

## IDENTITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE NORTHERN SHORE OF RIO GRANDE DO SUL IN THE *TAFONA DA CANÇÃO NATIVA* FESTIVAL

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### ABSTRACT

The Nativist Festivals, in the context of the Nativist Gaúcho Movement, consists of contests of songs which aim to foment regional cultural production and creation. These events, by the songs judged, classified, and awarded, celebrate identities and enable disputes between social groups on the pursuit of visibility, delimiting symbolic frontiers and vivifying myths of origins and invented traditions. This article presents an analysis of some songs from “Tafona da Canção Nativa de Osório” (one of the festivals from this movement), of its regulations, texts, and testimonies from people involved in the festival throughout its 31 years of existence. Tafona proves to be a *sui-generis* festival, since, in addition to the “Campeiro Theme,” intended for songs that celebrate this hegemonic dimension of the gaúcho identity, the festival opens space to award

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1. In my musical activity, I use the stage name Pedro Guerra Pimentel.



songs that cover the “Coastal Theme,” which results from the city of Osório being inserted in the North Coast of Rio Grande do Sul.

This study will present reflections about identity construction processes by analyzing Song Festivals from the Gaúcho Nativist Movement (MTG), in Southern Brazil. We may think of these events as celebration rituals of regional identities – as an agenda topic, especially on the ode to the figure of the gaúcho, his practices and ways of life, behaviors and attitudes, worldviews and lifestyles, as well as landscapes, environments, and relationships with the cosmos, other cultures and cultural diversity, and humans and non-humans. In the case of the song festivals mentioned here, smaller territorialities come into play decisively since they highlight their micro-regional features, which gave rise to an internal diversity from this fragmented unit making the figure of the gaúcho. Thus, these competitive events, which aim to reward songs based on carefully constructed values, criteria, and regulations are stages to build, maintain, and transform symbolic boundaries that delimit collective belonging – not only regional and micro-regional, as we have said, but also loyalties to ethnicities, race, gender, generation, and other markers.

We take these events, complex social phenomena related to the valorization of certain forms of artistic production, as a motto – which offer good reflections! – about identities and otherness: the collective production of symbolic boundaries that shape representations about ourselves and others as a way of being in the world. These processes, in turn, are always produced by creative subjects who compose relationship networks and are, at the same time, crossed by power relations and reproducers of these same asymmetries. Many of these events in Rio Grande do Sul State are produced from State initiatives in partnership with artists, cultural activists, and people engaged in the various forms of the traditionalist movement.

### **NATIVIST FESTIVALS AND REGIONAL IDENTITIES**

Nativist Festivals are events consisting of musical contests which aim to encourage local creation and cultural production, reserving space for compositions which describe landscapes, identities, and regional territorialities related to the culture of Rio Grande do Sul state and its ethnic and historical formation.

Among the various Nativist Festivals from Rio Grande do Sul State and other Brazilian states, we chose to study *Tafona da Canção Nativa*<sup>2</sup> in Osório, which belongs to the “Nativist Movement,” has existed for 31 years, and has 28 editions. This is a local event from the Northern Shore of Rio Grande do Sul, an interesting micro-region bordering Santa Catarina. It has a social, cultural, environmental, and historical configuration which greatly differs from that of the “*pampa*,” strongly associated with the generic construction of the *gaúcho* figure. The festival has an exclusive award modality for songs with “coastal themes” – i.e., those songs talk about territorialities, landscapes, and identities from this micro-region, becoming an interesting object of reflection for this research.

It seems evident that the first intention of the pioneer Southern Nativist Festivals was to value Southern regionalisms. Born in Uruguaiana, Colmar Duarte, one of the creators of *California da Canção Nativa*<sup>3</sup>, says of the institution of the festival, during a meeting of directors of CTG Sinuelo do Pago, that:<sup>4</sup> “with that act, we were ordering the end of prejudices against *gaúchos*’ regional music and particularities of our uses and customs” (Duarte 2004, 14). *California da Canção Nativa*, which emerged without any great pretensions, according to Duarte’s words, originated the Nativist Festivals Movement in 1971.

Although it had no great pretensions, it outlined privileged stages and scenarios for the appropriation, construction, and crystallization of a determined identity: the *gaúcho*, which transformed into a symbol identity of the state (and in service of the state), the “*gaúcho* nation,” as analogously understood by Álvaro Santi (2004) and Ruben Oliven (1992), in a period of fervent discussion about the figure of the *gaúcho* in the 1980s and 90s. The Nativist Movement played a fundamental role in such public debate.

Nativist Movement festivals configure musical contests which happen in a certain way. We may describe thus: composers are notified that the festival will take place via the media, their media platforms and relationship networks (with great emphasis to digital social media in recent years). Observing the specifications of its regulations, they frame and choose their works according to the requirements of that specific festival.

Composers or their representatives, submit their music for screening, which will choose among hundreds of submitted songs (a number varying according to the legitimacy and public recognition of that festival).

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2. The name could be translated as “Tafona da Canção Nativa Festival”. Tafona or atafona: [...] Mill moved by arms or by animal to make cassava flour” (Marins 2005, 106). Festival administrators argue that guests got together in tafona sheds to sing songs and socialize.

3. Native Song California.

4. CTG: Centro de Tradições Gaúchas. Entity with a legal personality, related to the MTG, Movimento Tradicionalista Gaúcho, also an entity with a legal personality.

Between 12 and 20 songs will be performed on the stage at the event, which almost always happens in two preliminary rounds and a final one over three evenings. A jury consisting of artists recognized by their cultural activity (who may be the same who analyzed the songs that took part in the previous selection) aim to appreciate and award these performances. Some festivals also award the most popular song, which is usually chosen by the attending public, whereas others are chosen by the present media (journalists, art critics, etc.).

