production schools in Lisbon (ProDJ, ETIC and i4DJ), as well as seven

semi-structured interviews with individuals responsible for training courses in these same three schools and two additional schools (Dance-floor DJ Academy and MK2)².

Choosing to be a DJ: from fun to professionalization

Since the mid-1970s, following the instauration of the democratic system in Portugal, the belief in the value of the school and the training certified by it was widely strengthened among the Portuguese youth. The schooling rates had substantially increased in all the education levels and the youth school paths became increasingly longer and uninterrupted, be it by the widening of the mandatory schooling and the social policies that came to fight dropping out, be it by the increasing democratization of the access to higher education (Ferreira; Figueiredo; Silva, 1999; Ferreira, 2006).

However, the recent conjuncture of economic crisis in the country, marked by the strong economic recession and the application of extreme austerity measures, created conditions for the *value of employability* of diplomas³, namely at the higher education level, to start to be questioned among the younger people. It is a conjuncture that was marked, among other phenomena, by deep transformations in the labor market - more segmented, flexible and narrower -, by official taxes of youth unemployment exceeding 40%, by increasing unemployment rates (above 20%) among the graduates and by a constant reduction of the number of candidates to higher education between 2008 and 2014 (Alves et al., 2011; Cardoso et al., 2012; Lobo; Ferreira; Rowland, 2015; Pais, 2012; 2014; Vieira; Ferreira; Rowland, 2015).

Therefore, there is an empirical terrain to understand why the previous virtuous relation between the type and level of instruction, the profession, the remuneration and the social status is not taken for granted anymore (Alves, 2008). The higher education diploma does not guarantee any longer the access to and the progression in a certain career, nor a job that corresponds to the acquired qualification. A reality, on its turn, of which young people and their families are increasingly aware. In a scenario of flexibilization and volatility of labor markets and precarious employment of the wage relation, the conditions that would favor the optimistic search for formal education and of the itineraries that it provides have been made weakened. Young people are presently compelled to deal with the insecurity and the polyvalence that increasingly mark their transitions from the school for the work world, feeling some frustration and dissatisfaction with the more normative configurations assumed by these ways. In many cases, these conditions take young people to attempt to look for itineraries that are alternative to the official itineraries that articulate school, training and work.

At the same time, other types of activities developed in the sphere of youth cultures have integrated the professional options and expectations of an increasing number of young people, promoting their incursion in new educational and labor territories and shaping new forms

of professional insertion and work culture. Aware that there are less possibilities of having a professional career understood as a trajectory, with linear and clearly marked progression stages, that the professional insertion and development paths are increasingly random, chaotic and labyrinthic, and that the future is increasingly uncertain, risky and open (Ferreira; Nunes, 2014; Pais, 2001; 2003; Pais; Bendit; Ferreira, 2011; Vieira, 2015), more and more young people claim that they are willing to explore the employability potential of their daily leisure and pleasure practices, which integrate informally, *for fun*, learned skills.

This is the case of DJing, today perceived by many youngsters as an activity with professionalization potential. Here it is used the concept of *professionalization* not in the sense with which it has been debated within the scope of the sociology of professions - the process through which certain occupations reach the honorific title of professions and become socially acknowledged as such, subject to regulation processes and jurisdiction (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 2001) -, but as it has been affirmed in the scope of the sociology of youth (Almeida; Pais, 2013), that is, as a subjective process of thinking and investing in a certain social activity as a possible means of life, assigning to it the employability potential and aspiring to obtain an income to make a life of it:

I think that since I was a kid, even though I didn't know which musical style, I already used to like music. I never thought that, progressing, I'd like to make a living of this, right? Obviously, there was a phase when I did it for fun. I felt that I really liked it and I decided to bid on it. Because this is a bidding, you know? [...] It emerged... it was [in] school parties and with friends. It was from then on. Since I was a kid, I always liked music, but I didn't know exactly where I'd end up in this field. But it was with friends and everything else that I had this idea. [...] When I started [this music], I was very young and the school didn't make much sense to me. [...] At that time, I never really ruled out going to the university. With time, later, I started to feel like 'I need to study, I need to do this and that'... But the university was not easy either. Later I started with the parties. At the same time, I started to feel that I wanted more... (Interview with Gabriel, 20 years old, 12th grade, trainee at the ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

According to what Gabriel shows to us, considering that insecurity and risk are everywhere, in all the available paths, why not study and/or do what one really likes, instead of choosing more expectable and pre-defined routes, like going to the university? Other interviewees made this choice, bidding in the DJing training in parallel or after the formal attendance to the school trajectory, in the way of exploring a practice that pleased them and that, who knows, could open another labor option to them, from which they would certainly have a larger feeling of self-accomplishment. This means that, in the current context of crisis, when the young people calculate the (lesser) employment possibilities that they will have in the future, they do not make this necessarily guided by materialistic values or based on instrumental principles, choosing preset routes that, supposedly, would assign a wider warranty in the future. Aware that these routes also do not safeguard them, they also

bid in educational and labor paths guided by gratification of expressive nature, that is, related to the expression and accomplishment of themselves as a person and a professional and with the pleasure and interest intrinsic to the tasks to perform. This happens, often, potentializing in the work sphere passions developed in the leisure sphere:

