

# **Gender Distorting Genre Distorting Gender:**

Exploring Women's Rock Musicking Practices in Contemporary  
Portugal

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## ABSTRACT

This work explores the everyday *uses* of rock music by women rock musicians, fans and DJs (*amateurs*), in a specific place (Portugal) and time (1990s-2014).

Drawing on the work in the two main fields of music sociology and gender studies and its performative perspective to both gender and music (but also taking contributions from techno-feminist studies, science and technology studies, sociology of work, leisure and sports), this research takes a 'music-in-action' approach. This approach understands music as a social activity, as a network of connections between people, materials, discourses and activities. Rock music is best understood as a genre-in-action (not just as a semiotic text or reflection), as socio-material practice, in its collective, relational, performative, situated contexts of use - as rock *musicking*.

As such, there are socio-material processes that constrain and enable women (as a minority group) doing and being in a masculinist rock music world. Taking a 'mutual shaping' approach to genre and gender, this research also takes into account how people use aesthetic materials in the processes of performative gendered identity making and relationship with others, as well as world building. The data consists of sixty in-depth interviews with Portuguese rockers (between 2012 and 2014), and supplementary field observations and follow-up interviews. The research found that girls and women's musical opportunities are more restricted, but that they are also actively negotiated. Parental support and the presence of rock fathers in early years, as well as participation in male networks – whether or not a woman is romantically involved with 'one of the boys' – throughout the life course are pathways into rock musicking, as documented in other studies.

Adding to the literature, this research highlights how not only in early years, but throughout the life course, rock musicking practices are dependent upon specific aesthetic (musical and visual) gender performances. From *female masculinity* to *alternative femininities*, rock music and its visual and material cultures are 'active ingredients' in doing and undoing gender.

In Portugal, the absence of a strong riot grrrl movement and the lack of female/feminist networks, turns membership in male bands the norm.

Consequently, either the “girl in the band’ or girl/female bands have to deal with their ‘novelty’ value. These rockers negotiate the labels of riot grrrl, feminist and grunge within a ‘girl power’ discourse, but mostly, struggling not to let their musical skills and value be obscured by their sex/ualization – developing high standards of musicianship, managing on-stage bodily disclosure, naming and praising their peers, aligning with an Anglo-Saxon rock female canon, but also othering female fans.

In male bands, due to male skill ascription, women are segregated into traditional female musical roles, the singer, the bass player. On the other hand, women drummers get token value. At the expenses of instrument specialization, women undertake multi-instrumental pathways. Becoming musical agile selves and re-valuing (traditionally female) musical roles, playing conventions and body techniques. Women also appropriate mixers to spread their love for rock music. These women creatively expand rock music’s material culture, crafting it with clothes, accessories and even food. For rockers who are mothers, rock musicking becomes a technology of mothering.

Taking Portuguese women rockers and their socio-musical practices, at both the everyday level and on the “spectacular” rock stage, this research adds to the international and growing body of work on gender and (rock) music across different disciplinary fields (sociology, popular music studies, feminist studies). It extends the traditional focus within popular music scholarship on Anglo-American rock culture, feminist mo(ve)ments, and subcultures, to place emphasis instead on an age group and place that has otherwise been overlooked.

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1. Uses of rock music by women *amateurs*

This research explores the everyday uses of rock music by women rock musicians, fans and DJs, in a specific place (Portugal) and in a specific time frame (1990s-2014). It attempts to take the *standpoint* of women, and to examine socio-musical action as it unfolds on the frequently overlooked stage of everyday life, not just on “spectacular” rock stages. As such, this research hopes to contribute to the growing body of scholarship on gender and music in sociology and in popular music studies.

Everyday life is not considered an isolated sphere of the social, nor is it considered to be mere routine or ordinary. In the tradition of interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology, people “practice” everyday life (Certeau, 1984). The everyday world is where people perform social life, (re)producing it, often challenging it<sup>1</sup>, reconfiguring other spheres, other times and spaces (DeNora, 2000; Pais, 2002; Pink, 2012; S. Scott, 2009).

My aim is to reframe women “amateur” rockers, and by the term “amateur” I mean two things. On the one hand, I mean the colloquial definition - “non-professional.” On the other hand, and in Hennion's (2001) sense, “amateur” means to be a lover (*amator* is the latin for lover). In both senses, however, amateurs are those who love music. They are also, therefore, music users, active practitioners of a love for music<sup>2</sup>, whether it involves playing an instrument, singing, attending concerts, listening to records, DJing, etc. They are, in other words, ‘doing things with music’.

In this thesis, I employ an ‘in-action’ focus (DeNora, 2000, 2011b, Hennion, 2010, 2012) with the emphasis on following amateurs as they do

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<sup>1</sup>For instance, James Scott has argued that much of the politics of subordinate groups (peasants) unfolds as everyday forms of resistance (J. C. Scott, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> In many other fields, there is a general shift in the conceptualization of users from passive recipients to active participants. In French, this is captured in the term “consommateurs” (Hennion, Maisonneuve, & Gomart, 2000, p. 81). In the Anglo-Saxon world, Bruns (2008), a scholar of new media, coined the term “producers” to show how, within the collaborative and participatory culture, the chain “producer-distributor-consumer”, which is characteristic of traditional industry, has been blurred.

things with music 'live'. I believe that if we follow human-music interactions, we can also consider amateurs' musical practices as "musicking" (Small, 1998, p.9), which highlights music as a relational, collective, performative, all-encompassing activity (from composing to singing in the shower, from talking about music to contributing in virtually any way to the making of a musical event). And I hope to show how including all the configurations that the love of music can assume – understanding rock music as rock *musicking* – has analytical consequences. This perspective opens our eyes to the social, technical and emergent features of what we speak of as 'music', and as 'good' music or 'appropriate' music. It highlights musicking as a social activity and an active process. It also highlights musicking as an instance of "practicing culture" (Calhoun & Sennett, 2007) and it restores music 'consumption' to the status of an activity (Hennion & Gomart, 1999). Importantly, it opens music up to being examined in terms of its network of connections between people, materials and activities, and how these connections give rise to social phenomena such as scenes, situations, social relations and aesthetics.

This analytical perspective allows me to explore the diversity and plurality of what women do with rock music and to restore that practice to its central role in the production of gender writ large. As such, it connects to and advances feminist scholarship that has criticised the marginalisation of the activities of female *music lovers* – e.g. decorating bedroom walls with posters, dress-making and clothes customising, dancing, and so forth (McRobbie & Garber, 1990). I want to consider *all* the possible forms of interaction with rock music that the women I have studied performed, and to make their attachments to rock music visible as they occur within mundane (everyday) settings.

