Effects on Children of Participation in Children's Community Choirs

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ABSTRACT – Effects on Children of Participation in Children's Community Choirs – This article explores the possibility of developing musical, social and personal skills in children, reflecting on the effects of their participation in community choir projects. Two projects, designed by adults, in which children are active subjects of artistic practices, which enhance music as an instrument for their sociocultural and affective development, are analysed. Through an ethnographic approach, these projects were monitored and focus groups and interviews with participants were conducted. The data collected suggest that those involved recognise positive effects on children in terms of personal and social skills and their ability to enjoy and build musical taste.
Keywords: Children. Children's Choirs. Community Musical Intervention. Arts. Education.

RÉSUMÉ – Effets de la Participation aux Chorales Communautaires d'Enfants sur les Enfants – Cet article explore la possibilité de développer des compétences musicales, sociales et personnelles chez les enfants, en réfléchissant aux effets de leur participation à des projets chorales communautaires. Deux projets, idéalisés par des adultes, dans lesquels les enfants sont des sujets actifs de pratiques artistiques, qui valorisent la musique comme instrument de leur développement socioculturel et affectif, sont analysés. Grâce à une approche ethnographique, ces projets ont été suivis, des groupes de discussion et des entretiens avec les participants ont été réalisés. Les données recueillies suggèrent que les personnes impliquées reconnaissent des effets positifs sur les enfants en compétences personnelles et sociales et de leur capacité à apprécier et à développer leur goût musical.
Mots-clés: Enfants. Chœurs d'Enfants. Intervention Musicale Communautaire. Art. Éducation.

RESUMO – Efeitos da Participação em Coros Comunitários Infantis nas Crianças – Este artigo explora a possibilidade de desenvolvimento de competências musicais, sociais e pessoais em crianças, refletindo sobre efeitos da sua participação em projetos corais comunitários. Analisam-se dois projetos, idealizados por adultos em que as crianças são sujeitos ativos de práticas artísticas, que potenciam a música como instrumento de desenvolvimento sociocultural e afetivo destas. Através de uma abordagem etnográfica, acompanhou-se estes projetos, realizaram-se grupos focais e entrevistas a participantes. Os dados recolhidos sugerem que os envolvidos reconhecem efeitos positivos nas crianças nas competências pessoais e sociais e na sua capacidade de fruição e construção do gosto musical.
Palavras-chave: Crianças. Coros Infantis. Intervenção Musical Comunitária. Artes. Educação.

Introduction

This research seeks to understand and analyse possible effects of children's participation in community music projects. The study object of the analysis was the projects *Escola a Cantar* and *Coro Infantil Casa da Música* [Sing at School and the Children's Chorus of the House of Music], which are both community children's choral music projects under the responsibility of the Casa da Música, designed to meet the community concerns of the Casa da Música Education Service. The purpose of these projects is to extend the school's work into communities and promote inclusion and equal opportunities (Boal-Palheiros, 2014; Bartleet; Higgins, 2018). Educational issues have been present in the programmatic concerns of the Casa da Música since its beginnings. These interventions are justified by the recognition that educational services are currently a strategic area for many cultural organisations, both because they allow the realisation of a programmatic vision of arts and culture as tools for social cohesion and integration, and because through them the trajectories and reputations of the institution and its members are also built (Ramalho, 2012; Boal-Palheiros, 2014).

The main objectives of the research presented here was to identify various effects of the projects Escola a Cantar/Coro Infantil da Casa da Música (EaC/CICM) on children in elementary school. More specifically, it sought to understand the extent to which projects such as these could contribute to: democratising access to a *legitimate culture* and a *legitimate cultural good* (Bourdieu, 2010), which is music, through the expansion of musical education; supporting the personal and social development and musical artistic skills of participating children; and promoting new visions of music in these children and their taste for enjoying and participating in musical practices.

The aim was also to understand the different contours that the projects were acquiring in the different contexts – the three schools and the Casa da Música.

Brief description of the project

The CICM project was designed to fulfil the community concerns of the Casa da Música Education Service, a community outreach project. In this sense, the Education Service, starting from the guiding principle that

music should be accessible to all, decided that CICM should involve children who until then did not have direct access to quality artistic training.

Thus, in the school year 2016/2017, the Escola a Cantar (EaC) project began in three public primary schools of the Porto metropolitan area: in Matosinhos, Vila Nova de Gaia and Porto. With these three schools, a choral training process was developed, involving about 350 children, educators, families, and communities. In this project, two Casa da Música instructors worked with all the first to fourth grade students from these schools, in weekly 60-minute sessions.

This process resulted in the creation of three choral groups, one per school, from which the voices of the Casa da Música Children's Choir would emerge, because at the end of the 2016/2017 school year, the children from the three school projects who showed the most vocal aptitude and interest in choral activity were invited to belong to the CICM, where they would develop their vocal skills more intensely.