I had never thought of that a lot, it was really when I was younger, I was about 14, 15 years old, I didn't have big plans yet. [...] And I didn't know that the country would be what it turned out being, right? Now everything is even more complicated. And, for that reason, I never made great plans of profession. And this one was the very first one, DJ was really the very first one... Because if I'm going to play, I don't feel that it's a profession. I feel that it's a *hobby* and that, if I can earn enough to have my own life, as I want, from DJing, I'll always feel that I don't have a profession [...], because it's like a *hobby* (Interview with Gabriel, 20 years old, 12th grade, trainee at ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

In the present context of labor crisis, the work continues, therefore, to occupy a central position in the youth's life as a dimension of value and not only in its instrumental or materialistic value as means of life, basic for subsistence and processes of providing autonomy to the youth. Its intrinsic value, as an element of gratification for the interest and pleasure that result from the task, and its expressive value, as a constituent element of personal and social identities, structuring of pleasant and subjectively rewarding life styles, continues to be as or more valued, namely next to *new dream jobs*, as it is the DJ case.

The Symbolic Reconfiguration of the DJ: a new *dream job*

The achievement of an ideal combination of instrumental or extrinsic values with expressive or intrinsic values in the professional exercise was, until a recent past, mainly associated to prestigious professions ratified by an academic diploma. However, in the current context of disbelief that an academic degree would fulfill dreams of security, stability, job, status and social mobility, associated to the context of insecurity and uncertainty that is felt in the labor market, the academic promises *compete* with the promises mediated by other social contexts, such as youth cultures and celebrity cultures. If previously the traditional dream jobs involved the selective mediation of higher education – such as physician, lawyer, architect or engineer, for instance –, nowadays there are new *dream jobs* that are not associated to careers certified by a higher education diploma.

Indeed, DJing has been the target of an important process of symbolic revalorization and social dignifying, as an activity invested with new meanings. If, until recently, being a DJ was not a promising profession, being associated to more marginal, underground social worlds, often loaded with stereotypes associated to the bohemian, the trickery and the use of drugs, nowadays this occupation is idealized as a successful profession with wide social recognition, moved by the social belief that through it one can come *to be somebody*, one can be in scene and live from the scene, providing to those who accedes it a feeling of

singularity, protagonism and existence both as an individual and as a worker, which is hard to obtain in the currently available work places available to the youth labor force:

Dance music here in Portugal... [...] We started with a much more underground wave, much more underground music, when what was called as *raves* started... [...] [Today] it's the whole... it's everything that is involved. It is the brightness, the lights, I don't know, it must fascinate them. [...] I think that this is the way through which they try to see it: 'Ok! My dream was something like this. I wanna be the center of the attention!'. [...] Speaking of the perspective that they [the students] convey to us [...] it's the lights... For them, success is the lights! They want success! [...] I really see that they come searching for this success in the limelight, of 'I'm a DJ!' [he says it with a very presumptuous air] 'I'm a DJ!' Something huge! They feel that as if it were the eternal life! This is what they convey to me... the idea of success that they would like [to reach]... (Interview with DJ JP, trainer at Dancefloor DJ Academy school) (Project..., 2013).

I have 15 years as a DJ, that is, I started way back when. I was never the target of what everybody used to say, which was: 'Ah! DJs are marginal'. That was the vision that they had then. [...] The DJ was considered as the marginal, as somebody who doesn't want to work, as somebody who wants to live of... Not nowadays anymore. By the way, nowadays it's absolutely the opposite. [...] There is a great transformation between the view of a DJ [from] 10 years ago, and now. I'm going to give you another example here. Some time ago we went to an [training] action and one of the organizers had a little daughter. [...] I started to feel that 'Ok, the father wants the daughter to enter into this world so that she can - I don't know, this is me speaking - be somebody'. Because we know that those who can be successful as DJ is a surplus-value, either at the level of money, either at the media level. [...] And this means what? That nowadays the parents themselves encourage [their children] What was like, ten years ago, 'no, no, you are going to be a physician, you are going to be a doctor', not anymore now! Now, when you see, they already [say] 'You will be a DJ, DJ is cool' (Interview with DJ PL, trainer at ProDJ and i4DJ schools) (Project..., 2013).