By exploring these mundane practices, I believe we can greatly illuminate the mutual shaping of genre and gender, a topic that places what people do with objects in the spotlight, and vice versa (Pinch & Oudshoorn, 2003). To account for the constitutive mutual relation between gender and music is to account for a *gendered* way of (re)producing rock and a *rocker* way of (re)producing gender. It is to study how gender shapes the rock music world, and how socio-musical goods and socio-musical opportunities are allocated to gender and, at the same time, how rock music is an "active ingredient" in the formation of gender (and other social categories, such as class, race, age, and

so forth) (DeNora, 2000, 2002, 2013; Dibben, 2002b; Green, 1997; O'Neill, 2012; Rolvsjord & Halstead, 2013; Roy & Dowd, 2010). In short, rock music is an “active ingredient” in everyday life (DeNora, 2000, 2003a), in the sense that music is a mediator between the society and experience (Hennion, 2001). Music is not just *passively* shaped by the social/society (determined by social structures) nor *passively* independent of it (a finished object), but with *specific active possibilities* that differentiates it from other (non-musical) objects when appropriated by its users, in situated contexts. This appropriation configures and is configured by aesthetic agency, (gender) identity, subjectivity, opportunities for social interaction and relationships, as well as contingency and serendipity.

My aim therefore is to understand how gender relations shape women's participation in rock, and to account for how women make sense of rock as an active ingredient in the making of (gendered) identities.

### 1.1: Rock musicking: towards genre-in-action

Genre-in-action signals an understanding of genre as socio-material practice in its collective, situated contexts of use (DeNora, 2011b). This research moves away from an understanding of “genre-as-text”, common in musicology, and from “genre-as-reflection” of society, most common in sociological approaches that analyse homologies between music and society, and which are akin to the production-of-culture approach (Dowd, 2004). As such, this research stands in line with other studies on genre cultures, genre worlds, music communities or music scenes (Frith, 1996; Hagen, 2012; Lena, 2012; Negus, 1999; Small, 1998; Straw, 1991; Toynbee, 2000). For example, in *Banding Together*, Lena presents genre as a community of genre practitioners, as they tune in with others, in specific contexts of use: “musical genres as systems of orientations, expectations, and conventions that bind together industry, performers, critics, and fans in making what they identify as a distinctive sort of music” (Lena, 2012, p. 6).

Rock music has its own genre conventions, music technologies of (re)production, artefacts, musical properties and styles, iconicity, discourses, ways of listening, modes of attention and patterns of use over time. For

instance, in rock music, the iconic electric guitar, the loudness and the amplified sound have held an important place within rock discourse since the late 1960s (Théberge, 1997; Waksman, 1999; Walser, 1993).

Also, although listener/producer roles blur<sup>3</sup>, these roles are distinct as they are constituted through different socio-material practices (e.g. use of instruments, use of the DJ mixer and CDs, playing, sequencing, using earplugs or stereo, etc.). Thus, rock music cannot be used in a totally free way by its users. Rock music “asks and does things” from/to its users (in a way that, say, electronic dance music does not) because it has affordances.

The concept of affordances was originally formulated by the psychologist J.J. Gibson. It has been used and refined in sociology and other disciplines (R. Anderson & Sharrock, 1992; J. L. Davis & Chouinard, 2016; Streeck, 1996). In music sociology, the concept helps to capture “how music’s specifically musical properties and materials may – via their physical features (e.g. tempo, melodic and harmonic structure) and their conventional associations (e.g. love songs) – lend themselves to forms of being and doing” (DeNora, 2003b, p. 170). Following this, my research question asks how rock music affords specific gender performances and identities for women in Portugal.

To sum up, genres have affordances as they are appropriated by their users. Genres construct and organize music-making and playing, selling and listening – popular music genres are constructed within both a commercial and socio-cultural process (Finnegan, 2007; Frith, 1996, pp. 88–89; Waksman, 1999, pp. 237–276). As Hennion (1999, 2001) also argues, amateurs are not opposed to the market, they are derived (and derive their pleasures) from it, as they share the categories and formats provided by the music industry. As such, genres are forms that “hold us together” (Hennion, 2007).

However, this is not a straightforward process. New genres emerge and expand, others decline. Because genres are “sociocultural classifications”, genres revolve around rule testing and bending, through ongoing boundary

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<sup>3</sup> Without listeners and the possibility of the inter-changeability of roles with producers, it is impossible to understand the existence of music sociologically. As an example, Thornton (1995) has long shown that clubbers (“reproducers” of music produced by others) undermine the hierarchy [composer-performer-listener], as their influence occurs at the level of events’ attendance and music purchase, as well as through immediate, visceral responses to music, to which DJs, producers, and promoters pay attention.

work processes that characterise music genres (Lena, 2012, p. 7; Frith, 1996, p. 93). As such, 'genre trouble' is worthy of study in itself, not a problem to be avoided. And the process of rock's boundary making is a form of *gendered* genre trouble.

## 1.2: Gendering the genre: women rock *amateurs*

The literature has had a good deal to say about the gender and sexual politics of rock music, identifying rock as a male-dominated activity. Going beyond this theme however, scholars have also documented how rock music is actively (re)produced as masculine through the social practices that organise rock music – in other words, underlining how there is nothing *essentially* male or masculine in rock itself (Leonard 2007; Cohen 1997; Whiteley 2000; Walser 1993). Following this theoretical path, and taking insights from other disciplinary fields, I aim to understand the 'mutual shaping'<sup>4</sup> of genre and gender. That is to say, not only how gender shapes the rock music genre, but also in which ways gender identities, discourses and gender relations are constructed and enacted through the uses of rock music – it being the case that both genre and gender are understood as socially constructed and performative.

Although rock is a male-dominated field, there have been prominent women performers who have received recognition, and noticeable feminist music mo(ve)ments. However, women remain under-represented and misrepresented both as musicians and fans (sexualised, derided or ghettoised) in mainstream rock music and in the rock music press (Bayton, 1993; Feigenbaum, 2005; Leonard, 2007, pp. 65–88; McRobbie, 1990).

This under-representation has contributed to a burgeoning compensatory history of 'herstories of rock', from academic studies in the form of (new) musicology, sociology, popular music and cultural studies to journalistic

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<sup>4</sup> This expression is indebted to the now classic work of feminist science and technology (STS) scholars (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999) which proposed the "social shaping of technology", looking only at how gender shapes technology – given that social relations, gender included, are embedded in technology – but also in which ways the design and use of technologies enacts gender identities and relations. The focus on the mutual shaping of gender and technology enabled them to overcome technological determinism, either its pessimistic strand - technophobia – or its optimistic counterpart – technophilia (Wajcman, 2007, p. 287).

accounts, as well as some(auto)biographies<sup>5</sup> and interviews (Gordon, 2015; E. McDonnell, 2013; Raha, 2004; P. Smith, 2011). So too, empirical studies have documented how women musicians have entered a male-dominated music industry (Bayton, 1998; Gaar, 1993; Gracyk, 2001; Leonard, 2007; O'Brien, 2002; Raphael & Harry, 1995; Reynolds & Press, 1995; Warwick, 2007; Whiteley, 2000), and/or male-dominated local music scenes (Bayton, 1998; Sara Cohen, 1991; Finnegan, 2007; Groce & Cooper, 1990). Studies have focused on women's involvement in specific music scenes and subcultures – most notably, the riot grrrl movement (Downes, 2010; Driscoll, 1999; Gottlieb & Wald, 1994; Keenan & Dougher, 2012; Leonard, 2007; Marcus, 2010; Rosenberg & Garofalo, 1998; Schilt & Zobl, 2008; Strong, 2011), but also punk (Leblanc, 1999; Reddington, 2012) or grunge (Schippers, 2002). Rock scholarship has focused on media representations of women in popular music, mostly well-known/famous musicians, but also fans. A critique of the negative representations of female fans in music journalism, epitomised by the figures of teenyboppers and groupies, has been systematically conducted (Carson, Lewis, & Shaw, 2004; Ehrenreich, Hess, & Jacobs, 1992). However, the above mentioned “compensatory” thread has left the actual practices and worlds of female rock music fans unexplored – with a few notable exceptions, such as a study of heavy metal fans (Hill, 2016), girls' consumption of popular music (S. Baker, 2004; Lincoln, 2014) or female involvement with specific artists throughout their lives (T. Anderson, 2012; Vroomen, 2004). It is time women as amateurs (musicians, fans and DJs), and their actual engagement with rock music were taken seriously, at the everyday level. It is this form of women's musical world-making practices, in a specific time and location, which my research will document.