From the school year 2017/2018 onwards, the study was, therefore, carried out in two projects – in three of the schools which continued their work with all the students, and which were also the place of recruitment of new voices, and that of the CICM. Thus, there are four widely spread entities developing, guided by the Casa da Música Education Service. The exploration of choral repertoires, collective composition and incentive to curricular success are the foundations of these projects.

The Casa da Música Children's Choir is currently one of the resident groups of the institution, with rehearsals on Saturday mornings at Casa da Música. Its public debut took place in one of the biggest concerts of 2017: on World Music Day, in Sala Suggia, it joined the Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música, the Coro Nacional de España and Coro Lira to perform Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*. Formed by 49 children, this choir results from and is an integral part of a proposal initiated in the year 2017/2018 with the desire of maintaining it in the future.

Effects of musical educational experiences

It is accepted that musical educational experiences can expand beyond the boundaries of music learning itself, including the development of personal skills, such as creativity and self-expression (Camara, 2003; Carminat-

ti; Krug, 2010; Kirschner; Tomasello, 2010; Wills, 2011), motor skills, the development of spatial reasoning (Jucan; Simion, 2015), rhythmic coordination, perceptual skills, which can be important in learning in the areas of mathematics and literacy (Anvari; Trainor; Woodside; Levy, 2002), and the ethical skills of discipline and responsibility developed through an established commitment to the work carried out (Dakon; Cloete, 2018). Also, public presentations allow a sense of achievement, pride, self-confidence, and self-respect to be developed (Arslan, 2014; Dakon; Cloete, 2018). There are also arguments that active involvement with music in childhood may also contribute to improving emotional self-control, since it can promote emotional development (e.g., mood regulation), and may also enhance highly affective experiences related to music (Sloboda, 1991; Hallam, 2010; Miranda; Gaudreau, 2011; Wills, 2011).

Making music together also seems to have positive effects on the development of social skills and constitutes a very clear way to achieve better levels of coordination between elements of a group and the sharing of emotions (Kirschner; Tomasello, 2010), through the development of friendly relationships, feelings of security and mutual respect. It provides children with ways to meet new people and make new friends (Dickens; Douglas, 2013; Dakon; Cloete, 2018), and can be an important factor for community cohesion (Azizinezhad; Hashemi; Darvishi, 2013).

It will be important to distinguish these types of i*ntrapersonal* (Finnäs, 1989), or *non-musical* (personal and social) skills from the so-called *musical* (Koopman, 2007) or *intramusical* (Finnäs, 1989) effects, i.e., those that focus on the constitutive aspects of music.

This type of experience seems to be able to contribute to the development of the quality of musical skills, especially regarding a greater capacity to interpret, to be more musically competent and open, and to have a critical awareness of music (Swanwick; Lawson, 1999). These skills are enhanced by fun, playful, creative experiences involving movement (vs. a more rigid physical posture), which facilitate the development of the ability to interact and teamwork with peers (Finnäs, 1989; Dakon; Cloete, 2018).

One of the aspects to which musical activities, in relation to musical skills, seem to be able to contribute is to the construction of taste and taste judgement (Alpert, 1982; Finnäs, 1989; Carper, 2001; McKoy, 2002;

Bourdieu, 2010; Hennion, 2011; Arriaga-Sanz et al., 2017). It is thus important to reflect on the effects that these activities may have on the musical preferences and consumption of the children involved. Also, there is a wide variety of positions that should be analysed on this issue.

Several studies (Finnäs, 1989; Arriaga-Sanz et al., 2017; Dobrota; Ercegovac, 2017) reveal that the vast majority of songs preferred by children are popular and trendy, and have a fast tempo and different rhythms, clear themes and chord progressions resolved in a straightforward and easily predictable way. They have coherent melodies, an absence of pronounced dissonances and a moderate degree of complexity, and mostly come from the media and are based on images from screens (televisions, mobile phones, games).

It is important to distinguish between musical preference (a volatile and undefined term implying the reactions to music that reflect the degree of liking or disliking, rather than a cognitive analysis or aesthetic reflection) and the concept of musical taste, used to indicate a more lasting preference towards certain types of music (Finnäs, 1989). For Pierre Bourdieu, musical taste is a very important and classificatory concept. He even states that:

> [...] there is nothing that allows, as much as musical tastes, to affirm their 'class' [...] The practice of musical taste choices appears then as extremely classifying [...] due to the rarity of the conditions of acquisition of the corresponding dispositions, of activities like attending concerts or playing a 'noble' musical instrument [...] (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 64).