This is, in great extent, the social image currently projected by the media on the activity of DJ and some of its protagonists, daily mediatized in TV thematic channels (MTV, Trace, Clubbing TV etc.), movies⁴, magazines with varied contents, social networks and specific *sites*. These mediatic devices put into action a type of socialization of the imaginary (Kaufmann, 2003) that impels young people to produce professional idealizations or fictions. This form of projective reflexivity that constitutes the professional *dreams* is constructed based on pleasant images on what one *would like to come to be*, leading to a vague, diffuse and indefinite idea of future. Not being endowed with any temporal circumscription, it is a form of professional projection that does not demand any degree of commitment or realism either.

In certain conditions and in face of the visibility and familiarity with certain social chances, these professional *fictions* of the order of the imaginary can, however, be transformed into professional *aspirations* and *expectations*⁵. These are forms of projective reflexivity that also reflect desires of professional performance in the future, but whose orientations already take into consideration not only what *one would*

like to be, but also *what one could be* (in the case of the aspirations) and/or *what one wants to be* (in the case of the expectations). They imply, therefore, a strategical rationality to put into practice a concrete project that takes into consideration what can be concrete from the order of the reasonable and the probable. The social visibility that the DJ mediatization acquired claims not only for dreams, but it also potentiates professional aspirations and expectations among the new generations.

In fact, the recent mediatization of the DJ occupation strengthens the belief that anonymous dreamers or aspiring can accede to the limelight, making them familiar with criteria of access and success clues. On the other hand, it constructs and spreads an aura of glamour and fame on its protagonists, successful celebrities, actors of a cool, modern, cosmopolitan life style structured around an activity where the work is mixed with enjoyment of life and pleasures of different order: not only the intrinsic pleasure to practice, the whole time, the activity that one likes the most, but also extrinsic gratifications from which, then, wide social recognition, fame, money, girlfriends, trips etc. can result.

I have an idea that a lot of people doesn't do the things because they like it. They do it for the recognition that they receive from it or for the 'Ah! You have a friend who's a DJ. Ah! Very cool, and this and that'. [...] I believe that it there is a lot of people who go for the recognition or think that are going to get a lot of money with it (Interview with Gaspar, 22 years old, licentiate, trainee at ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

There must be someone whose only motivation is fame, who only wants to be famous. There must be someone whose only motivation is to have, in the case of a young man, lots of girls running after him, of being known, that his name is said. It has lots to do with fame. I would like to be famous, but I'd like to be there for merit, do you get it? (Interview with Gabriel, 20 years old, 12th grade, trainee at ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

The symbolic reconfiguration of the DJing activity does not result only from the intense process of mediatization and idealization. Inner conditions to the world of electronic music production triggered a transformation in the ways of making music that has had a significant role in the social dignifying of this occupation: I refer, specifically, to the process of *artification* of the DJ activity, a term used to describe the symbolic transubstantiation of a non-artistic activity into an artistic one (Heinich; Shapiro, 2012).

Being institutionally recognized as a profession in the International Classification of Occupations as well as in the National Classification of Professions in Portugal, DJing was symbolic and socially promoted in this most recent classification between its versions from 1994 and 2010. This promotion was based, in a great extent, on the institutional recognition of its *artification*. In fact, in the classification used in 1994, the DJ was placed between direct and private services workers not classified anywhere else, belonging to the Great Group 5 – sales personnel and salespeople (Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional, 1994). In the 2010 classification, though, DJ was classified in Great Grupo 2, specialists of intellectual and scientific activities, a category that

“[...] understands the tasks and functions of the intellectual and scientific professions, with particular incidence on the domains of inquiry, development and application of human knowledge” (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2011, p. 123). Within this large group, DJ started to be included in the category “Other artists and creative interpreters of the arts of spectacle”.

Even though in official terms the content of the DJ tasks has been remained the same in both categories between 1994 and 2010, its inclusion in this last category associates to it an artistic, creative and intellectual dimension that was not previously recognized. However, this association indicates the *artification* of the DJ activity, which happens through its *creativization*, that is, the process of displacement of a discourse mainly technical and practical to inform the practice of DJing, for a discourse of innovation, creativity and authorship, with subsequent expansion and multiplication of the forms to make different these same practices (Ferreira, 2014b). These are dimensions whose relevance appears sufficiently emphasized among the interviewees:

Above all [the DJ] must have a great creative ability. [...] And this obliges him to develop a big, consistent research of new music, old music, [to perceive] what each of them can convey to the people, in the right point. This is a major factor (Interview with DJ JP, trainer at Dancefloor DJ Academy school) (Project..., 2013).

DJs, producers, whatever they may be, have lots of homework to do! It's very demanding, because they must be always updated, they have that to be always one step ahead of all the others, because that demands a lot of creativity also. And the creativity... one must be always researching. [...] Because this is always being updated, at the equipment level - I speak about the DJ, because there is a lot of updating, there are lots of machines. [...] Suddenly, a lot of things emerged for them to be able to create something new and different (Interview with DJ CS, trainer at Dancefloor DJ Academy school) (Project..., 2013).