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<sup>5</sup>Rock autobiographies and memoirs are a popular literary genre (Stein & Butler, 2015; Swiss, 2005), and there has been a growth in this female rock literature from the 2000s onwards (Roś, 2017). This female rock literature is mostly divided (and somehow apart) according to its authors: either written by female rock musicians (Roś, 2017) or written by groupies (Larsen, 2017). They have the focus of women's experiences in the rock music industry in common, not at an amateur level.

### 1.2.1: Women as rock music users: articulating standpoints

The focus of this research is on gender and popular music, rather than “women in rock”<sup>6</sup>. The focus is not on sexual difference, but on the social construction of gender relations, musically mediated. It will analyse the process through which gendered (classed, sexed, raced) relations are made, unmade and remade. Or, in other words, how women are doing and undoing gender (Butler, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 2009), through rock music.

Feminist standpoint theories posit that all knowledge is situated (Haraway, 1988). They aim at building knowledge from women’s lives (D. E. Smith, 1987). Taking the perspective of the socially underprivileged (their *standpoint*) will not distort the analysis; on the contrary, it will provide “strong objectivity”, as it will be less partial and hence more objective (Harding, 1991). Taking inspiration from these theorists, I argue that it is possible to analyse rock – and the mutual shaping of genre and gender – from the *standpoint* of those who practise it, women rockers. There is nothing essential or homogeneous about the category “woman” – there are differences between women, as there are similarities between women and men. In fact, feminist scholars have shown how women’s experiences are diverse and contradictory (Harding, 1991, pp. 173–181). More recently, the term “intersectionality” captures this diversity more systematically, drawing attention to the fact that gender intersects with other categories, such as class, race, ability, age or sexuality (Choo & Ferree, 2010).

The compensatory history in popular music and other fields is in line with early feminist and radical sociology research, which has made “giving voice” to women’s experiences a feminist flag. The aim was to counter traditional sexist research agendas, which implied that the voices of the powerless have been silenced (Skeggs, 2001). However, this perspective has sometimes fallen into the trap of essentialism and realism, both in tension with post-structural perspectives, because it undertheorises institutional power relations (Simpson & Lewis, 2005), and in tension with post-humanist perspectives in turn because it under-theorises all the socio-materialities (social, technological and corporeal relations) that *constitute* voices – which are neither pre-given, nor merely

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<sup>6</sup> The field of technology studies also signals this shift towards “gender and technology”, rather than “women and technology” or “women in technology” (Lohan & Faulkner, 2004, pp. 320–321).

verbal/linguistic, but socio-cultural-political constructions (Moser & Law, 1999; Rolvsjord & Halstead, 2013).

Avoiding any essentialist (positivist) pitfalls, *articulating voices* highlights the social construction of *giving voice*. This is based on three premises: voices are not pre-given nor neutral (to give a voice is not to give a *given* voice), voices emerge in situated contexts (including the research process). Finally, voices are not exclusively verbal/linguistic, as there are non-verbal features of agency, from “communicative musicality” to embodied agency (Halstead & Rolvsjord, 2013).

My research is underpinned by a feminist commitment to *how* women’s voices get articulated through their uses of rock music, in order to “fight against the waste of [subaltern] experience” experience” (B. de S. Santos, 2002).

### 1.3: The Portuguese Case

Amateurs do things with music in situated contexts, in specific times. I followed women rock music amateurs in a specific location (Portugal) and in a specific time frame (1990-2014).

The body of work on women and rock music stems from Anglo-Saxon social sciences (sociology, cultural studies, popular music studies, communication). Most studies on women rockers have been carried out in the UK (Bayton, 1998; Cohen, 1991; Downes, 2010; Leonard, 2007; Reddington, 2012; Robson, 2011), U.S.A. (Schippers, 2002; Clawson, 1993; LeBlanc, 1999) and Australia (Bannister, 2010, Strong, 2010). Furthermore, case studies on popular music and gender have focused on Anglo-saxon artists (Whiteley, 1997). In Europe, there is a growing body of work on gender and rock, to my knowledge in France (Ortiz, 2004) in the Netherlands (Berkers, 2012), in Spain (Wheeler, 2016) and in Italy (Varriale, 2016). In South America, the Brazilian riot *grrrl* has been documented (Guerra, Gelain, & Moreira, 2017), as well as in Chile (G. Becker, 2010)<sup>7</sup>.

The choice of Portugal as a case study is firstly intended to address the gap in the social sciences and humanities literature, as there is no socio-

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<sup>7</sup> Researchers who have examined rock worlds in other geographies have also approached the role of women. Hecker (2012) in his ethnographic work on heavy metal in Turkey has also explored women’s role in the scene. The work of Fornäs and colleagues (1995) has also approached the role of girls in the youth culture of Swedish rock bands (in the 1980s).

musical study on Portuguese women rockers<sup>8</sup>. In this sense, my research is exploratory. The study of popular music by Portuguese sociologists is fairly recent, which is explained by the late institutionalisation of the social sciences in Portugal. This also applies to gender studies (Âmancio e Oliveira, 2014; Neto, 2013; Pereira, 2012). The few existing studies of rock music in Portugal show that men outnumber women as key protagonists. But they tell us little about the lived experiences of women.

Secondly, Portugal, a southern European country, is an interesting case study due to its specific position in the modern world-economic system (Wallerstein). Portugal's "semi-peripheral" condition, configures the specific character of Portuguese society, marked by intermediate development, by heterogeneity, and by the prominent role of the State (Santos, 1993). The singularities in Portuguese socio-political-economic history and contemporaneity (dictatorship and colonial war, the transition to democracy and the integration into the European Union) all have implications in the production, distribution and consumption of rock music.

Thirdly, because space/place, both physical and imagined, is an active ingredient in musical experience, the choice to conduct empirical work in contemporary Portugal is important. However, my research focus is not on a national music landscape nor on the Portuguese music industry. My research focus is, instead, on local music scenes, and amateur rockers, as they carry out their non-professional or semi-professional activities in specific places<sup>9</sup>. In this sense too, my research is exploratory, as the research subject is a fleeting one, given women rockers' low-profile as "hidden musicians" and the often short-term participation of women in music-making activities (usually confined to adolescence).