Thus, regarding what he calls the universe of singular tastes, Bourdieu states that it is possible to distinguish three universes of tastes that normally also correspond to school levels and social classes. They are:

> [...] legitimate taste, that is, the taste for legitimate works [...] and to which the most secure aesthetes can associate the most legitimate works of art in the process of legitimation, cinema, jazz...[...] [which] increases with school level, reaching its highest frequency in the fractions of the dominant class that are richer in school capital; middle taste, which brings together the minor works of the major arts [...] and the major works of the minor arts [...] [which] is more frequent in the middle classes than in the popular classes or in the 'intellectual' fractions of the dominant class; and, finally, the popular taste, represented here by the choice of works of so-called light music or erudite music devalued by dissemination, and above all, songs totally devoid of ambition or artistic pretension [...] which finds its maximum frequency

in the popular classes and varies in inverse proportion to the schooling capital (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 6062).

In other words, differences in musical taste, due to being conditioned to aesthetic disposition – and this, in turn, conditioned to income and schooling levels – also contribute to social class divisions (Calvi; Souza; Santini, 2009). Thus, if we look at taste as

> [...] social representation of who we are or who we would like to be, the work of shaping this taste is a kind of shortcut between these two worlds, that of belonging (who we are or project ourselves to be) and that of reference (who we would like to be or the image we would like to project) (Calvi; Souza; Santini, 2009, p. 143).

Thus, the weight of socio-economic and socio-emotional factors is recognised in the formation of habits, attitudes, and musical taste, especially in younger people. The relationship between musical preferences and the formation of musical taste and various factors, such as participation in peer groups, family origin, age, gender, and the influence of the media has been studied in the context of different research (Finnäs, 1989). In this sense, shared knowledge is recognised as a powerful determinant of children's cultural preferences, both because it is about establishing effective and affective communication, and, being transmitted by others through social interactions, it serves as a marker of social group identity (Soley; Spelke, 2016). Knowledge of cultural products, such as songs, typically arises through exposure to these products. However, while cultural knowledge depends on interaction with cultures, this exposure can come in various forms in contemporary societies. Preferences thus emerge from various sources and not only from exposure, including (in the case of music) from auditory sensitivity to sociocultural conditions and even the personality of the individual listener (Soley; Spelke, 2016, p. 107). Looking at the role that socio-emotional influences can have on the development of musical preferences and taste, the emotional charge of songs seems to influence musical preferences and taste development, in that the degree of emotion felt when listening to a piece seems to have a positive correlation with preference (Finnäs, 1989). It is accepted that children's/young people's musical tastes develop primarily through contact with peers and exposure to the media, often departing from the tastes of their music teachers, instrument teachers, general-

ist teachers and parents (Finnäs 1989; Fung; Lee; Chung, 1999; Quadros Júnior; Lorenzo, 2013). What children seem to seek in music, whether heard in or out of school, is the possibility of developing skills and confidence to be able to choose and enjoy their music autonomously (Hargreaves; Marshall, 2003).

Musical preferences and taste also seem to be able to vary between different populations according to socially and culturally conditioned habits. Several studies regarding the influence of music listening habits on taste construction (Greer; Dorow; Randall, 1974; Hargreaves 1984; LeBlanc; Colman; McCrary; Sherrill; Malin, 1988; Finnäs, 1989) show that the effect of familiarity with music and repeated listening tend to increase the taste for more complex music. On the other hand, repeated listening to simple and very familiar music often leads to a decreased preference for that same music. It is also possible to see that the development of disapproving attitudes towards certain types of music can be minimised if there is early intervention with children, especially if playful and creative teaching-learning strategies are used (Alpert, 1982; Carper, 2001; McKoy, 2002).

Regarding the variable sociocultural origins, in general, higher sociocultural strata show a greater preference for classical music, increased frequency of concerts, etc. Young people who play or have played an instrument also show a greater preference for more erudite music. More negative attitudes towards contemporary music tend to be greater in contexts where there is a distinct lack of musical stimulation (Peery; Peery, 1986; Finnäs, 1989; Tanner; Asbridge; Wortley, 2008).

Recalling Bourdieu (2010), the challenge of the type of projects such as those analysed here will be for children whose class habitus positions them as close to a taste of the popular classes, through symbolic bridges constituted by the contact with different types of music, to also become *legitimate heirs* of a musical culture traditionally linked to what Bourdieu (2010) calls the *cultural nobility*. That is, that these projects allow the development of a cultural bilingualism in the children involved (Stoer; Cortesão, 1999).

It is recognised that "[...] enjoyment of music is acquired rather than innate, [...] music can be learned, and one can come to appreciate genres that were initially not understood" (Jucan; Simion, 2015, p. 621). Positive and engaging musical experiences can lead children to want to participate in new mu-

sical practices and help to shape their musical taste. Several studies have been conducted describing the formation of musical taste through experiences that include active music practice during childhood (Finnäs, 1989; Arriaga-Sanz et al., 2017). Art education ensures the development of a fundamental area of knowledge that mobilises both sensory and rational and imaginative and emotional capacities, creating that mysterious amalgam of pleasure and knowledge that is artistic expression (Ruiz, 2005, p. 3). In this sense, it is argued that the value of artistic practice since childhood goes beyond the appropriation of aesthetic values and the construction of taste.