Just like it is observed in the excerpts, the DJ creativity implies the accumulation of a high musical culture and the development of a research *ethos*, through the exploration of creative solutions and the investigation of new techniques, sound materials and equipment. This research *ethos*, guided in the direction of the creative innovation, is in a great extent cultivated in the current conditions of schooling of musical production practices, conditions that implied the transformation of the traditional practical and experiential know-how informally produced and reproduced in the world of DJing, in curricular knowledge. This transformation implied the systematization and theorization of know-how historically accumulated within the specific area of the electronic musical production, its articulation with other disciplines and knowledge already academicized (engineering, acoustics, mathematics, technology, aesthetics, history, among others), as well as the application of less intuitive and know-how reproducing work methodologies in favor of more conceptual and project-based methodologies, strategically and rationally applied to the musical practice.

The Pedagogization of DJing: the school institutionalization of experiential knowledge

DJing is an occupation in which learnings and practical knowledge, or know-how, are, and always were, quite valued. In a quite wide and generalist sense, we speak of the experiential knowledge demanded to choose, mix and align, or even create (in case the DJ is also a musical producer) a set of music for the amusement of others. A lot of these know-how is developed since early in the scope of biographical experiences, socially contextualized among peer groups during the leisure times, practices with the recreational goal of occupying the free time. Music is downloaded from the internet, some tutorials are watched on YouTube, equipment is bought and one begins to be responsible for the music in friends and family parties. In the preparation for these moments, youngsters are trying music, alignments and sound effects provided by the equipment, alone in their bedrooms or among friends. The taste increases, the recognition of their talent extends in a micro group social scale and, this way, the dream to become a DJ is being nurtured.

However, the sped up technological changes of the equipment manipulated by the DJ have had relevant impacts on the knowledge and know-how implied in their activity, in terms of structure and volume of the skills that are demanded from them (Attias; Gavanas; Rietveld, 2013; Bacal, 2012; Montano, 2010; 2013). In face of a provision of increasingly sophisticated and complex technological equipment, the manipulation of the effects available by them becomes increasingly harder in conditions of self-learning or informal learning among peers:

When we started to play with our mixer, we were worried with certain things. And they were various, because we didn't know them. We looked at that and everything was new to us. Even though we had watched the videos [he refers to the tutorials in YouTube], everything is quite complicated when we have the things in front of us. And this was when we felt like: 'Well, maybe we need the help from somebody who knows'. And this is when we decided to start a course to improve our technical levels, as we didn't know how to make things work either. We didn't know what each thing meant. Therefore, we decided to bid on the training (Interview with Manuel, 19 years old, licentiate, trainee at i4DJ school) (Project..., 2013).

I believe that knowing what the buttons do is very important. Most of the people tends to press on buttons in a random way - and I know it because I also did it, before I had the training on how to use some software - and, therefore, this creates quite a big handicap. Because when one doesn't know what he's doing, it becomes more difficult to reach what one intends. And not reaching what one intends is the major cause [of] giving up for people who make music, because it's not like what they were expecting, or it's not like it should be. [...] And, therefore, I think that this is very important, I think that these fundamentals are very important. I believe that there are a lot of very talented people who, in fact, reach their full potential when they finally perceive what the heck those things do. [...] I tried to do it at home! But not knowing some fundamentals is relatively hard... starting from the middle of nowhere! It's necessary to know a lot of things. It's necessary to know what language the music uses - and I

had studied piano when I was a kid, therefore... it must help in some way! It helps to perceive some things, but it doesn't help to perceive the working mechanics of a machine, a computer which has hypotheses, infinite possibilities of parameters combinations (Interview with DJ MC, trainer at ETIC school) (Project..., 2013).

Recognizing the youth enthusiasm for this practice, we recently witnessed in major Portuguese cities, especially in Lisbon and Oporto, an increasing set of formative institutionalized offers and structures in the form of curricular plans and marketed under several educational formats. The emergence of this formative supply is, in a great extent, related with the attempt to satisfy the growing dream of being a DJ among young people:

Ultimately, we sell a dream, right? Because we have Portuguese DJs receiving €8,000 for a 45-minute-long performance. This is a very significant amount! Sometimes, they earn €100,000 per month. Obviously, they are quite a few, right? And it takes years and years of work. But our ambition is to train the best DJs of the world! (Smiling) (Interview with MP, public relations in ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

The training that is provided in these contexts may be a ludic, but organized form, for the youth to fill their free time only. However, quite often it is faced by its students beyond this objective, following a path through an employability perspective that implies the preparation for a future professional exercise. Even when many young people apply in these contexts with more ludic objectives, the formative process itself ends up socializing them and producing predispositions for the development of a future career in the field:

Lots of people come here for fun. Later, by the middle of the course, we see that they have talent for more. And those who are talented, the trainers always push them, providing stimulus. And they are not allowed to give up. And this is when the dream and will are born. I think that they are born then (Interview with DJ JP, trainer at Dancefloor DJ Academy school) (Project..., 2013).