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<sup>8</sup> Neither have women rockers been documented in biographical books, journalistic accounts nor in documentaries. I started my PhD in 2012, though I applied for the scholarship in 2011. Regarding academic production, the situation is slowly changing with the recent work of Paula Guerra and her team (Guerra et al., 2017) on Portuguese punk women in the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>9</sup>These local music activities are often much more subject to regulations by city councils – providing financial support, regulating liquor licenses, noise ordinances, event permits, etc. (Kruse, 1998; Street, 1993) – than they are subject to regulations by the music industry.

Local music scenes include both local and global dimensions, as de/reterritorialisations create new listening communities that transcend local boundaries (A. Bennett & Peterson, 2004; Kruse, 2010).

Hence, my research is on trans-local rock musicking practices in contemporary Portugal (1990s-2014). These contemporary practices converge upon an “aesthetic cosmopolitanism” as proposed by Regev studying Israeli pop-rock music (Regev, 2007a, 2007b, 2013). Regev claims that the standardisation of national music cultures along the lines of the pop-rock aesthetic (expressive isomorphism) has allowed similarities (not differences) to emerge in an “aesthetic cosmopolitanism” of late modernity. The pop-rock aesthetics produce a shared sonic vocabulary (e.g. amplification) that pervades everyday life across the (western) globe.

As a result, there is a blurring of the national specificities (and cultural otherness) in the production, distribution and consumption of music that were once much more influenced by Portuguese 20<sup>th</sup> century history. Although this research is territorially bound to Portugal and to specific Portuguese cities, by taking Portugal as a case study, I address broader issues that are of significance in the field of socio-musical studies and gender studies. Namely, the socio-material processes that both constrain and empower women (as a minority group) doing and being in a masculinist world. I also examine how people use aesthetic materials in the processes of performative gendered identity making relationships with others, as well as world building.

#### 1.4: Organization of the thesis

After this introduction, in **chapter 2**, I review the literature that informs my theoretical approach: music-in-action (Part I). Next, I review the current body of scholarship on gender and rock (Part II). I conceptualise music ecologies, affordances and asylums, musical taste, musicianship and music learning, drawing from the field of cultural and music sociology, but also taking insights from other fields of study, such as cultural studies, media studies, STS, music therapy, material culture, consumption and audience studies, as well as the sociology of work and occupations. As the research followed a grounded theory approach, and the literature was read while doing my research, the literature review rationale is in itself data-driven. To end the literature review, I briefly

outline the historical socio-political context of Portugal (its semiperipheral condition and the women's socio-political status). I then discuss the emergence and place of rock in this country, based on the current (Portuguese) socio-musical literature on rock in Portugal. This third part will work as a prelude for the data chapters.

In **chapter 3**, I describe the research process undertaken. I will present the participants that are the key actors in this thesis. I move to the methodological issues (data analysis, validity and ethical issues) that are informed by a grounded theory approach and feminist methodological concerns. The following chapters (**4-15**) are the empirical ones, where I present data guided by emerging themes from the fieldwork (Smart, 2009 as cited in Einarsdóttir, 2012).

Four main threads underpin the data chapters. First, I document the ways in which gender shapes access to music worlds. Here the focus will be on gendered pathways into rock musicking practices. As found in other studies, the role of family (fathers, but also brothers), (male) peers and boyfriends/partners (rock couple cultures) in access to instruments, instrumental learning and band membership is crucial (**chapter 4** and **chapter 5**). Adding to this literature, my findings unpack the 'black box' of getting access to male networks or parental support, by showing the embodied gendered performance it entails (**chapter 6**). My findings also show that these processes unfold throughout someone's lifetime, expanding on other research scopes that tend to focus on youth or ageing.

Secondly, I detail band membership in two different socio-musical spaces which shape musical participation in different ways: a male-centred band giving rise to phenomena such as instrument segregation and multi-instrumentality (**chapter 7**) and the female band (**chapter 8**), where I also discuss the appropriation of riot grrrl, grunge and girl power in the Portuguese context. Finally, I account for women's discourses on musicianship (**chapter 9**).

Having acknowledged the gender segregated rock music worlds, and how women negotiate their positioning, the third thread moves to a more productive outlook on the uses of rock music in constructing gendered, embodied musical identities through the use of each of the main instruments that compose the band – voice, strings and drums – with a focus on the

gendered playing body, the socio-materialities of playing and the pleasures of playing (**chapter 10, 11 and 12**).

The fourth thread focuses on amateurs' rock musicking practices, documenting activities, crafts and services that have been overlooked. In **chapter 13**, I unpack the 'black box' of a rock music DJ set, following women rock DJs as they "play the song", *de-scripting* the mixer and 'doing gender' in the set. **Chapter 14** illustrates rock crafting practices: clothes and accessory making and baking. Inspired by a DIY ethos, reconfiguring domesticity and traditional female roles, these rockers (re)produce the 'sight of sound' and craft rock worlds' material cultures. Finally, in **chapter 15** I show how rock moms pass on their love of music, reconstructing themselves as (rock) mothers.

I then present the **Conclusions**, an overview of the research. I consider its limits, and I offer some reflections on directions for future work.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is divided into three main parts.

In Part I, I will present the theoretical lens through which I analyse the empirical data. I follow a “music sociology” in action approach, one which takes artwork itself seriously, through the way it *affords* identity, agency, bodily action, sociability to its *amateurs*, as they are appropriated in situated contexts (2.1.1). The performative approach to music that music sociology undertakes brings the music user’s body to the fore, considering how music affords embodied action (2.1.2). Everyday life is the privileged lens through which to watch music’s affordances as practice and process (everyday life is not a different social sphere). And the literature on leisure sets the affordances of musicking on an empirical plane, from music-making to personal listening (2.1.3). In the style of a short conclusion, I restate the main theoretical tools of music sociology in the context of the post-critical arts sociology (2.1.4).

In Part II, I will review the literature available on rock music and its gender and sexual politics. I start by stating my approach to music as a mediator of gender identity, and the working definition of gender as performative doing, as emergent in social interaction within institutionalized practice (2.2.1). I introduce the main feminist movements and moments of girls’ and women’s engagement in rock (2.2.2) followed by the way those mo(ve)ments (and others) construct gender performances in rock worlds, both the gender subject positions on-stage and off-stage (2.2.3), as documented by the literature. Rock music is a gendered genre, with specific gender stereotypes and ideologies (e.g. creative male artist versus passive, sexualised female consumer; serious artistic rock versus commercial feminised pop) that circulate and persist in the music press (2.2.4). These gender ideologies have material effects on (gender) segregation and other exclusionary forms of musical practice, at the level of the music industry and local musicianship, but also in music making or fandom (2.2.5). I then zoom in to detail gender segregation in fan practices and musical leisure (2.2.5.1). Afterwards, I show how gender segregated dynamics shape music making practices, both in the music industry (2.2.5.2) and at a local level. In this matter, I detail the gender organisational culture of amateur rock, and

how girls and women negotiate their socio-musical roles (2.2.5.3). Finally, I focus on gender segregation in the rock band, and on the gendered meanings associated with playing and performing rock instruments (2.2.5.4).

In Part III, I present the place where my empirical work will be conducted: Portugal. I present the main socio-political characteristics of the country that has historically shaped the production, distribution and consumption of rock music until the present day. I dedicate special attention to the sociology of popular music made in contemporary Portugal, and how music and gender have been portrayed.