However, the relationship between musical preferences and working with music seems to be ambiguous (Dobrota; Ercegovac, 2017) and is influenced by the particular characteristics of the listener (age, musical background, personality, musical knowledge or experience), the characteristics of the music (tempo, rhythm, timbre) and the context in which the music is heard (familiarity and repeated listening, affective experiences and social influences) (North; Hargreaves, 1997; Schäfer; Sedlmeier, 2009). The interaction of these factors contributes to form musical preferences that, over time, can become a specific pattern of musical taste (North; Hargreaves, 1997; Arriaga-Sanz et al., 2017).

It is also important to acknowledge the role of technology and media in providing access to multiple cultural and musical expressions from diverse societies, allowing different musical styles to reach audiences immediately (North; Hargreaves, 1997). Children are not passive consumers: they think, judge, give opinions and assert value criteria, although they often confirm society's current prejudices regarding gender, class, ethnicity, and generations.

This has led to a displacement of the non-formal learning context that determines the construction of preferences, in terms of the music that children listen to. Therefore, nowadays it is more complex to determine where children learn. All this is a challenge for music teachers today, who must prepare themselves to respond meaningfully to these changes and need tools to help them understand their environment and make appropriate decisions that benefit their students, valuing this diversity and creating a stimulating educational environment that favours the acquisition of musical skills (Arriaga, 2014; Riaño; Cabedo, 2013 apud Arriaga-Sanz et al., 2017). It is important, in this sense, to reflect on the variables that can be worked on in

teaching/learning situations, especially as regards what might be significant in influencing musical preferences and taste among young people receiving general music instruction (Finnäs, 1989).

Thus, in the work with music, more than seeking to develop taste, as aesthetic perception and appreciation, it will be important to develop some (awareness of) social autonomy, even if fragmentarily. This allows individuals the capacity for critical reflection about themselves and their reality and the development of more consistent social ties (Fabiano; Silva, 2012). More than aiming at *conquering audiences for culture* over time, we should seek to create what Santos (2003) calls a new concept, that of co-production of senses of social inclusion, a social inclusion

> [...] based on the acceptance and valorisation of diversity, on cooperation among different people and on the learning of multiplicity; a process through which society, in its most diverse dimensions, adapts itself so as to be able to include all individuals who, in turn, prepare themselves to play one or several roles in that society (Guerra, 2012, p. 96).

In relation to the data analysed in the present research, in fact it seems clear, as we will see below, that the different actors involved in the EaC and CICM projects recognise that these have positive effects on children at the level of the so-called non-musical (Koopman, 2007) or intrapersonal effects (either personal or social) (Finnäs, 1989), but that these are also experienced at the level of families, schools and the community. About the *musical* (Koopman, 2007) or *intramusical* (Finnäs,1989) effects, it can be perceived that repercussions of this type are recognised mainly in children, but also in the families and even in the head teachers.

Methodological processes

Analysis of the processes and results of intervention projects in the community may constitute an important strategy. The rationale underlying the projects and the activities developed should be clarified, as well as providing reasonably reliable information about the merits, potentialities and weaknesses of these specific projects, operating in circumstances that are also specific (Newcomer; Hatry; Wholey, 2015). The context of the present research is anchored in a qualitative approach (Patton, 2002), with the aim of understanding the effects that the EaC and CICM projects had on

the various actors involved. Rather than seeking absolute results, the intention is to understand their ecological validity, i.e., how, in each particular context, certain results were achieved. The focus on process monitoring in this research also allows us to address questions of internal validity, identifying a causal connection that can be established between the intended effects and the effects obtained by the projects, and the extent of this relationship, without overlooking the identification of unintended effects (good or bad) (Newcomer; Hatry; Wholey, 2015).

The research was carried out within the framework of an interpretative paradigm, recognising the interdependence of the subject and object of knowledge in the social sciences, as well as reality as socially constructed by the participants, and the need to understand the meanings of actions, as well as the perception of emotions, meanings and reasons for the actions of individuals involved in a music project with the community (Langston; Barrett, 2008). In view of this, we initially opted for research methods that allowed description rather than explanation, in order to identify how personal and social meanings are constructed (Silva, 2013; Aires, 2015) and in this context, we chose to conduct a multiple case study (Stake, 2013; Bond, 2015). By crossing it with ethnographic observation, the aim was to expand participants' perceptions of the experience and its perceived effect and create opportunities to listen to the speeches and opinions of the actors involved through the organisation of focus groups (three with children from each school and one with the children from CICM; three with head teachers from each school and one with the EaC/CICM music teachers) and interviews (two, with the two project leaders). Instead of collecting "decontextualised evidence" (Hamilton; Corbett-Whittier, 2012), the aim was to better understand not only the characteristics of the contexts and communities, but also of the individuals and extend the understanding of situations, behaviours, and attitudes in real contexts (Morgan; Spanish, 1984; Gondim; Sónia, 2002). Subsequently, the collected data were analysed. We chose thematic analysis, a method which allows the perceptions about patterns of meaning (themes) to be identified and systematically organised in a set of data (Braun; Clarke, 2006; Braun; Clarke; Hayfield; Terry, 2012), the themes being considered important in relation to the research questions explored (Braun; Clarke; Hayfield; Terry, 2012). The themes that emerged from the narratives