In the early 2000s, Álvaro Santi (2004) considered the Nativist Movement as the most important current manifestation within the Gaúcho Traditionalist Movement (MTG). *California da Canção Nativa*, considered the “mother” of the Nativist Festivals, was very successful in the 1970s and 1980s, inspiring the emergence of several other festivals organized in the same way, thus reinforcing the Nativist Movement itself by its capacity to mobilize and produce visibility.

The Gaúcho Traditionalist Movement was born and strengthened in the 1950s, led by young high school students - among them, Luís Carlos Barbosa Lessa and Paixão Côrtes.<sup>5</sup> Many CTGs were created in that context, which compiled, collected, created, complemented, and registered in guide books dances, music, costumes, food, and other vintage and contemporary customs, giving origin to a “traditionalist movement” of great proportions, which little by little spread to five continents (Hohlfeldt 2018, 87). Hohlfeldt finds that this huge movement decisively involves the invention of gaúcho traditions, appropriating the concept of “Invented Tradition,” as defined by Hobsbawm and Ranger.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, Oliven (1992) notes that the social construction of the gaúcho identity in Brazil evokes supposedly glorious times, when men lived free across the fields on horseback, men who would be honorable, brave, and loyal because of that. He also states that this necessarily idealized figure suffered a long process of cultural elaboration until it reached the one recognized as a figure of belonging - the gaúcho from contemporary Rio Grande do Sul (Oliven 1992, 50). Concerning the Gaúcho Traditionalist Movement, he points out:

It could be said that we are facing a group of intellectuals that makes use of a certain knowledge as a way of power.

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5. Note that, in addition to the figures of Barbosa Lessa and Paixão Côrtes as mentors of the Gaúcho Traditionalist Movement, the fundamental role Conjunto Farroupilha played in its national and international diaspora as a herald of this nascent musicality, as well. Regarding this, see Prass (2017).

6. “[...] a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules [...], of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition [...]”, implies “[...] continuity with the past” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 2018, 8).

It is, ultimately, about having a monopoly about the right to claim what is and what is not tradition and gaúcho culture and about having influence over a market of symbolic goods (Oliven 1992, 109).<sup>7</sup>

CTGs were and are often partners to create and hold nativist festivals. The theme of “invented traditions” in the context of the “Gaúcho Traditionalist Movement” brings several important studies by researchers and theorists, such as Oliven (1992, 69), Lessa (2008, 64), Santi (2004, 20), and Zalla (2018, 104). They discuss and analyze the ideological construction of the gaúcho myth based on the Nativist Movement, which had great importance to support the ideology originally developed by the group of intellectuals which included Barbosa Lessa and Paixão Côrtes, replicating and delving into the imaginary established in the literature about the gaúcho since the latest years in nineteenth century.

Ondina Fachel Leal (2021), in her restlessness to understand what gaúcho the gaúcho literature she read, the nativist music she heard and liked, and the academic discussions about on the subject addressed, finds, based on a dense ethnography, a gaúcho who, in the early days of the *Pampa*, arose from a kind of man - and here the gender really is masculine! - who mixed ethnicities: the Indigenous who already lived in these lands, the European from overseas (both Portuguese and Spanish), and the Black man who had escaped from slavery. These men developed customs and experiences, taming horses, capturing cattle for its meat, leather, and bones, and, finally, developing a specific culture. For the author, this “gaúcho” has ceased to exist, especially after territorial delimitations were set, considering that they used to live as the owners of themselves and the animals in the surrounding environment. Over time, this “gaúcho” ceased to be a “free” person and became a specialized work force. Thus, his knowledge was used to benefit powerful landowners. If that free “gaúcho” ceased to exist (Maestri 1993), the spirit of that feeling of freedom and interaction with the environment remained. That figure persists with a huge emotional force in the symbolic representations which shape regional identity, decisively removing that earlier image of gaúcho, who was once seen as a bandit, a thief, a figure of lesser moral stature in other times (Oliven 1992, 50, Leal 2021, 69). Today, apart from the territorial issue, in which the considered figure belonging to the state of Rio Grande do Sul is named “gaúcho,” we can say that, in a hegemonic narrative, gaúchos understand themselves as descendants and inheritors of a human group which, during a period of its existence, had been building its identity, thus, they developed a “culture” (actions in their way of living) involving the management of cattle and horses, using horses as an allies.

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7. All the quotes originally published in Portuguese were translated into English by us.

Leal (2021) points to a fundamental gender dimension in the construction of the gaúcho image: it is an eminently male figure. About the theme of the weak female presence in the imaginary related to gauchismo, Clarissa Ferreira (2021), in her “*Gauchismo Líquido*,” points out that, in the traditionalist and nativist musical universe, this scarcity is even more evident since it relates to the ideal of “*prenda*,” associated with a delicate and modest behavior. We will talk about this topic later.

After more than 50 years of nativist festivals, we find the praise of a broad identity of the “gaúcho,” idealized and appropriated by the Gaúcho Traditionalist Movement and positively reflected by nativist festivals all over the state in different scopes. A song categorically attributed to the “*campeira*<sup>8</sup> line” translates *campeira* elements into musical expression. An interpreter who appears in the festival as a representative of the *campeira* gaúcho identity, however, has often failed to experience this reality in his or her daily life. In many cases, that person is an urban worker, a businessperson, a “nightlife” musician who earns a living from concerts in events, etc. Their performance, despite distant from their daily reality, performs the *campeiro* identity and updates the symbols composing it.

Countless television programs broadcast the songs occupying the stage of the festivals, the most notorious of which is RBS TV “Galpão Crioulo.”<sup>9</sup> We also find thousands of radio programs (many currently broadcast on the Internet) designed to reproduce gaúcho *campeiro*-style songs – First, meeting listeners’ demands but, at the same time, creating and reproducing a captive audience for such expressions which, in general, are understood as the legitimate representatives of the authentic “gaúcho culture.” We can say that a self-reproductive circle is created. We find an ideological interest in praising a musical style which supposedly represents the general culture of the state (as in a nation-state), the “*campeiro*.” It contributes to shaping and regulating these festivals, orbiting around this same style and glorifying it.