## Part I – Music-in-action

### 2.1: Music sociology: Towards a socio-ecological understanding of music

The issue of the “artwork itself”, to quote Becker (2006), has been re-addressed in the current sociology of art (Zolberg, 2014). It is concerned with aesthetic experience and with actual engagements with artworks<sup>10</sup>(DeNora, 2000; Frith, 1990; Hennion & Grenier, 2000; Tota, 2014; Witkin, 1995). This shift is in line with broader developments in the social sciences, as Acord & DeNora (2008) described, namely: 1) the ‘strong program’ in cultural sociology (Alexander & Smith, 2001), which understands “social action as cultural performance” and performative action (an approach indebted to the seminal work of Victor Turner (1986); 2) the ‘practice turn’ (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & Savigny, 2001) 3) and the performance turn (Eyerman & McCormick, 2006). Hennion (2012) adds another turn, 4) the mediation turn in the analyses of institutional, material and human intermediaries.

This concern with artworks resonates with Actor-Network Theory (ANT). That is to say that it takes into account the agency of non-human actors (actants), of which art works are one kind. In ANT, material artefacts are

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<sup>10</sup> Despite the recognition in social theory of the “aestheticisation of everyday life” (Featherstone, 1991), the sociology of arts was slower to recognise aesthetics itself. However, in this regard, important work has been done by Halle (1996) whose study of art in North-American homes, grants the householders the position of ‘curators’ of their domestic space. Also, much of the work on the ethnography of domestic spaces looks at aestheticisation of the domestic space and its (aesthetic) labour and the aesthetic agency (and aesthetic “lay expertise”) of home-makers (Pink, 2003; S. Scott, 2009).

conceptualised as mediators of human activity (distributed agency). But ANT studied laboratories, where the ‘material agency’ of objects in connection with talk and practice, could be seen to contribute to how scientific work got done (Latour & Woolgar, 1986; Lynch, 1985; Pickering, 1995).

More generally, it also resonates with studies of material culture, which have long been focusing on the role of objects – their specific material and sensuous properties – in human (inter)action<sup>11</sup>. One piece of work which has been influential in the sociology of the arts (as in other disciplinary fields) has been Alfred’s (Gell, 1998) anthropological work on assigning agency to artefacts and artworks (art-as-agency). Gell, like other contemporary material culture scholars shows how objects’ meanings produce social relations through their uses by individuals and collectivities, through the way people talk about objects and how objects are located in larger cultural narratives (Appadurai, 1986;; Kopytoff, 1986; Vannini, 2009; Woodward, 2007).

In this vein, and putting forward a more dynamic understanding of (musical) objects-human interaction or artefacts-in-use in situated contexts (Suchman, 2007), I use the concept of affordances. What can affordances afford?

As described in Chapter 1, the concept of affordances, within a socio-ecological tradition, has been a useful way to approach music, suiting a socio-musical research that draws together the concerns of new musicology [“How musical discourse could shape or reflect society”] and sociology [“How society shaped music”] (DeNora, 2003a, p. 41), allowing a practical understanding of how music comes to have meanings and can become a template for action (Ansdell, 2014; D. Clarke & Clarke, 2011; E. Clarke, 2005; DeNora, 2003a; Dibben, 2001, 2012; Windsor & de Bézenac, 2012).

Affordances allow us to go beyond the divide of music-as-text versus music-as-context (DeNora, 2003a), towards music-as-action.

Along with affordances, there are people’s abilities, and the relationship between dispositions and abilities, captured in the idea of “learned affordances” (E. Gibson & Pick, 2000). This idea is one that stretches back to Howard Becker’s (1953) classic study on “becoming a marijuana user”, which described

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<sup>11</sup> Although the same applies to music, not so much work has been done on the material culture of music – for a short review cf. Straw (2012).

the interactional, tacit, informal, situated components of learning which initiate a novice marijuana user into the experience of being high, and activate the effects of the drug: how one learns to smoke, to create the symptoms, recognise them and connect them to the drug use. Becker showed how dispositions towards objects and the environment are “built up in the course of learning” (H. Becker, 1953, p. 235) and in ways that demand work should be done by users (in his case, marijuana users) and in ways that structure actual experience.

As with marijuana, so too with music, in and through what music is found to afford, structures for action can be provided, in the sense that “doing music is simultaneously doing other things: “thinking and remembering, feeling, moving/being, and co-operating, co-ordinating, and sometimes colluding with others” (DeNora, 2003a, p. 165). As such, music can inform consciousness, action, subjectivity and emotion (E. Clarke, Dibben, & Pitts, 2009; Juslin & Sloboda, 2011; Sloboda, 2005).

The entanglement of sonic materials with corporeal, physical, emotional and psychic states signals a move (Gilbert, 2004), towards musical affect in practice (DeNora, 2000, 2003a, 2011a; Finnegan, 2012; Grossberg, 1988).

There is an emotional and cognitive dimension at play in human-object interaction, recognized by a “theory of resonance” (T. E. McDonnell, Bail, & Tavory, 2017), that shows how (cultural) objects are ‘in action’ when actors use them for problem-solving, world-building and meaning-making (in the pragmatist vein of John Dewey or William James). As such, objects’ meanings emerge through the actual (not presumed) social interactions between people, cultural objects and situations, whereby actors continuously interpret and reevaluate the world around them in response to repeated interaction with cultural objects (T. E. McDonnell et al., 2017, p. 2). Capturing music’s role as a mediator of the social, DeNora suggests that: “affordances are produced through an interaction between people, interpretations and decisions and the use of materials. Affordances are the product of practices of appropriation, achieved in and through practical action (...)” (DeNora, 2011b, p. 162), in a specific context in a specific time. In fact, it is only when music users link or *associate* – using ANT’s metaphor – music and other things that music can afford something. Without making assumptions *a priori* about those links (as Hennion would put it), about

“what” music might do to people (music’s effects), sociologists should follow agents as they *do things with music* (DeNora, 2003a, p. 41).

Against this backdrop of affordance/appropriation, we can now return to the study of amateur musicking with a clearer understanding of how to musick is to build a world, to make lines of action, to produce (our)selves and to curate scenarios for social (inter)action.

### *Amateurs and the pragmatics of taste*

Against the view of music lover as a cultural dope, Hennion proposes the figure of the amateur, as an active practitioner of the love of music:

the amateur (in the broad sense of art lover) is a virtuoso of experimentation, be it aesthetic, technical, social, mental, or corporeal. She is the model of an inventive and reflexive actor, tightly bound to a collective, continuously forced to put into question the determinants of what she likes. She is as self-aware about pieces and products as about the social determinants and mimetic biases of her preferences; about the training of her body and soul as about her ability to like music, the technical devices of appreciation and the necessary conditions of a good feeling, the support of a collective and the vocabulary progressively designed to perform and intensify her pleasure. Studying diverse amateurs, then, provides a better understanding of our attachments (Hennion, 2012)

It is the diversity and combination of amateurs’ practices, supports and devices as they use music, that, as Hennion argues, should produce useful typologies of forms of music loving: from the practice of an instrument, singing, listening to records at home or in the car to concert going. These are all possible (and not mutually exclusive) forms of attachment to music (Hennion, 2001). Hennion’s concern with the diversity of music listening formats is shared by Michael Bull (2000), who has proposed a typology of music’s uses, rather than – as in Bourdieusian-inspired music sociology – typologies of users. Hennion considers taste as a collective, situated, pragmatic activity, intersubjectively accomplished by specific amateurs (Hennion, 2010). Hence, taste is a modality of attachment to the world and is one of those “things that hold us together” (Hennion, 2007).