collected through the field notes, focus groups and interviews were brought together in an attempt to obtain a comprehensive view of the various experiences collected. The objective was to achieve coherence anchored in the way the data were carefully analysed and combined, interweaving them with theory, in the sense that this interconnection allowed the construction of valid arguments for the choices to be made from the themes (Aronson, 1995).

Effects of musical education experiences on children

Analysing the effects that the participants in the EaC and CICM projects recognise in themselves and/or other actors involved, through their perceptions of the processes undertaken, proved to be a complex task. From the data analysis it became clear that many actors had not only an opinion to give but also very particular views, not only on the type of effects they recognised as existing, but also the existence of these effects on different actors. In the process of triangulation of information, it became clear that it was necessary to listen to what each person had to say (Santos, 2003). It was thus a challenge to manage to interweave the threads that make up a narrative, suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). This narrative is assumedly constructed by those who tell the story and by those who collect the themes and decide to carve unrecognised pieces of narrative evidence. These are then selected, edited, and arranged to draw the arguments that respect the narratives of each actor, without atomising them and without removing their underlying intensions.

According to the data analysed, it could be perceived that the effects of the EaC and CICM projects emerge clearly as being more significant on children, which seems to be natural, since these are children's choral music projects, and their main protagonists are children. In fact, the effects on them are widely recognised by the children themselves, the head teachers, the musicians/trainers and those responsible for the project. The data collected thus indicates that those involved in these projects recognise the value of music as significant. They also recognise, as Koopman (1997) argues, that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in musical activities and that musical abilities can be developed in children through these activities. However, it can also be seen from the data analysis that the type of effects recognised vary according to the perspectives of each actor.

In the following summary table (Figure 1) it is possible to observe the effects that the different participants recognise that the EaC project has had on children.
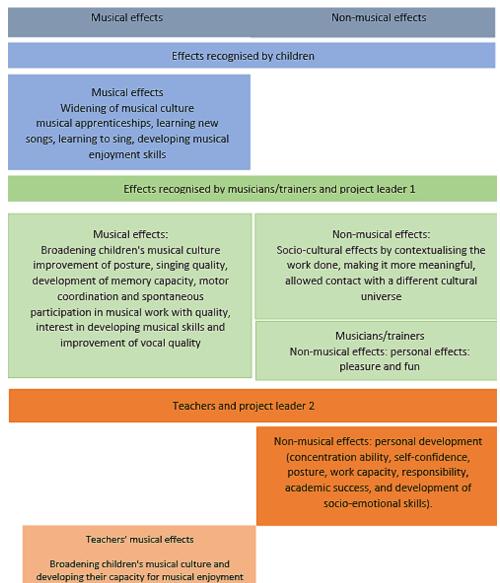

Figure 1 – EaC Project. Source: Elaborated by the authors.

For children, the effects they recognise in themselves are the *musical* (Koopman, 2007) or *intramusical* (Finnäs, 1989) effects. Children refer to the fact that they feel that as the project was an experience that they consider to be fun and that they liked it a lot, it allowed them to widen their musical culture, as they became acquainted with new music and learned to like music that they did not previously know, developing their capacity for musical enjoyment:

– Did you already like music a lot?

MEB/9: I like it much more now...

– Why do you like it much more now?

MEB/9: because... because of... (silences and keeps thinking) [...] I don't know how to explain (silence) [...] I learned new songs [...] and because I really like listening to songs and singing [...] and I learned new songs [...].

They also feel that they were able to learn music (learn to sing, improve their posture on stage).

According to the discourse produced in the focus group with the EaC musicians/trainers and the project leader 1, this project had musical effects, contributing to the broadening of the children's musical culture. They refer to the improvement in posture, memory capacity, motor coordination and spontaneous participation in musical work with quality/discovery of music, the interest in developing musical competencies and vocal quality. But they also refer to significant effects on the sociocultural development of the children (contextualisation of the work through presentations to the communities, making it more meaningful for the children and allowing them contact with a different cultural universe). The musicians/trainers also recognised the effects on a personal level, from the joy and pleasure that the children showed in the context of the EaC work.

The head teachers and the project leader 2 were able to recognise, above all, results in the children's personal development (improvement in the capacity of concentration, self-confidence, posture, work capacity, responsibility, academic success and development of socio-emotional skills). The head teachers and project leader 2, like Arslan (2014), consider that these types of musical experiences contributed to the children's positive development, both academically and in their social lives, through the development of discipline and responsibility skills through the commitment established with the work in the choir. However, the head teachers also recognised effects at a musical level, stating that the EaC project contributed to the broadening of the children's musical culture, effects also widely referred to by several authors such as Calvi, Souza and Santini (2009) and Bourdieu (2010), as well as to the development of the capacity for musical enjoyment, an aspect also recognised by Swanwick and Lawson (1999).