However, we found that some nativist festivals have space for other types of musical expressions and representativeness of the cultural diversity of the State, spaces which are always forged in contexts of symbolic disputes and conflicts over authenticity and legitimacy, as Oliven (1992) shows. This topic particularly interests and guides us to look at *Tafona da Canção Nativa*.

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8. Referring to the rural gaúcho figure as described above.

9. RBS TV, television media network from the RBS group, a Rede Globo affiliate.

## THE TAFONA DA CANÇÃO NATIVA

In a context of public discussions and ideological disputes, *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, from Osório, was created in 1989, when the other nativist festivals addressed topics other than the coastal one. Thus came the “coastal theme” into the scene. Its proposal appeared on the back cover of the LP of the 1st *Tafona da Canção Nativa*. In the words of the creator and president of the 1st *Tafona*, Airton Marques Camargo (at the time the Osório Secretary of Culture, Sports, and Tourism ):

The Northern Shore has long needed to get its cultural roots back. The Province of São Pedro was born here, this is where the Lusitanians coming from Laguna first arrived, people who unfurled floodplains and undulating plans, pushing the motherland to the banks of Uruguay, in the whole conquest of the Continent. No more, no less, simply coastal gaúchos, with our history, our customs, our racial miscegenation which framed our pattern [...]. [...] This horse lasso, which now belongs to lassoes of culture, does not claim to renew the native music but mainly to get back and spread the roots of regional RS cultures, putting in evidence those from the Northern Shore. (Camargo, back cover of the LP of the 1st *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, 1989).

In Airton Camargo’s speech at the end of the 1980s, we can highlight a context of intense work to build the Gaúcho figure (Oliven 1992), the perception that the Northern shore of Rio Grande do Sul needed to “get its cultural roots back.” The festival was idealized as a movement directed to such perceived necessity. The perspectives of “rescue,” as manifested in the Gaúcho Traditionalist Movement itself, has its roots broadly related to the necessity to register and perpetuate certain practices and expressions valued as “typical” of popular regional cultures. Those necessities are deeply present in the whole folklorist movement. In the case of Southern Brazil, this process relates to the crystallization of certain representations about the figure of the “Gaúcho,” today strongly anchored in the actions of these same movements.

In this sense, Ruben Oliven points out that “in the eighties, the gaúcho identity became an object of disputes, characterized by intense and strong polemics.” The period discussed questions about the “gaúcho figure, the way to build it, the criteria to define its authenticity, the instances of its legitimacy and consecration etc.” (Oliven 1992, 108). The author continues: the identity of the constructed and idealized gaúcho, “based on a past which would have existed in the pastoral region of *Campanha* [...], excludes more than it includes, leaving out half of the territory of *Rio Grande do Sul* and a large part of its social groups” (Oliven 1992, 100).

Within nativist festivals actors, groups, and cultural expressions constantly compete for space, visibility, and power. In general, the identity of the southern inhabitant is idealized as that of the *campeiro*, of Gaúchos as constructed in an atmosphere of what is known as “*gauchismo*.” These festivals evince repeated attempts to block from the contests the presence of representations considered “urban” or manifestations of other cultural segments from the state. The regulations of the festival usually stipulate that submitted songs must include a specific theme in their lyrics, employ certain musical instruments, and even the clothing worn for performances since almost all festivals require that the performers and instrumentalists on stage wear “*pilcha*”<sup>10</sup> during the competition.

Besides the regulation<sup>11</sup> imposing these rules - sets of prohibitions and prescriptions which at once include and exclude – a jury (which the executive and organizing committee of the festival chooses) usually select the songs to be performed’. The committee aims to ensure that the names invited to compose the juries perform nativist and country music (*campeira*) and have developed their artistic backgrounds, careers, and works within this style, thus evidently characterizing a way to impede other cultural manifestations.

Regarding the jury’s influence on the songs selected for the festival and the given awards, we can mention the 23rd *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, which had a jury including Antônio Augusto Fagundes, Don Araby Rodrigues, and Salvador Lambert, people directly linked to the Gaúcho Traditionalist Movement and who have published books and poems about the subject; Luiz Carlos Borges, an accordionist with an expressive history in the music of the state, a frontier musician, and a *chamamé* enthusiast and defender, complemented the jury. Kleiton Ramil also participated, an eclectic musician and composer who has already tasted success in the national cultural industry. This background may have influenced this edition, although with some diversification, predominantly choosing *campeiristas* songs out of the more than 500 submitted ones, and reflecting it in its result, which placed a “*chacareira*”<sup>12</sup> and a “*chamamé*”<sup>13</sup> in its first and second positions. “*Por Bailado e Chacarera*”,<sup>14</sup> by Rogério Villagran and André Giuliani Teixeira, placed first in the festival; “*Um Chamamé... Y Nada*

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10. Pilcha is the name given to the “typical” gaúcho outfit, it was also built within the MTG according to strict rules and normative standards (Nunes 1996, 373). The pilcha, we should highlight, is considered a “gala attire” in several ceremonies in Rio Grande do Sul.

11. Article 22 of the regulation of the 23rd *Tafona da Canção Nativa* 2013: “Art. 22 - Regarding the clothing of competitors, this regulation establishes the following: RIOGRANDENSE LINE: Competitors must wear the typical outfit of Rio Grande do Sul. COASTAL LINE: Outfit according to the presented theme, as long as they are not disrespectful to the public, participants, and the Organizing Committee of the festival” (Accessed November 11, 2020, <http://www.sesmaria.org.br/tafona.htm>).

12. Rhythm and dance of the Argentinian folklore.

13. Argentinean rhythm from Corrientes, an Argentinian Province.

14. (Villagran and Teixeira 2013).

*Más...*”,<sup>15</sup> sung in Spanish and talking about the *chamamé*, placed second. Both lied within the aesthetics of nativist festivals (the dimension of what is known “*gauchismo*”) “*Praieiro*”,<sup>16</sup> a coastal-themed song placed third.