## 2.1. 2: Musicking as an embodied performative event

In his emphasis on taste 'as performance', Hennion (2001) focuses on the performative character of music and musical engagement. He moves away from the meaning in-the-text to be decoded by actors who use it as an index for cultural capital and displays of power, reflecting social class; instead, this perspective understands music as social performance – music becomes a performative embodied social activity. This is a topic that has been subject to considerable focus within socio-music studies in recent years, across different disciplinary fields (Atkinson, 2006; H. Becker & Faulkner, 2009; Boia, 2014; DeNora, 2002; Green, 1997; Halstead & Rolvsjord, 2017; Hara, 2013; McCormick, 2009, 2015; Procter, 2013; Rolvsjord & Halstead, 2013).

Putting the body at the center of this performative event will, as I shall describe, be central to our understanding of women and rock. Bodies are integral to the construction of self-identity, interpersonal interaction, and emotion, in late modernity – the body project (Giddens, 1991; Shilling, 2005). The body is (re)produced through a range of bodily practices and modifications (Featherstone, 2007). Bodies' (self)regulation and representation are two of the issues regarding 'bodily order' (B. S. Turner, 2008).

The body is also social and "embodiment is not an isolated project of the individual; it is located within a social world of interconnected social actors" (B. S. Turner, 2008, p. 245).

In the 'society of individuals', bodies who do not consume correctly are associated with irresponsibility and moral inferiority (Bauman, 2007). On the other hand, "looking good" is "feeling right" (S. Woodward, 2005), as health and well-being are linked to physical appearance (Monaghan, 2001).

There are "schemes of perception and appreciation inscribed in the bodies of the interacting agents" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 63). This concept of bodily capital is expanded by Wacquant, showing how social actors' bodily capital is an embodied learning process over time, which is carefully managed (Wacquant, 2004, pp. 127–149).

In Goffman's dramaturgical tradition, and drawing on Mauss's legacy on techniques of the body, we enact bodies through "self-reflexive body techniques" (Crossley, 2004, 2015).

As Mol & Law (2004) propose, not only we “have” bodies (bodies too have their materialities, such as size/height, weight, color, genitalia), but we also “do” bodies, and we “become” bodies over time, and in specific contexts, more or less voluntarily, with more or less control, more or less consciously. The issue at stake is to study empirically in what ways social actors “have”, “do” and “become” their bodies.

This focus and these concerns are integral to the practice of musicking, where indeed, as we shall see, there are many themes and issues relating to the music-performing body.

### *The musician's body: embodied occupational identities*

Within the social organization of rock, where live music is a locus for the ideology of authenticity (Auslander, 2006a; Moore, 2010; Pattie, 2007), the body is on display and communicating (Crossley, 2015; Davidson, 2005).

Here we can learn from the sociology of work scholars, as musicians' bodies become an occupational resource giving rise to embodied occupational identities (C. Sanders, 2006; Driver & Bennett, 2015). Musicians' occupational identities become deeply embedded in aesthetic, bodily and emotional dimensions, which all come together in the (embodied) interactions that take place in everyday exchanges between actors at work (in this case, not only the musicians and the audience, but also sound engineers, venue managers, etc.).

Part of on-stage “body work” (Shilling, 2005; Wolkowitz, 2006) demands (embodied) “aesthetic labour” (Witkin & DeNora, 1997; Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson, 2003), as musicians' corporeality is subject to the aesthetics of bodily style and presentation. As the body has gendered and sexual meanings, there is a trend to the sexualisation of work. Adkins (2000) studying the hotel industry, shows that female attractiveness and fetishisation of uniforms and appearance were “part of the job”. Cockburn (1991) reports similar findings in a retail company.

For musicians being onstage also demands (embodied) “emotional labour” (Hochschild, 1983). As with flight attendants, musicians are also expected to configure themselves as specific types of agents, using specific forms of emotional display (smiling, looking friendly, helpful) that “embody” the organisation's purposes, even if they are not contractually written.

### *Musicking as embodied action*

Beyond embodied occupational identities, musicians enact their body, as playing is embodied action (H. Becker & Faulkner, 2009; DeNora, 2002; Sudnow, 2001).

One important way that music 'performs' the musician/music consumer's body is through how it works as a "prosthetic device" (DeNora, 2000). Taking aerobics as her case study, DeNora shows how music can afford bodily entrainment, suppress pain or fatigue (by facilitating 'embodied awareness', and states of cool or warm consciousness (DeNora, 2011c). DeNora describes how this idea is by no means new: she draws on Paul Willis's ethnographic study on bike boys and their taste for fast-paced music as an empirical example of how music entrains the body, as constitutive of trajectories and styles of conduct in real time. As one of the boys put it; 'if you hear a fast record, you've got to get up and do something, I think. If you can't dance any more, or if the dance is over, you've just got to go for a burn-up [motorcycle ride]' (as cited in DeNora, 2000, p. 7).

In addition to music's role as an organising medium for bodily capacity, music also offers specific kinetic and tactile-kinaesthetic experiences in terms of how it is played and made. Performers hold, touch, feel, and tinker with their instruments. They develop physical dexterity and motor coordination as part of their craft. However, the significance of (vibrant) physicality and the sensorial experience of art works (music included) has been marginalised, not just in the sociology of music (Boia, 2014; DeNora, 2000; Driver & Bennett, 2015), but in sociological analysis generally (Blackman, 2008).

Music affords different actions for different bodies and different types of bodily movement, through actual bodily-material practices, related to playing and listening techniques. The piano player develops specific tacit "ways of the hand" (Sudnow, 2001), over time the music listener accumulates sensibilities to specific ways of hearing (DeNora, 2000; Hennion, 2001), and dancers are music lovers that activate specialised listening practices – dance is also a performance of musical taste (Fogarty, 2015).

As has been observed, the body can be enacted in multiple ways (Mol, 2002). In relation to rock music the body is enacted in specific ways. Heavy

metal affords headbanging in a way that indie rock does not – the body gets musically entrained by tempo and by patterned (institutional) modes of body behaviour (DeNora, 2002, p. 22). The body emerges from the interaction with objects (e.g. music, a guitar) within an environment (a gig, at home rehearsing, in the car etc.). Bodies (and bodily action) emerge through human-music interaction becoming music cyborgs, to use Haraway's cyborg metaphor as other scholars have done, highlighting the potential for research of the articulation of (physical) bodies and identities through technologies and its socio-material practices and their 'dance of agency' (Pickering).