What seems to be common to all the actors is that they recognise much fewer effects of the project on children at the level of the development of social competencies; the children are the ones who most highlight teamwork and collaborative work (although the teachers also mention this aspect).

About the effects that the participants recognise in the children within the context of the CICM project, it is possible to perceive that these are mainly non-musical effects, at the level of personal development, although it is also perceived that there is recognition of effects at the level of sociocultural development and even, albeit to a smaller extent, musical effects.

Figure 2 – CICM. Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Regarding the CICM project, the children also recognise that it is a very positive experience and refer to their participation in the project in a

very emotional way. They speak of fulfilling a dream, of how happy they feel and valuing the pleasure and play they experience in the project. In their discourse, they refer to the wide and diverse effects of the project on themselves, both at the level of their personal development (a space for discoveries of personal fulfilment, growth, well-being and learning), as well as the feeling of personal fulfilment, transformation, achievements and development of the capacity for personal expression and intelligence. This allows them to develop a sense of achievement, pride and self-confidence and self-respect.

> FCICM/11: Singing brings me happiness [...] and the rainbow. I mean there are several colours and each colour... is a definite feeling, and I feel feelings when I'm singing [...] and they're good!

This is especially true when performing in front of an audience. The fact that these children perform in a prestigious concert hall, in front of audiences they do not know, but which also include their families, clearly has a very strong effect on their discourse, revealing that they felt nervous, but that their families valued their performances:

> MCICM/11 M.: I think things went better in the concert than in rehearsals because it was the pressure from the audience.
> FCICM/10.: yes, because in the *War Requiem* it was our experience, our first time, right? [...] but it was something more serious and as it was the first time, I think I was more nervous [...] now I think I was more at ease, I don't know [...]
> FCICM/9.: one thing that surprised me a lot was that I already knew that my mother was going to be prettier than usual, but I didn't know that my father was going to wear a suit.
> MCICM/10.: it was more [...] I think it was easier! [...] because we were not nervous [...], but the [...] nervousness sometimes makes [...] stay in the right place and [...] sing well [...].
> FCICM/10.: I think I was nervous just the same [...] only I don't think we noticed, but for us this one was much easier! My father says he felt a lot of development since our first concert until now! It's much better...
> FCICM/9: my grandmother said to me: you were very beautiful there! My father said: Congratulations daughter! and I said to my father: did you like it? Yes, I liked it very, very much.

They also recognise some effects on their sociocultural development. Because their work experience in the CICM allowed them to achieve better levels of coordination and sharing of emotions among the children in this

choir, as Kirschner and Tomasello (2010) state, it also allowed the development of friendships. Through the project they affirm that they have been able to meet people and to make friends with whom they feel what Barrett and Smigiel (2007) call *unity of purpose*, as children refer to the perception of a similar love between them and a commitment to music. They also recognise that the project could enable them to see the world and they see the extension of their experience of the choir into other contexts of their lives.

> FCICM/10: I think this experience allows us to know the world...
> FCICM/11: I felt that we, with the children's choir, by singing we will get to know more people, tourists...