The songs categorized as coastal at the *Tafona da Canção Nativa* festival brought several elements considered as typical expressions from the Northern shore of Rio Grande do Sul, including landscapes, legends, traditional narratives, customs, experiences, expressions of colonization and of the settlements in the region and mentioning rivers, lakes, the sea, the life of a fisherman, Azoreans, and its Portuguese heritage. Since the third *Tafona da Canção Nativa* and the song “*Quicumbi*,”<sup>17</sup> by Ivo Ladislau and Carlos Catuípe, the *afro-gaúcho* matrix is present in these competitions. The *Maçambique* gender appears in these authors’ research, which, however, relegates Indigenous peoples to an almost absolute silence in the group of productions composing the festival. Such themes are practically absent in the songs selected for the other festivals in the state – showing the hegemony of “*gaúcho*” theme – until the advent of the 1st *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, which aimed to sing the history of the Northern Shore and promote coastal music (as it happens to this today), as per the back cover of the LP from the festival.

We found that these movements, which appeared in Southern Brazil, show a feeling of belonging, a mobilization searching affirmation of local and communal identities, the need to distinguish what is ours and what is not and delimitate territories, symbolic boundaries, and limits, in this case, expressed by an intention to resist or to improve the art was created before the advent of these festivals, whose themes expressing territorialities, in the sense of symbolic appropriation (Haesbaert 2004), were and are treated “as a synonym of belonging to what belongs to us” (Santos and Silveira 2014, 19).

Regarding the almost total absence of themes identifying, extolling, and celebrating the Afro-Brazilian identity in the music of Rio Grande do Sul in these festivals, Juarez Fonseca (2004) points to the rare participation of Barbosa Lessa in these festivals (with “*Bambaquerê*” at *Califórnia da Canção*). He finds it curious

[...] the resistance that California and the nativist festivals have to accept as ours the rhythms from Black descendants in the Rio Grande do Sul shore. They say it is “*samba*”. It is not of course [...]. [...] Most “*bagual*” festivals created a type

15. (Muller and Nunes 2020).

16. (Martinez and Sperandir 2013).

17. (Ladislau and Catuípe 2019).

of music that is considered traditional. However, it has no musical basis (root) in any tradition [...] (Fonseca 2004, 21).

The issue of invisibility has always guided the fight for social space and work opportunities for African descendants and Indigenous peoples in Brazil due to the historical formation of our society, which evinces inequalities, prejudice, and disdain for non-European cultures composing Brazilian culture. As Ilka Boaventura Leite emphasizes, “the invisibility of Black people is one of the pillars of the whitening ideology, and it can be identified in several types of practices and representations [...], [...] in the individual and collective field, in institutional and official actions, and in scientific texts” (Leite 1996, 41).

### **IDENTITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE *TAFONA DA CANÇÃO NATIVA***

The study of identity construction processes is always complex, requiring a deep analysis of its social, cultural, ethnic, economic, and territorial aspects, what languages, dialogues, ways of saying, and (our particular interest) songs reproduce, and what and how it is sung, its rhythms and genres, artists’ creative gestures, and the means of circulation of their works. Thus, Silva (2014) states that:

In general, when we say something about certain identity characteristics of some cultural group, we think that we are simply describing an existing situation, a “fact” of the social world. What we forget is that what we say takes part of a wider network of linguistic acts which, as a whole, contributes to define or reinforce the identity we are supposedly just describing. So, for example, when we use a racist word such as “nigger” to refer to a Black male person, we are not simply making a description about a person’s color. We are, in fact, inserting ourselves into a larger linguistic system which contributes to reinforce the negativity attributed to the “Black” identity. This example also works to highlight another important element of the performative aspect of identity production. The productive efficacy of identity-related performative facts depends on their incessant repetition. In terms of identity production, the occurrence of a single sentence from this background would have no important effect. It is by its repetition and, above all, the possibility of its repetition, that the power that such a linguistic act has in the process of identity production comes (Silva 2014, 93 and 94).



Music festivals constitute not only excellent stages to perform certain statements involving repeated and recreated formulas but also spaces to transform symbols and representations. The Northern Shore of Rio Grande do Sul contains identities related to its ethnic formation, in which people identify as belonging to a diasporic and immigration heritage of people who came to this territory when Brazil was still a Portuguese colony. We can include in the same context the descendants of the Portuguese, Azoreans, Africans, (and later) Germans and Italians, those from other ethnicities (such as the Japanese), and those who have lived in this territory for thousands of years, such as Indigenous peoples.

Based on Castells (2018), we understand identity as the source or way a group of people organizes meanings<sup>18</sup> and experiences and learns languages, names, and culture, establishing distinctions and associations between the person and the other (us and them) during the construction of their self-knowledge (Castells 2018, 54 and 55).

Thus, according to Castells' theory, we may consider the Nativist Movement as an identity of resistance regarding the fight for cultural space due to globalization and mass media (Castells 2018, 56) by actors in devalued positions (in this case, neither space in the media nor job opportunities for local music production) who keep, although "stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival". At the same time, we may see the Movement as a legitimizing identity, which is "introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination *vis à vis* social actors" (Castells 2018, 55). Thus, by the almost exclusive preponderance of the *campeiro* theme in nativist festival songs, their performative enunciations (Silva 2000) continuously reinforce the stereotype of the southern man as the "*campeiro*", making other cultural manifestations invisible. In other words, erasing its internal otherness forges the supposed homogeneity of such identity.