### 2.1.3: Musicking in everyday life: identity and sociability

Everyday life here is understood as a site where experience and sense-making unfold, and therefore it is understood as practice and process, not as a different site that contrasts with the extraordinary, nor as a 'taken-for-granted' background that is the context of experience (A. Bennett, 2005a; DeNora, 2014; Pais, 2002; Pink, 2012; S. Scott, 2009). Instead, the everyday becomes a privileged site to explore experience and interaction.

The call to study 'music in everyday life' comes from the recognition that music is pervasive and "ubiquitous" (Kassabian, 2013) in contemporary daily life. Music is part of the western societies' "soundscape" (Schafer, 1993). Music offers a soundtrack for work, on the factory floor (Korczynski, 2011), at the office (Dibben & Haake, 2013), when shopping (DeNora & Belcher, 2001), and in public spaces. Music is also on TV (Negus & Street, 2002) and on the radio (Longhurst, Bagnall, & Savage, 2001), in advertising (Tota, 2001), films, computer game soundtracks and telephone ringtones and so forth.

Within popular music studies, the focus on everyday life has been a corrective against field biases, namely a focus on (male, heterosexual) youth, and spectacular styles. Against a reading of popular music as either resistant, or co-opted, there has been a shift towards a more pragmatic and balanced assessment of the role of music in the everyday life of people (not just the "rebellious youth")<sup>12</sup>. Recently, the focus has shifted from youth to ageing (A.

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<sup>12</sup> If the use of the concept declined, it was by no means ignored. Since its theorisation in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham, the concept of "subcultures" has been assessed and redefined as the handful of essays in 2000s on "post",

Bennett & Hodkinson, 2012; A. Bennett & Taylor, 2012; Hodkinson, 2011; Jennings & Gardner, 2012; Kotarba, 2013); from the “spectacular” and visual dimensions of subcultures to include the more mundane and sonic dimensions of musical listening, as music is integrated within varied activities and situations (Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Kahn-Harris, 2004). In fact, as recently as the late 1980s, Laing (1985) and Richard Middleton (1990) have criticised subcultural theorists (for example, Hebdige) for their neglect of musical sound in favour of visual style.

The role of “music in everyday life” and in mundane contexts signals a move from “meaning” (music as object) to the pragmatic, situated “uses of music” (rather than interpretation) (DeNora, 2003a, pp. 44–45; P. Martin, 2006, pp. 180–201). This move converges with ethnomusicologists’ concerns about the “everyday usage, function and meaning of music” (Edstrom, 1997: 19 as cited in Martin, 2006, p. 206). Studies on music in everyday life show how music, technologically mediated, is an “active ingredient” in identity and subjectivity construction – a “technology of the self” (DeNora, 1999) – thus affording narratives for world-building, meaning-making and identity (Crafts, Cavicchi, & Keil, 1993; DeNora, 2000; Frith, 1996; Halstead, 2013; MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002; Merrill, 2009).

For instance, the field of music psychology investigates people’s use of music in everyday contexts (and emotional outcomes), whether by individuals or groups (D. J. Hargreaves & North, 1999; Juslin & Laukka, 2004; North & Hargreaves, 2008; North, Hargreaves, & Hargreaves, 2004; Sloboda & O’Neill, 2001).

Music therapy studies also investigate how music affords well-being in everyday life in ways that foster coping (Ansdell, 2014; Batt-Rawden, 2007; MacDonald, Kreutz, & Mitchell, 2012). Michael Bull (2000, 2007) and Marie Skånland (2011) look at the role of personal stereos in the construction of the self, well-being, cognition (looking, listening, thinking, remembering, fantasising etc.), interpersonal relations, as well as the organization and management of time and space in everyday life. Additionally, Simon Frith’s observations point to

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“after” and “beyond” subcultures make evident (A. Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004; Huq, 2006; Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003)

a socio-ecological understanding of music and identity as later proposed by DeNora (2000, 2011, 2013).

Frith specifically analyses popular music and ‘the social functions of popular music are in the creation of identity, in the management of feelings, in the management of time... [Popular music] is special...not necessarily with reference to other music, but to the rest of life.’ (Frith, 1987, p. 144).

Music is also relevant to building sociability and affiliation with others, from intimate culture (Denora, 1997; Wilson-Kovacs, 2004) to collective music-making, singing and remembering (Einarsdóttir, 2012; Hagen, 2012; Pinar & DeNora, 2015). Music affords collective action and protest (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Roy, 2010), and can also be a medium for conflict resolution (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010; Robertson, 2010). Music can also foster communal ties (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2008; Stige, 2010). Some community music therapy scholars advocate the idea that collaborative musical ‘furnishing’ activities can be a resource for the generation of bonding and bridging capital (Putnam, 2000) or even a form of proto-social musical capital (Hara, 2013; Procter, 2011).

On the other hand, music also affords a (temporary) respite from identities, as the concept of “music asylum” helps capture. In her critical re-reading of Goffman’s *Asylums*, DeNora detaches the concept of asylum from its physical location and/or groups of personnel (and its total institutions), and returns to its original meaning as a shelter and as a haven. This means that asylums are both phenomenological experiences and (an environmental) construct: “asylum can be defined as a space, either physical or conceptual, that either offers protection from hostility (a refuge) or, more positively, a space within which to play on/with one’s environment, whether alone or in concert with others” (DeNora, 2013, p. 47). This is to say that musical asylums can be workplaces for both “removal” (individual, private) and “refurnishing” (public, collective) activities and experiences, and I will discuss these terms again later on.

### *Musicking as leisure*

Beyond listening to music, a lot of people engage in music-making and playing instruments on their own or in a group, singing alone or in choirs or bands, which are also uses of music (Frith, 2012, p. 157; Hennion, 2001). Another way

of conceptualising people's musical engagement in everyday life is to see music activities as a (more or less) time-intensive leisure form, in addition to the role of music in so many contemporary forms of leisure (A. Bennett, 2005b).

Leisure (including musical leisure) is a site for identity construction (contestation and negotiation), sociability and social capital building, as documented by (feminist) leisure scholars (Aitchison, 2003; Raisborough, 2006). For actors involved in 'serious leisure' practices, a display of commitment, identification (with the activity) and a sense of belonging are organising principles in their lives (Stebbins, 2014).

This resonates with the work of music education scholar, Stephanie Pitts (2005), who advances and takes seriously the "value of musical participation" in everyday life and throughout the lifetime of individuals. Considering different forms of musical participation from music making to concert attendance, Pitts argues that there is no separation between music and life.

Finnegan's landmark study (2007 [1989]) captures music-making across different musical genres, as "social practices and process" in the everyday life of amateurs in a small English town. Finnegan calls them the *hidden musicians* (who are only hidden due to the focus on "great" and professional musicians). Finnegan argues that music-making provides "pathways" through life that are paved out by social and musical networks, and that intersect with other spheres, and in this complexity, they constitute the everyday life of people: "to be involved in musical practice (...) is to be involved in social action and relations – in society" (Finnegan, 2007, p. 329).

#### 2.1.4 Towards a (post-critical) music sociology

This collection of concepts – affordances, use, pragmatic meaning, materialities, body, amateurs, musicking and everyday life – fosters an understanding of music as society, which is best encapsulated in the use of the label "music sociology"<sup>13</sup> – or rather, as a medium for world-building.

This point has been discussed explicitly in the "new sociology of art" (de la Fuente, 2007) or a "post-critical [...] new music sociology" (Prior, 2011, p. 122).