What has been changing is that, while previously we had essentially younger guys who had a lot of passion and had the dream, but let's wait - as I use to say -, today, sometimes, I'm afraid, when I see a father arriving with a young kid and paying for the course, almost like he was paying for a higher... course, or something else. And this makes me a little concerned because, obviously, this is an artistic field, right? We are talking... it's not like being... even though nowadays there aren't that many guarantees, but soon... it's not an engineering or architecture course, who knows, medicine or even mechanics. [...] Since [nowadays] the DJs have a different visibility and, possibly, even culturally they are seen by the parents of these kids as possible professional opportunities, there is an easiness and there is, sometimes, even incentive for them doing it (Interview with DJ MS, trainer at MK2 school) (Project..., 2013).

One of the goals of this type of educational supplies is exactly to potentialize and deepen the skills that were shared before by young people in interactional socialization and developed in their leisure time. They accomplish that, however, transforming these skills into formal

and systematized knowledge and reproducing them in an intelligible and a quickly apprehensible way. Thus, the marketed training in DJing schools configures a form of focused and institutional transmission of a set of knowledge and know-how of *technical*, *historic* and *theoretical* nature that was accumulated informally.

The varied set of disciplines made available by them is presented to the trainees as one of the most efficient way for a fast, systematic convey, as deep as possible in the negotiated time, of the several types of accumulated cultural and praxeological capitals in the field of electronic music, and whose ownership is considered mandatory to the current development of electronic music production. These capitals comprise a certain volume of historical references in terms of musical styles and charismatic figures, of information and theoretical reflection, of technical or practical knowledge acquired and consolidated in the time concerning the handling of equipment and the respective effects:

Therefore, all the DJs, until some years ago, used to learn by seeing their friends playing, they learned because they researched, because they bought the equipment and trained. Nowadays, the knowledge is increasingly bigger. [...] But, of course, having a training - in this in case, with our trainers, all with more than fifteen years of experience - is different. There is quite a lot of attention and everything is very specific and with a very ruled thread. And this is why we wanted to be certificated, because then we not only obey to the evaluation parameters imposed by the society, as we have programmatic contents that are strictly followed and evaluations that always contribute for the improvement of their performance (Interview with MP, public relations in ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

One thing is to be learning, being self-taught. Another thing is [having] a school that researches, that looks for, that tries to follow, that tries to see beyond the things, and this complements the DJ much more. That is, we, as a school, could have all of this, we have the conditions for this, and this [makes] with that any student who comes to this school wins with this. [...] Because I had to learn with the mistakes, right? Here, in a school, no. In the school... What I learned, or all the trainers who are in this school, the mistakes [with] which we learn along life, we end up preventing them to make them... And this is to gain time, for them. Thus, it is very important, really... And there is a big difference between having a training and not having this training. [...] In fact, being here in the school, conducting a training is, undoubtedly, to jump over many problems (Interview with DJ PL, trainer at ProDJ and i4DJ schools) (Project..., 2013).

The transmutation process of informal skills into formal competences implies identifying, recognizing and defining the first ones as specific disciplinary knowledge, transforming know-how into knowledge, pedagogizing them in the form of a curricular plan and under different educational formats (different disciplines, modules corresponding to different levels of technical difficulty, specialized workshops etc.), designing instruments and moments of evaluation of these competences and certifying them under the form of qualification with different types and levels of institutional recognition to be marketed as formative resources:

The course has three modules and all of them have one specific component. The first module is the basic part, where they learn to do pitching, where they learn to do the DJ's heavy work, the DJ's fundamentals. The second module is the consolidation of the first one and the preparation for the third one. And the third is, really, the creative part, [the] processing of effects, it's a DJ's more ludic and visual issues. Throughout the course, we have documents that we pass to the students, so that they can study, consult, appreciate - anyway they want to interpret it -, which complements and helps, not only in the exams - which is mandatory, and this is why we are a certified school and we wanted to do it. At the end of each module there is an evaluation that it is written and practical, it is theoretical and practical. And that's it. And there is this process of the three modules. At the end of the three modules there are two additional exams [which] already are practical exams only, they are developed in the club already. They are two real performances, when they are also evaluated. One in which [the student] is evaluated by judges, that is, it's in a club, but there are three people - who are external to the school - evaluating and who evaluate the students in all the evaluation criteria, like technique, presence, the issue of the image, the musical issue. Done, everything is evaluated. And another exam, also in the club, is an actual performance. Already with the audience, be it friends, be it people invited by us that form the audience, and they also use the same criteria of evaluation, a little more rigorous. Because there is an audience already, they must please an audience, they should produce a musical momentum, they must have a notion of what they can do so that the dance floor is the most joyful and danceable possible. And this is the training process (Interview with DJ PL, trainer in ProDJ and i4DJ schools) (Project..., 2013).