Nativist Festivals Movement regulations fail to establish any criteria regarding female identities. Some award both best male and female performers. However, as Ondina Leal (2021), Álvaro Santi (2004), and Ruben Oliven (1992) have observed, what sustains a great part of the nativist festival theme has its origin in the "cult" of the "gaúcho". The festivals reproduced this fact, of course, associated with other violent and social barriers women face, thus very clearly evincing the prevalence of the male gender. Reading the back covers and inserts of the LPs and CDs shows the massive male participation and the scarce female one as composers and musicians in these festivals (they feature somewhat more often as

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18. Manuel Castells defines meaning as the symbolic identification by a social actor of the purpose of their action (Castells 2018, 55).

interpreters). We again mention Clarissa Ferreira's (2021, 116) "*Gauchismo Líquido*," which interprets the passive and submissive attitude imposed to women in the traditionalist and nativist world, which these songs reproduce. This is also evident in their approach to typical themes, i.e., the male chauvinist and patriarchal origins of the Gaúcho Traditionalist Movement which places women as those who must be protected for their "fragility", a figure related to domestic chores, care, and affection, whereas men must work in the field, provide for their homes, and sustain their families.

The prescriptions and prohibitions constituted within the MTG evidently relate to these aforementioned topics. Glaucus Saraiva (apud Oliven 1992, 114), in his *Manual do Tradicionalista*, "establishes" that some changes to "*prenda*" costumes are allowed, but with some conditions:

We only request that our dear traditionalists, attending to the virtues of demureness, simplicity, and decency that the gaúcho attributes to them, do not transform "*prenda dresses*" and their accessories into costumes which are offensive to the moral sense of austerity from our Traditionalist Movement (...). The function of women's clothing is to serve as a model for cuteness and beauty, not to make them grotesque or ridiculous.

When we analyze *Tafona das Tafonas*, the 20th anniversary of the festival, which took place in 2009 and gathered the winning songs from its first to the 19th editions, we see the scarcity of female representation among its champions. However, the female presence increased as *Tafona* emerged among other nativist festivals, as per the recurring participation of performers such as Cléa Gomes, Maria Luíza Benitez, Lomma, Fátima Gimenez, Ângela Jobim, Adriana Sperandir, Maria Helena Anversa, Mari Ramos, Juliana Spanevello, Débora Rosa, and many other talented artists who sing in the Osório *Tafonas*. Its 21st edition, for example, had great female participation; they performed seven of its 12 songs.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, the participation of women as composers of the songs selected and performed in the festivals remains very rare.

The greater empowerment of female representation in *Tafona* performances certainly coincides with the strength of the search for Black expressiveness on the shore: the recurrent representation of *Rainha Ginga* (*Ginga Queen*), an often sung and remembered song which celebrates the

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19. Adriana Sperandir, Mari Ramos, Juliana Spanevello, Maria Helena Anversa, Analise Severo, Maria Conceição e Graziela Pacheco, as per *Revisão Newspaper* and in *Staccatus*, a digital magazine (Accessed March 5, 2022, <https://www.rima.art.br/eventos.rima.art.br/paginas/t21-2011.pdf>).

coronation of a Black woman in the Catholic Church within the context of the *Maçambique* from Osório.<sup>20</sup> Songs about the Festival of Our Lady of the Rosary show the research for *Tafona*. In “*Congado e Paixão*” (Dicasa 2018), performed at the 11th *Tafona*, Paulinho Dicasa reveres *Rainha Ginga*, the *congado*, and Black empowerment in society, saying:

There is a *congado* in Morro Alto  
Without delay I'm going there  
Down here on the asphalt  
You can hear the drums beating  
They're the Black *marzambi* players  
Preparing the revelry  
For *Ginga*, the Warrior Queen  
It's all party and joy  
Here comes the sovereign  
Our great empress  
Her beauty enchants all  
The *congado* is happy  
A different emotion  
No one can explain  
The pleasure we feel  
Singing and dancing the *Maçambique*.  
I am the Black potentate  
I am not here to fight [...].

In its symbolic dimension, ethnic groups created elements which constitute signs its members believe makes them different from others. These differences, expressed in words, attitudes, songs, poems, clothing, and other expressions, make up their lives with others in society in the exercise of manifesting differences. The imaginary of those who identify with a specific ethnic group build ethnic identities, which occasionally fail to correspond to a real heritage situation. This imaginary produces symbolic boundaries, elements created and cultivated to separate, include, and exclude group members. We will talk about this topic later. For now, we should return to the Legitimizing and Resistance identities (Castells 2018) among ethnic groups in their participation at *Tafonas*, a festival aiming to retrieve the roots of the coastal culture.

Ilka Boaventura Leite (apud Prass 2013, 41) interprets Antônio Mulato's lesson on Black rural communities, saying, “Antônio Mulato was teaching me that each Black rural community has its own history, keeping

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20. About the Afro-Catholic complex of *Maçambique* in Osório, see Bittencourt Junior (2006) and Prass' (2013) excellent studies.



instituted a specific cultural tradition in the process of its constitution as a differentiated ethnic group”.

In a brief survey of the historical context of the Northern Shore of Rio Grande do Sul, we know that Amerindians lived in Southern Brazil for over 10 thousand years (Marques 2004, 38) before the European arrival, and many of the customs we have today are due to this Indigenous heritage. Oliven (1992) questions the invisibility of the Indigenous in the traditional literature on the identity of Rio Grande do Sul inhabitants because they have occupied these lands for thousands of years before other ethnic groups. He says that it is “common for traditional historiography to refer to the territory of Rio Grande do Sul in the early days of the Iberian colonization as ‘nobody’s land’ [...] Archaeological research indicates, however, that Rio Grande do Sul was already inhabited more than 12,000 years ago” (Oliven 1992, 53).

Until the beginning of the 17th century, Indigenous peoples belonging to the ethnic family of the *guarani*, the “*arachãs*”, and the “*carijós*” lived on the coast of the Northern Shore, between the south of Laguna and near Tramandaí before the arrival of Azorean couples in the region in 1752. The first Portuguese whites expelled or decimated these people. They traveled along the Brazilian coast to enslaved Indigenous people, taking them to São Paulo (Barroso 1993, 33).