Finally, there are also references to the development of musical skills (specifically musical skills and interest in music), but as being a type of effect that they feel has less relevance for them in the context of the work they do at the CICM.
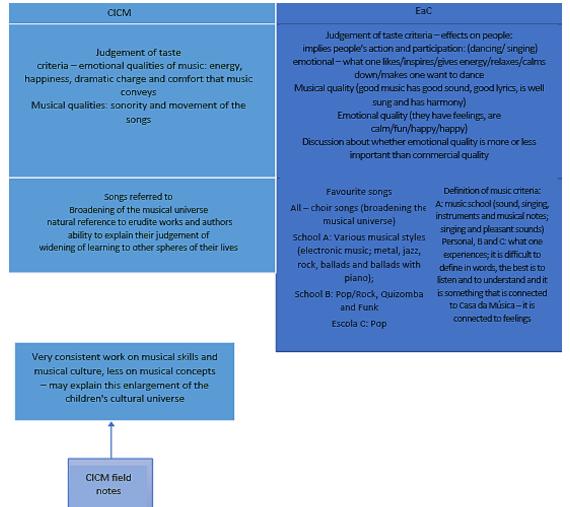
Both project leaders 1 and 2 recognise that it is a demanding project that requires great responsibility, dedication, and commitment from the children. Project leader 2 draws attention mainly to the impact that the CICM project has on the children in terms of personal development, which can be seen in their ability to adapt to the demands of the project, in the development of affective relationships among the children, as well as in the ability to welcome and integrate new CICM members, as stated by Dickens and Douglas (2013) and Dakon and Cloete (2018). However, they consider that there were important repercussions at the sociocultural level, mainly due to the contact with a different cultural universe, teamwork and pride in belonging to this project. In their opinion, this was also the case at the musical level (musical development, pride in the musical learning achieved), since the children clearly developed musical skills in their experience at the CICM, an effect also mentioned by Swanwick and Lawson (1999) in relation to experiences of this type of project. The musicians/trainers look at this issue from a different angle than the others. They talk more about future expectations they have about the impacts of the project on the children, and, at this level, they refer to expectations at the level of the children's personal development. They expect this to be an experience they will remember as positive; a seed at the level of the development of teamwork skills, sensitivities, listening skills and personal growth which will contribute
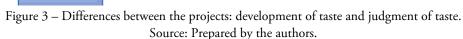
to developing the children's capacity for musical enjoyment. The musicians/trainers also mention their concerns regarding the way in which the CICM project is developing. They state that this project may have positive effects on a personal level, especially if the work is concerned with achieving a balance between the demand for quality products and the quality of the processes. Perceiving the need for visibility of the project as a fundamental issue, they fear that there may be a difficulty in coordinating the objectives of a community project with the expectation of the rapid creation of a professional-level choir, although they acknowledge that these risks are being considered. This is because they consider it fundamental to make children "actually protagonists of the processes, without ignoring the quality of the products developed" (Guimarães; Neves, 2013, p. 156). They also show concern that the community project may be used as a tool to promote a powerful institution and state that it is necessary to maintain an attitude of critical vigilance in monitoring and developing the project.

In fact, when we look at the data related to the way children from EaC and CICM refer to their musical preferences or how they analyse and describe the reasons why they like certain types of music more or less, we can see that the way they do it is different in these two contexts. These children, in general, recognise that the experience of being in the choir (in the EaC or in the CICM) provided them with a possibility of contact with new music, which allowed them greater pleasure in musical enjoyment. Especially regarding the CICM, one can notice a widening of the range of musical consumptions or even a change in these consumptions. It can be noticed that there is a clear difference between the way children from the two contexts define their musical taste, what they understand as good music and also about the impact that the work had on their musical consumption. However, there are differing aspects that may be significant.

Figure 3 – Differences between the projects: development of taste and judgment of taste.
Source: Prepared by the authors.

In EaC, the criteria used are, on the one hand, the effect that music has on the children themselves, as stated by Soley and Spelk, (2016), which imply action and which have emotional qualities, although they also recognise the importance of musical qualities such as good sound and good lyrics, well sung and with harmony.

> MEA/7: [...] um [...] it's a song that calms you down [...] (moving fingers with a thoughtful look) [...]
> FEA/10: a song that we like?
> FEB/9: feeling [...] joy [...]
> MEC/10: it has to be fun!
> FEB/10: it is a song that [...] that was not created to [...] to be famous [...]
> MEB/9: it was created with feeling!

FEB/6: that! [...] a good song is not created to achieve fame; buts created to have feelings [...].

It is important to note that, in this project, in the statements they make there seem to be differences in the musical consumptions between children. As North and Hargreaves (1997) state, in fact, children are not passive consumers; they think, judge, give opinions and assert value criteria. Thus, it can be perceived that, although musical consumptions are quite diverse from school to school, their taste and judgements of taste seem to confirm prevailing prejudices in society regarding gender issues, and sociocultural and generational belonging (Finnäs, 1989; Dobrota; Ercegovac, 2017; Arriaga-Sanz et al., 2017). In school A, in their definition of good music, the children use concepts such as styles of music, instruments used, harmony, inspiration and the musical consumptions they say they listen to – jazz, electronic music, metal, rock and songs sung in the choir. In schools B and C, the children value more personal concepts when defining good music, such as the fact that it is not created only for success, but that it has feelings, it gives joy, it is fun, it makes you want to dance, it has good lyrics, and it is well interpreted. They refer to consuming mainly trendy pop/funk songs, but also songs sung in the choir. This may lead us to think that, since these are groups of children coming from different sociocultural backgrounds (school A has a population closer to the middle class and there are references to listening to music with their families, whereas in the other two schools children from lower sociocultural strata predominate), the effect on the change in the type of musical consumption of the children may have been greater when the previous contact with other types of music already took place in their cultural backgrounds. Children from schools B and C have a more restricted consumption of musical styles, much more linked to a type of commercial music and of access through the media. However, in all groups it can be seen that the songs they work on in the context of the choir became part of the songs they like to listen to, widening the range of musical styles. In the CICM, the children use criteria of quality also emotional and musical quality, although the concepts used show the contact with a musical universe different from the first one: they speak of emotional qualities of music such as energy, happiness, dramatic charge, and comfort and in musical qualities such as the sonority and movement of the songs.