It becomes evident, therefore, that the DJ activity is to pass through a process of pedagogical formalization of their knowledge and its ways of conveying. It is in this sense that we speak of *pedagogization* of DJing: that is, that the experiential knowledge traditionally produced and reproduced informally in the context of youth cultures are under an increasing *appropriation by* and *integration in* forms of school culture, even when out of the official school path. The marketization of these resources happens in the extent that they are appealing competences and qualifications, attractive and appealing to certain growing youth profiles, potentials detainers of time, economic and symbolic resources to invest in them not only as an activity for the use of free time, but also as an activity with professionalizing potential.

It is about a qualification culture, therefore, that meets professional aspirations and expectations of these youth, trying to invest a value of certification and employability to the commodity that they market. This value of the certification is also a distinction criterion in the market of this type of educational supply, sufficiently appealing in the search and the choice for this type of schools:

I chose this [school], and I had already visited two other ones, but I chose this one because it was the only one, at least among those I researched, that was certified. That's it. And I said to myself: 'Calm down. I'm looking for a school [that] doesn't have any certification, I see this one and it's certified, by chance it's even easy to get there - ok, that's where I'm going' (Interview with Tomé, 23 years old, 12 school years, worker, trainee at ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

These schools do not provide exactly a formal certification at the same level of those in the official school's path, at the secondary or under-graduation level. Some schools (like ProDJ) provide, however, professional certification accredited by the DGERT (*Direção Geral do Emprego e das Relações de Trabalho*) [National Board of Employment and Work Relations], the responsible official body for the certification of training bodies. This means that the practices and procedures of the training certified by this body are in accordance with a quality referential specific for the training, in the terms of the National System of Qualifications. Other schools (like the ETIC) go even farther, literally, and they provide an international certification to which they call *Higher National Diploma*, the designation used for higher education courses of the British educational system, facilitating the progression of studies and equivalences of their trainees to the international level, as well as the validation of their professional statute as DJ.

Between Proofs and Experiences: valences of the training school in DJing

Despite verifying that the existence of a formal accreditation logic on part of the youth is relevant in the option for a training in the field of DJing, the frequency of these training contexts is also highly appreciated due to the experiences provided by them to its students and the *proofs* to forge their professional identity as a DJ (Martucelli, 2006). On the other hand, they provide *practical experiences* in the access to techniques, technologies and equipment used in these occupations, which are much more sophisticated and complex now than in the past. When questioned on the advantages of the training, many interviewees certify this practical valence:

[...] 'mainly at technical levels. For everything: since we work with different materials, we learn how to do different things, we learn about the different ways to mix, everything that the material has to offer. Because I, before I came here to take this course, if I played in the highest technology that they have here, certainly I wouldn't know the use of half of the buttons. And now I already know it, right?' (Interview with Gabriel, 20 years old, 12 school years, trainee at ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

It is possible to observe, therefore, the valuation of a pedagogy based on *learning by doing* in the DJ training, in which doing is more important than listening, and experiencing is more effective than studying, being the trainer more like a mentor than a master. These training spaces acquire, thus, for their trainees, a value increased by the *laboratorial function* that they play, likely to be materialized with greater or lesser success, depending on the possibilities granted by the school in terms of creative experimentation material conditions. That is, the conditions relative to the availabilities provided by them in the contact with different techniques, technologies and equipment. Ultimately, resources that allow the formulation, the experience and the development of experimental situations that trigger new creative solutions.

On the other hand, these formative contexts still are sufficiently valued by the youth who attend them due to *social experiences* provided by professionals of the field, the trainers, who usually are DJs themselves. The valuation of their socialization dimension is revealed in the appropriation of the school as a dynamic space of debate and critique on their own work and the others', of following up and sharing of experiences with colleagues and teachers, of widening of the contact with other DJing professionals and their respective forms of doing. When providing the favorable occasion and conditions to acquire technical, historical and theoretical knowledge for the development of their musical creativity, to experience and to essay their paths, these schools promote a universe of intra and intergenerational permanent dialogue and/or confrontation, in which the exchange of critique, information, experiences and impressions is constant:

I think that they emerge because we, in the end, provide a full service. More than a school, the ProDJ is a place of living and experiencing. Therefore, the longer they are here, more contact they constantly have with all the equipment, the trainers and the colleagues. And they exchange a lot - experiences, happenings and music -, and this results in their growth at the professional level (Interview with MP, public relations in ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