These familiarities among the various cultures in the America Europeans “conquered” and “dominated” forged identities from these fields of relations, marked by conflicts and asymmetries. As Ingold states, “the identities and characteristics of persons are not bestowed upon them in advance of their involvement with others but are condensations of histories of growth and maturation within fields of social relationships” (Ingold 2000, 19).

In Barth’s (2011) terms, we think about ethnic groups in their symbolic boundaries: rather than consisting of sets of specific characteristic traits, ethnic groups stem from symbolic boundaries which may or may not have “territorial compensation” (Barth 2011, 195). They are “categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people” (Barth 2011, 189). Ethnicity emerges in contexts of symbolic dispute, in which the “founding memory of national unity is, at the same time and necessarily, forgetfulness of the conditions of production of this unity: the original violence, arbitrariness, and multiplicity of ethnic origins” (Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart 2011, 36).

We can differentiate rates of identity construction: the slow elaboration of the Gaúcho figure (Oliven 1992) as a symbolic unit of reference, and the micro-regional production of origin myths repeatedly praised, which, in general, erase their violent beginnings (Hobsbawn and Ranger 2018). The Northern Shore society stems from its diversity of cultures and ethnicities, although some of them are glorified and remembered, whereas others are relegated to silence and forgetfulness. Festival songs evince this. Thus, Weber (2008) defines ethnic groups as:

[...] “*grupos étnicos*” a aquellos grupos humanos que, fundándose en la semejanza del hábito exterior y de las costumbres, o de ambos a la vez, o en recuerdos de colonización y migración, abrigan una creencia subjetiva en una procedencia común, de tal suerte que la creencia es importante para la ampliación de las comunidades (Weber 2008, 318).<sup>21</sup>

Ethnic groups identify themselves in the continuous production and circulation of symbolic elements externalizing the “differences” between “us” and “them” - the construction and maintenance of symbolic boundaries.

Going back to rate analysis, although *Tafona da Canção Nativa* takes place in Osório, the festival also belongs to the greater “nativist” movement, which inserts a festival in world of nativist events in Rio Grande do Sul State. This means that both people connected to the cultural productions of Osório and the Northern Shore and artists and composers from all over Brazil (and even from neighboring countries, such as Argentina and Uruguay) participate in it.

Thus, the identities songs and stage performances represent are elements also featured in other festivals. However, some identities explain some artists’ research to artistically portray the features of the Northern Shore of Rio Grande do Sul. They take place several times specifically for the festival, and an innovation marking the identity of *Tafona da Canção Nativa* within nativist festivals is its openness to give space and encourage research about the Northern Shore of Rio Grande do Sul. Among the identities highlighted in the songs performed at *Tafona*, many are dedicated to ethnic-based identities and emphasize a presumed common origin belonging to the collective as a mark of formation of specific ways of life.

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21. Translation: “[...] ‘ethnic groups’ those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the which have a subjective belief in a common origin, so that the belief must be important for the propagation of group formation”.

In the disputes for “a place under the sun” of the identities of the groups in the shore, the countryside (*campeiro*) identity is certainly in great prevalence, very present in other nativist festivals and rodeos. It also appears in the media, configuring a hegemony on television and radio. We must discuss this since we always find an internal dispute and prevalence rotation of songs at *Tafona da Canção Nativa Festival* – sometimes it has more *campeiro* themes, sometimes more coastal ones. A statistical analysis of frequency is unsuitable here since we pursue an analysis of the elements configuring and establishing the symbolic boundaries between ethnic groups.

Júlio Ribas, who organized many editions of *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, in an interview he gave to us, comments on this alternation between musical genres in response to why, at certain moments, these awards for “different lines” are created (in general, a Line of Riograndense Manifestation [*campeiras* and nativists] and another of Coastal Research) and if the groups acting in the musical universe in the city of Osório were consulted about these regulation changes. He answered that there were always lines to “register” songs but different “awards” started only after the 18th *Tafona da Canção Nativa* (2007). However, since he has participated in regulation creation, several people have aided the construction of the regulations for each Festival edition. They are recurrent sources of consultation, such as those who actively participate in the local culture - Índio Rufino, Paulo Campos, Paulinho Di Casa, Mário Duleodato, and others.

Concerning the internal and external pressures for the prevalence of one or another identity - between “*campeiras*”, represented by rural *gaúcho* and “nativist” songs, consecrated in the Nativist Festival Movement, and “coastal” ones, represented by the “research” which emerged at *Tafona* editions and bring Portuguese and Azorean origins and an African matrix with the “*maçambiques*” - Ribas said in the interview he gave to us that both groups always pressure the festival - *campeira* (nativist) and coastal - claiming prevalence of one over the other. Júlio tells the episode of a demand from the mayor of Osório at the time for equivalence between the number of songs registered in each context since once the festival had 800 *campeiras* songs and 100 coastal ones. So, he suggested a proportional number of selected songs which would be equivalent to the number of registered songs. Júlio said that organizers applied this proportion to registered and selected songs, but local musicians and composers strongly criticized them, accusing them of wanting to “give up” coastal music. We found that, in the fifth and sixth *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, in 1993 and 1994, respectively, the main factor was that any song from the recognized Afro-matrix nuances in the Northern Shore, such as “*Quicumbi*”, “*Maçambique*”, was classified neither for their themes nor their genres in the selection process.

In these *Tafona da Canção Nativa* editions, “*Quando o Verso Vem Pras Casas*” by Gujo Teixeira and Luiz Marengo is the most representative of this “country identity” (*campeira*). It won the ninth *Tafona da Canção Nativa* (1997), coinciding with the “explosion” of popular phenomenon “Luiz Marengo”, whose singing, songs, and what he represented fell into the taste of the public (from all social classes) attracted to a “gaúcho identity”. This singer and composer influenced many emerging artists, as Clarissa Ferreira (2014, 57 to 67) states in her dissertation.<sup>22</sup> We offer some verses from “*Quando o Verso Vem Pras Casas*”:

The quiet of tarumã, got a larger shade  
Across the stretching floodplain with the falling afternoon sun  
A *pañuelo maragato* opened on the horizon  
Bringing a new light for a beautiful end of the afternoon  
From there, a country verse came from the *campereada*  
On the back of a respectful open-fronted *gateada*  
He unsaddled at the camp, already tired of the long distances  
But stamping his countryside figure, his way [...]  
(Teixeira and Marengo 2013).