The contact with the songs and the contexts in which they are listened to seem, in fact, to influence taste and judgement of taste, as Finnäs (1989) states. In the CICM, the children state that they like a set of authors and works that they were in contact with during the project work, of which they speak with clear familiarity, explaining in a natural way why they like them and what they like in the works they talk about. Regarding their musical taste, the CICM children refer to a clearly erudite repertoire that very much reflects the works and composers worked on during the first year of the choir's work.

> FCICM/9: I like *Old Abram Brown* (Benjamin Britten) very much, because there's a part where we can sing very loud, that we can sing strong like that, I like it very much! I feel very comfortable.
>
> MCICM/9: The one I like the most is *War Requiem* (Benjamin Britten), because it is more dramatic!

Through the way they express themselves, it can be perceived that these children have a good capacity for analysing their musical taste and explain clearly why they like each song, analysing the sonority of the compositions, the energy, and the feelings they transmit. This might be related to the fact that the work of the CICM consists of the development of musical competences, specifically choral, but does not neglect to work on the issues connected to musical culture. In fact, several authors, such as Finnäs (1989), Carper (2001), McKoy (2002) and Arriaga-Sanz et al. (2017) recognise a connection between the work of musical competences and the development of taste and taste judgement.

What seems possible to perceive, upon analysing the issues of taste and taste judgement in both projects, is that everything leads to the belief that both contributed (in their own way, with different intensities, according to each context) to an enlargement of the children's musical culture. The children have not stopped considering their previous musical references, but they have added different ones. This seems to support the idea that, in fact, preferences emerge from various sources and not only from exposure and auditory sensitivity, but also from sociocultural conditions, and even the personality of each listener. It varies between different populations according to socially and culturally conditioned habits (Finnäs, 1989), but also, as Jucan and Simion (2015, p. 621) argue, "[...] the enjoyment of music is acquired and

not innate, [...] music can be learned and one can come to appreciate genres that were not initially understood", allowing for a certain development of some "cultural bilingualism" in the children involved (Stoer; Cortesão, 1999). In fact, more than working on taste, such as aesthetic perception and appreciation, in these projects some (awareness of) social autonomy seems to be achieved in fractions of social groups (Santos, 2003).

Final considerations

According to the analysis carried out, it can be stated that these two projects managed, at least partially and in some of those involved (children and some families), to create what Teixeira Lopes calls *regimes of familiarity*, which is essential for the transformation of practices and the construction of new behaviours. These projects contributed to constructing new forms of relating to music, with effects on the cognitive schemes of perception and classification that are at the basis of the production of identities (Lopes, 2009, p. 10), more directly in the children, but also in the adults involved. In other words, these projects seem to have contributed to democratising access to a *legitimate culture* and a *legitimate cultural good* (Bourdieu, 2010) – music – through the widening of musical education. However, it is recognised that the projects present some sociocultural mismatches between artists and project recipients, mismatches that should be recognised and taken care of in order to achieve a greater adequacy to the specific characteristics, skills and expectations of children and adults in the projects. Especially in the case of CICM, a necessary critical reflection can also be recognised on interests and difficulties of compatibility between the artistic mission of cultural agents and institutions and the social and civic missions in which they are involved (Ferreira, 2015, p. 55).

This is probably one of the greatest contributions that projects like EaC and CICM can bring. These are projects that make community musical intervention with children and are constituted as spaces of contact for children with other musical universes. The main mission of this kind of work is to contribute to broadening the range of the musical and cultural universe of those involved, where broadening always means the idea of opening horizons and of making what Freire (2018) refers to as cultural synthesis. It is, therefore, the acquisition of a cultural bilingualism (Stoer;

Cortesão, 1999) and of an emancipatory practice. Starting from (and respecting) the characteristics of specific social groups, it can establish bridges and potentiate a critical dialogue between different cultural universes, in this case the musical knowledge of music professionals and of the community. Thus, these projects seem to favour the personal and social development and the musical artistic competences of the participating children, as well as promoting a new outlook on music for them and a taste for enjoying and participating in musical practices. But this type of intervention will always have to contribute to transformation. The contact of a powerful cultural institution such as the Casa da Música can never represent the alienation of the cultures of the communities with which it works. However, respect for these cultures can never mean that the populations with whom we work, because they belong to a specific cultural universe, with their own musical consumption and tastes, do not have the right to enjoy their music, and to have contact with and get to know other cultural universes, to which, without this type of project, they would probably not have access. Recognising communities as plural spaces of inevitable cohesion and conflict (Ferreira; Coimbra; Menezes, 2012), one realises that the agenda of these projects intentionally mobilises this diversity in the cooperative construction, among equals, of something new (Matarasso, 2019). By being limited to what is already known, it only gives space to the taste of the market without questioning it and does not promote opening new channels of enjoyment and expression for adults and children. As Ostetto (2004, p. 16) states, everything will remain in the same place and the existence of this type of projects will never be significant[1].

Note

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