Beyond the course, they - the techniques they learn -, end up having... having access to the experience. The actual experience, from the real life. And this learning by themselves [...] they are not going to have, you know? And I think that's more enriching. I believe that this is it. [...] Because here they end up filtering, [for perceiving] really whether 'this is what I want or not'. [...] Quite often they ask 'But, how is it? What do you usually do? What have you already done?'. And they end up having access to this experience. Which they are not going to have easily in these days, isn't it? Because we have several DJs, but there are many who learned at home, with tutorials, in YouTube, but that isn't the same! It's not the same. And here they have access to these two faces: to the learning and to the experience. I believe that this is where our strength is. (Interview with DJ JP, trainer at Dancefloor DJ Academy) (Projeto..., 2013).

In this way, the legitimation and social validation network of the youth aspiring to be a DJ is extended beyond its micro group circles, consolidating (or undoing) the value of previously accumulated biographical experiences, as well as the appreciation propagated in the circles of nuclear interaction of the youth, formed by family members, friends and colleagues. This means that, more than a formal accreditation, the youth look for in these training contexts a wider and more specialized accreditation and social recognition of their potential vocation:

A trainer initially has [a lot of influence], because it's the trainer who is training, teaching, and the DJ is going to start from there. [The beginner] will always listen to a trainer and will also, possibly, idolize him a little and try to do things like him, because he knows that this is the way to do it well, correctly. It can influence, there is no doubt that it can influence, and if there is somebody who can inspire the student, it's the trainer [when] saying that it's well done. I think that the best thing that

the student can hear is the words, not from a friend, not of a bar manager, it's from a trainer or a professional DJ. Being sincere, right? It's the best that one can hear (Interview with Gaspar, 22 years old, licentiate, trainee in ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

The contact with professionals from the field also has resonance next to the laypeople in the arts of DJing, in the extent that they are able of introduce them in the extra musical competences that are necessary to make somebody a DJ and to turn the respective professional dream into reality. Because, after all, "[...] being a DJ isn't just pressing the buttons, right?" (DJ PL, trainer at the ProDJ and i4DJ schools; Project..., 2013); "[...] it isn't only pressing play and generate sound, right? [...] There is so much behind it!" (AP, teacher and responsible for the music courses at ETIC school; Project..., 2013). As they attempt to professionalize in the activity and they look for places to play in the work market, the trainees will have to take over the statute of *self-entrepreneur*⁶, which implies the possession of other *survival skills* beyond the properly musical competences, like public relations and personal marketing techniques, career management methodologies, competences of self-presentation and their own work, either in meetings with customers or in their musical performance in the stage etc.

The idea that we receive at school is that the diploma, clearly, is a surplus-value. [But] to play in the places where I've already played, this was never relevant. More important, I think, than the diploma is the issue of knowing what we know at the level of everything; mainly of technique and the way we present ourselves in the places. That is, they prepared me, therefore, one hundred percent, and they explained everything that I must do to be able to perform in a place - how should I do, what should I take with me, what should I say. And if I do this well, I almost won't need the diploma, because it's enough to be able to play there (Interview with Gaspar, 22 years old, graduated, trainee at ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

We not only provide training, we also work in the field of events, we do a lot of stuff related to events, and we always try to take our senior students to our events. This is to make them know how they should speak with the customers, how they should be dressed properly, how they should assemble things, how they should keep the posture etc. Because no matter this being a very liberal profession and with a lot of give and take, there always are some restrictions [to which] one cannot escape. I mean, a customer is a customer. The customer is paying, the customer orders! Therefore, they also must have a little of this notion and... knowing how to negotiate and knowing to value themselves each time more (Interview with MP, public relations in ProDJ school) (Project..., 2013).

According to this view, the DJing schools function as preliminary spaces of institutional framing of their young trainees' activity. Their access corresponds to the entrance in a social network of inter-peer recognition and legitimation, in a network of opinions and evaluations already endowed with a certain degree of specialization and, therefore, with some capacity to build reputations. Colleagues and teachers are part of this network, but there is also the possibility of integrating other agents who are exterior to the school. From this emerges the expecta-

tions related to the schools as spaces of potential capitalization of privileged social relations, in the sense of providing social opportunities that warrant or facilitate the insertion of the youth in the work market. In the more informal or institutional contacts that it provides with professional environments, the schools end up socializing their trainees in the rules and conventions that guide the social play of the DJing world. If, on the one hand, it is in them that the student faces for the first time the rules of this social play, on the other one, its frequency strategically turns to be strategically profitable as a means of central socia(bi)lization for the success in their future professionalization.