Later on, this song (known by the public and one of Luiz Marengo’s biggest hits) won *Tafona das Tafonas* (2009). We should say that rural gaúcho tasks have little effectiveness in the daily life of most contemporary coastal inhabitants, keeping, however, great mobilizing potential regarding the symbolic representations brought by these songs.

To show the “alternation” in the results of *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, which Julio Ribas described, its 27th edition brought many identity representations sung throughout all these years of *Tafona*: the winning song, “*Meu Mate de Doze Braças*”,<sup>23</sup> which won best *campeiro* theme, had a melody and lyrics about *mate*, a drink directly related with gaúchos, inherited from an Indigenous custom, and appropriated by “*gauchismo*”, joins the “12-fathom lasso” metaphor, an essential instrument to handle cattle spanning twelve fathoms:

My low-herbal *mate*  
big, wavy gourd  
a thing that nests the hands  
to sweeten the dawns  
My *mate* of twelve fathoms  
that, once in your hands  
brings the flavor of your lips  
in the palm of this song [...]  
(Brum and Pereira 2020).

22. Master’s Dissertation “Campeirismo Musical e os Festivais de Música Nativista do Sul do Brasil: A (Pós)Modernidade (Re)Construindo o “Gaúcho de Verdade” (Ferreira 2014, 57 to 67) (Accessed June 30, 2022, <https://lume.ufrgs.br/handle/10183/101270>).

23. (Brum and Pereira 2020).

In its next edition, the 28th and last edition of *Tafona*, the song that won first place, “*Folia Santa ao Divino*”, by Diego Muller, Erlon Péricles, and Caio Martinez is a coastal research about *Folias do Divino* and *Ternos de Reis* songs:

Oh, sir of the house  
This is our greeting  
fun is arriving  
with flag in hand [...].  
[...] And here I leave, touched,  
If the singing ceases...  
- I follow, crossing the journey...  
... But we will return another time! [...]  
(Muller, Péricles and Martinez 2019).

Regarding ethnic identities, we find the repetition of the “Azorean” theme, with many approaches stemming from composers’ research, such as those portraying facts in cultural events in the society and region of Osório, such as “*Terno de Reis*”. This theme and the elements in the lyrics and stage performance of the song celebrate Azorean descendants’ identity, who came and settled in the municipality, cultivated their customs and traditions, and built a new identity in Brazil. According to Vera Barroso, “it is more than proven that the Azorean northern shore identity of Rio Grande do Sul has been preserved. Azoreans before and after 1752 arrived in the lands of the old Freguesias of Santo Antônio da Guarda Velha and Nossa Sra. da Conceição do Arroio” (Barroso 2004, 47). Festival songs show many statements and elements which prove the representations related to Azorean identity as the simplest one regarding the social and historical formation of the Northern Shore of Rio Grande do Sul, an important categorization as an ethnic identity. Besides the *Ternos de Reis* that appeared in the festival, the song “*Galpão Açoriano*”,<sup>24</sup> by Ivo Ladislau, Carlos Catuípe, and Mário Tressoldi, at the 16th *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, is a representative song of the Azorean identity. It describes elements belonging to the Portuguese-Azorean culture, metaphorically found in “*galpão açoriano*”, the working place and social environment of the *tafona*, a term that gives the name to the nativist festival in Osório.

In an Azorean shed  
Here it is a *tafona*, *tafoneiro*  
a guitar that I like  
accordion, fiddle and tambourine  
in a suit of affection  
There’s *mate*, there’s brazier

24. (Ladislau, Catuípe, and Tressoldi 2008).

Heated fire from the past  
There's, there's, there's  
the scraping of cassava  
in a group party  
the baking of flour  
*rosca*, couscous and biju [...]  
(Ladislau, Catuípe and Tressoldi 2008).

Within a certain hegemony of “Azoreanity”, other groups have aimed to build counter-hegemonic narratives or inscribe their own histories in these hegemonic narratives (Bhabha 1998). The dimension of Blackness has been conquering space, reinforcing African backgrounds and new identities built in their meeting/confrontation with other ethnic-racial groups. It has also highlighted its background, worldviews, musical features, and customs, basic pieces for the identities which have gradually grown in the Northern Shore of Rio Grande do Sul.

Of African origin, the “*Maçambique*” genre emerged with great force in the festival, as we pointed out above when we described the songs focused on *Rainha Ginga*. Although composers and researchers Ivo Ladislau and Carlos Catuípe — who are not African-Brazilians —, have inserted “*Maçambique*” in *Tafona*, what originated this musical “genre” at these festivals was research on the “*Maçambique*” performed by the religious, cultural, and socio-political group in the “*Maçambique*” of Osório. This group consisted of Black people who celebrated an Afro-catholic identity exalting and performatizing Blackness in popular Catholicism. Bittencourt Junior (2005) defines this religious act as: “The Osório *Maçambique* is a religious manifestation of Afro-Brazilian Catholic devotion, which is experienced through the Catholic liturgy and the performative rituals found in the Northern Shore of the State of Rio Grande do Sul” (Bittencourt Jr 2005, 235 to 243).

As a source of information for the performance of these songs on stage, these authors (Ladislau/Catuípe) generally searched the participation of musicians such as Mario Duleodato, a drummer known as “Marião”, who knows the beats of each moment of the coronation celebration of *Rainha Ginga* and *Maçambique* festivities. Paulinho Dicasa, a musician and composer from Osório, member of the *Tribo Maçambiqueira* group, also takes part in it. Paulinho and Marião are Black and their participations asserts the theme and the genre of *maçambiqueiros*, legitimizing *Maçambique* at *Tafona* and other festivals both for their presence and their knowledge of drum and guitar rhythms and beats.

The practitioners of the *Maçambique* Group from Osório have never participated as composers at *Tafona da Canção Nativa*. Luciana Prass (2013)

developed an approach in her ethnographic and ethnomusicological study about performative practices of Black communities in Rio Grande do Sul by recording audios, making scores for the songs, and writing their verses. She analyzed and registered the role of compositions in the context of tradition. She finds that the community has scarcely commented about these compositions, considering that the songs sung in the rituals are orally transmitted to newer generations. She highlights, however, a composition by Chief Faustino, “*Que Senzala foi aquela*”, which is sung in religious events “and brings contemporary elements, an acknowledgement to Nelson Mandela, and connects the *Maçambique* from Osório to the problems of racial segregation in South Africa. This theme is recognized (by the community) as *maçambiqueiro*” (Prass 2013, 263 and 264).

## CONCLUSION

These festivals emerged in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in the early 1970s as an identity response to the cultural industry of that time, increasing the import of fashions, lifestyles, products, and massified images as a process of full development in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This moment gave rise to *California da Canção Nativa* and the Nativist Movement.

The MTG was already in full ascension since the 1950s, as CTGs spread throughout the Brazilian territory, coinciding with the diaspora of gaúchos to several states. CTGs supported and encouraged the creation of festivals in the countryside. The regulations of these festivals imposed conditions and restrictions – from the clothes which could be worn on stage to composition formats and limits on the types of musical instruments to be used – which were seen as appropriated to the idealized image of being a gaúcho. Thus, these nativist festivals projected and amplified the MTG’s perspective, which continues to ignore other cultural manifestations, identities, and ethnic representations failing to fit the canons of what was idealized as native music.

However, identity disputes are constant. Other manifestations emerged in some festivals, as at *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, which shows and represents Azorean and Portuguese identities on a “nativist” stage. Subsequently, the African culture of the “*Maçambique*” emerged due to the awards given to productions resulting from research on coastal cultures. These acts broke the hegemony of the *campeiro* identity.

These identity disputes with the ethnic basis (based on an origin rhetoric), expressed in lyrics, melodies, and musical performances on the *Tafona* stage. They updated the features of the symbolic boundaries ethnic groups created and established in the state and its Northern Shore. We also

found authors interested in stressing the representativeness of one or another ethnic group, using elements from these ethnic groups – such as, for example, authors who have no Azorean “origin” but researched the theme and performed on stage. The resulting songs had elements inspired by the Afro-coastal culture of the Festival of Our Lady of the Rosary, the “*Maçambique*“, as well.

Bittencourt Jr (2006) understands the use of Osório *Maçambique* Group elements by outside composers as cultural appropriation. He criticizes the indiscriminate appropriation of symbols and signs which the *Moçambique* Group community deems religious and sacred without any kind of return to the community or adherence to its fight and claims. Also, the disregard of official organizations (which are managed by individual people, chosen by a political and interests process) with the “[...] ‘hard core’ of this symbolic contribution, [...] relegated to a marginal line [...] and outside the legal support of the ‘heritage laws in the country” (Bittencourt Jr. 2006, 367), a fact that reflects the invisibility of minority cultures.

Bittencourt Junior (2006) concludes that the presence of *Maçambique* in these festivals is a form of resistance. We agree with that due to the historical invisibility of African-Brazilian cultural elements, especially in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. We believe that because this visibility of the the *Maçambique* culture and rhythm, taken to nativist festival stages, disseminated knowledge about the existence of this African-Brazilian tradition. This also has many similarities with other *congadas* practiced in Brazil, as per Prass (2013). It awakes the desire in other musicians and composers in the nativist festival circuit to know more and research the subject, including composing songs related to the culture perpetuated by the descendants of Morro Alto Quilombo and other groups in the Northern Shore. Likewise, Bittencourt criticizes a certain reading of these cultural manifestations from the perspective of an “Afro-Azorean” culture, a generalization which would dissolve the strength of the Black ancestry and diversity which characterizes the region.

Finally, based on Castells’ (2018) theory about identities, we can claim that the “*campeiro* identity” constitutes an “identity of resistance” in relation to the national and global mass culture. However, due to its hegemonic representation both in nativist festivals, including *Tafona da Canção Nativa*, the media – which reserves space for cultural manifestations of the state of Rio Grande do Sul –, and in manifestations of official organizations, it established many devices reinforcing the univocal identity of the “gaúcho” as the representative identity of all the people in this territory. So, looking for this process of invisibility of others, we may understand the “*campeiro* identity” as a legitimizing identity.

We can evaluate the female identity in nativist festivals as a resistance identity “created by actors who find themselves in devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination positions/conditions” (Castells 2018, 56). Nativist festivals are an arm of the Traditionalist Movement, which has its bases linked to conservatism and male chauvinism, reserving a subordinate place for women. Despite the recent public debate and considerable advances, it seems that these first spaces women conquer lack a glimpse of transformation, at least in the short term.

Concerning the Black identities evinced at *Tafona*, the *Maçambique* Group inspired authors to research and compose about the theme. We may consider this group as an identity of resistance due to the long invisibility and difficulties African-Americans faced, inscribing themselves and aiming to maintain their conquered space in the hegemony due to their differing features. We can use, as an example, the *campeiro* Gaúcho idealized by the MTG, and the Luso-Azorean, understood by the population of Osório. This is very present at *Tafona da Canção Nativa*. The nativist festivals pointed out in the beginning of this article are stages of production, maintenance, and transformation of symbolic boundaries delimiting collective necessities, ethnic loyalties, racial, gender, and generational relations, and other markers. At the same time, they serve as legitimizing instances of certain hegemonic representations and a channel to inscribe counter-hegemonic narratives which aim to widen borders and modify the construction of recognitions and affectivities among different groups.

**TRANSLATION**  
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