Conclusion

The context marked by the decrease of the employability value of higher education diplomas and the work conditions provided by them, as well as the social revaluation that the activity of DJ has had by means of its intense mediatization and artification has strengthened the professionalization process of this activity. This means that a leisure and pleasure practice in the scope of youth cultures, developed in an amateur way, tends to be increasingly perceived and dreamed of by many young people as an activity of potential means of life or means of subsistence – even with different possibilities to reach them, depending on different previous social conditions (as class and gender).

Considering that this phenomenon does not happen only with DJing⁷, it urges to look at the practices developed within the scope of the youth cultures not only as leisure, consumption or ideological resistance activities, as it has happened in a great extent in the tradition of subcultural and even post-subcultural studies, but also looking at their youth appropriation as practices of production, with potential to come to constitute a way of life in the future. As work, they are not, however, only or even basically valued for its instrumental or materialistic dimension of the subsistence, also constituting *arts of existence* (Ferreira, 2016) that seduce many youth to escape to the emptiness of an anonymous and anodyne subsistence, corresponding to the current condition of the youth as workers, perceived as another one among many, placed in the backstage of the social scene social and left at the mercy of ways and mechanisms of labor insertion that submit them to the invisibility of underemployment, unemployment or the desolating and not promising job. In the dreams of many youth, being a DJ provides a feeling of protagonism and social recognition, with the right to a singular existence as an individual and a worker, a feeling of *being somebody* in the world, namely the work world, but not only that.

In this context, recognizing the calling of increasingly younger people to this activity, DJ training schools emerge and propagate, marketing competences and credentials that explore the will to make this dream real. In these schools, what were informal practices of production and reproduction of knowledge and know-how implied in the DJ activity are being replaced by pedagogical mediations and mediators.

Competences that previously were shared by youth in convivial socialities and developed in their leisure times are formalized in curricular units, marketed under different educational shapes and institutionalized under the form of qualifications, with different degrees of certification and school recognition. It is in this sense that I argue that the DJ occupation is passing through an increasing process of *pedagogization* (Beillerot, 1987), accomplished in the increasing appropriation and integration to forms of school culture of experiential knowledge previously produced and reproduced informally within the scope of the youth cultures quotidian.

Thus, it is clear how the process of turning the dream of being DJ into reality is more difficult to materialize itself based on learning practices that are exclusively self-sufficient and informal. This happens, mainly, due to increasing sophistication and complexification of the technological equipment used and to the gradual demand of innovation and creativity in the practice of this activity, by reference to a wide heritage of accumulated knowledge - now more systemized and formalized than in the past, namely by action of the educational institutions themselves, whose pedagogical activity compels to the systematization, *discoursivization* and conceptualization of the accumulated practical knowledge.

It can then be concluded that the learning of the DJing activity, traditionally considered as a *do-it-yourself* practice in the literature on youth cultures, does not necessarily follow this logic anymore. When this activity is pedagogized, the complexity and sophistication of the (technological, theoretical and of survival) contents and competences presently demanded for its practice ultimately configure a form of learning that is more similar to *do-it-for-yourself* than to *do-it-yourself*.

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Notes

- 1 Concerning the experiences allowed by the dance electronic music in contexts *raving & clubbing*, please see Demeuldre (1998), Jordan (1995), Queudrus (2002), Racine (2002), Reynolds (1998).
- 2 The empirical material presented in this article was produced within the scope of the research project *Tornando Profissões de Sonho Realidade. Transições para novos mundos profissionais atrativos para os jovens* [Making Dream Jobs come True. Transitions to new attractive professional worlds to young people], funded by the pela Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, PTDC/CS-SOC/122727/2010. For a more detailed description of the objectives and methods used in the project, please see: <<http://newdreamjobs.wixsite.com/dreamjobs>>. It is a wider project to research social and symbolic configurations concerning the choices, projects and professional paths not only of DJs, but also of chefs, models and soccer players.

- 3 The value of employability of a diploma is understood as the social value assigned to this tool in the access to a work position equivalent to the qualifications that certifies the most stable forms of job and, ultimately, to a work position *tout court*.
- 4 Some movies focusing on the DJ life: Groove (2000, Greg Harrison), Scratch (2001, Doug Pray), Maestro (2003, Josell Ramos), Hey DJ (2003, Miguel Delgado and Jon Jacobs), It's All Gone Pete Tong (2004, Michael Dowse), One Perfect Day (2004, Paul Currie), Berlin Calling (2008, Paul Kalkbrenner), We Are Your Friends (2015, Max Joseph).
- 5 To deepen the distinctions between professional *dreams, aspirations* and *expectations*, see Mateus (2013, p. 123-172).
- 6 According to Alves, the expression of *self-entrepreneur* describes the idea that “[...] each one must have with him/herself the relation of an entrepreneur with his product, trying to ‘sell him/herself’, to negotiate the ‘capital’ in which he/she became” (Alves, 2009, p. 253).
- 7 See, for instance, the case of the tattoo artists in Ferreira (2014b).

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