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<sup>13</sup>The Exeter School, with its MAiA (Music and Arts in Action) framework, has produced a relevant body of work for the discipline of Music Sociology.

Despite the legacy and the paramount contributions of Bourdieu's (European) critical sociology and (North-American) production of cultural approaches (privileging an organisational understanding of art worlds), the post-critical sociology of arts argues that "not all aesthetic processes can be reduced to questions of power, symbolic exclusion and institutional process" (Prior, 2011, p. 125). That is to say, artwork is more than a mere display of power or reflections of deep social structures. Even if more recently Becker's work has been influential, in terms of analysing the "art itself" (H. Becker, 2006), it has been criticized (and refined) for not taking a performative approach to music (McCormick, 2012), and for "sociologising" the organisational aspects of art worlds without accounting for what is central for artists – the art itself (Hennion, 2001). Bourdieu has been criticised for his lack of engagement with (creative) agency and artistic motivation. In fact, agency and creativity have been under-theorised in the sociology of the arts (Born, 2010; Straw, 2010).

Hennion points out that the system of artistic production has been overlooked at the expense of the artwork and aesthetic experience, dismissed "as either the mere stakes of an identity game – an *illusio*, as Bourdieu calls it – or the purely conventional products of a collective activity" (Hennion & Grenier, 2000, p. 342). Currently, the "aesthetic turn" (Prior, 2011) in the sociology of the arts aims at "putting arts back into the social" (de La Fuente, 2007).

The music sociology that I shall develop in my empirical case study looks at the "mutual shaping" of art and society and follows actors as they "do things with things" (Streeck, 1996). At the same time it avoids establishing mediating links between art and society "when this is not done by an identifiable intermediary" (Hennion as cited in DeNora, 2003a, p. 40). This is a music sociology that can capture the otherwise elusive ways in which assemblages of (music) mediations (e.g. instruments, musicians, scores, stages, records) are made in real time, by situated agents.

In music sociology's theoretical movement from representation to performance, the body is put "in a cultural-material context (ecology) from which it emerges" (DeNora, 2011b, p. xvi). That is to say, (this approach) music sociology is not so interested in the representations of the body (in line with other critiques of bodies' over-textualisation (Howson, 2005), but in the ways

the music gets into the body and the ways in which the body itself becomes “musically composed” (DeNora, 2000).

In other words, the new music sociology places the emphasis on the active and reflexive agency of actors: “music is a resource for modulating and structuring the parameters of aesthetic agency – feeling, motivation, desire, comportment, action style, energy” (DeNora, 2000; Witkin & DeNora, 1997). In this respect, the new music sociology highlights the idea that music is not just a socially constructed medium but also a medium *of* social construction (DeNora, 2003a, p. 148). Music as a cultural workspace is furnished and furnishing: it is created by and aids in the creation of people’s aesthetic sensibilities. Meaningful interaction cumulatively translates such sensibilities into dispositions. This aesthetic furnishing, like craft practice (e.g. ways of handling materials and objects, ways of perceiving), is a trans-individual, inter-subjective practice (DeNora, 2014, p. xv). This (inter)action is not just cognitive, but also has an emotional, embodied dimension that is often tacit.

## Part II – The gender and sexual politics of rock music

There is a burgeoning literature on the relationship between gender, sexuality and popular music. These studies range from social sciences to the ‘new musicology’, with different methodological approaches, from ethnography to discourse analysis and semiotics (Bayton, 1998; Sara Cohen, 1997; Downes, 2010; Finnegan, 2007; Jarman-Ivens, 2007; Leonard, 2007; McClary, 1991; Middleton, 1990; Moos & Contreras Zubillaga, 2013; Shepherd, 1991; J. Taylor, 2012; Walser, 1993; Whiteley & Rycenga, 2006). More recently, two all-encompassing volumes are a show-case of work on these topics (Hawkins, 2016, 2017; Kearney, 2017).

The earliest feminist research critiqued rock music as a masculinist culture, dominated by men (McRobbie, 1990; McRobbie & Garber, 1990). This perspective has informed subsequent studies in different disciplinary fields and in a way that has meant that the critique of rock as “a male form” (Frith & McRobbie, 1990, p. 373) has served as the unquestioned starting point for later researchers (Auslander, 2004; Leonard, 2007). Yet, the fact that men outnumber women in rock and other genres is not enough to explain rock’s

masculinity and why rock is equated with male(ness) (Leonard, 2007, p. 24). Neither is it sufficient to claim that the music itself uncomplicatedly represents masculinity (Jarman-Ivens, 2007). In fact, masculinity and femininity in rock have always been “troubled” and ‘queered’ (Auslander, 2006b; Bruzzi, 1997; Clifford-Napoleone, 2015; Hawkins, 2016; J. Taylor, 2012; Whiteley, 1997).

The question can and should be shifted so as to emphasise practice: how rock is (re)produced as a masculine music world. Moreover, the question should concern how a particular genre is actively produced as masculine within a set of (contested) gendered spaces, discourses, and practices (Auslander, 2004; Sara Cohen, 1997; Downes, 2012b; Green, 1997; Leonard, 2007).

Instead of considering the masculinity of rock (or other male dominated music scenes, such as hip-hop) as oppressive (patriarchal, racist) *per se*, scholars need to empirically analyse the uses of rock by real girls and women. Only by following actors as they *do things* with rock (including gender performances), without establishing a priori relationships, can we get out of this reductionist position:

The point of criticism should not be to decide whether rock music is oppositional or co-optive with respect to gender, class, or any other social category, but rather to analyse how it arbitrates [one could say mediates] tensions between opposition and co-optation at particular historical moments (Walser, 1993, p. 136)

The focus of my analysis is how music and gender are mutually shaped, and locally produced, how the social organization of gender is mediated by rock music. This means shifting the analysis of homologies to the affordances of music in terms of gendered performances and identities; that is to say, not only analysing how gender shapes rock music, but also how rock music is an active ingredient in the formation of gender.

### 2.2.1 Identity as Performed: gender performance through music performance

Gender performances of masculinity, femininity and (hetero)sexuality are constituted through the practices of musicking. Identity involves the presentation of the self (Goffman, 1990). Identity demands the practical work of achieving it, of “passing as” (Garfinkel & Rawls, 2006).

Following this tradition, part of this “identity work” (Snow & Anderson, 1987) consists of presenting the self to others (projection) and to oneself (introjection), through cultural, bodily, behavioral, technological, textual and discursive practices (DeNora, 2000). Identities are not pre-given, they demand practical engagement in identity work and self-reflexivity (Giddens, 1991). Identity work gets done through “impression management” and careful monitoring of self-image (Goffman, 1990). The self is accountable through governmentality/self-governance by negotiating (in a Foucauldian sense) subject positions (Butler, 2005; N. Rose, O’Malley, & Valverde, 2006). What counts as identity and difference is situated, relational, material and distributed (DeNora, 2000; Law, 1999).

The gendered self is produced through performative on-going actions. The gendered self is an outcome of the process through which gendered relations (distinctions, but also similarities) are made, unmade and remade (Butler, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 2009).

Gender identities take shape in relation to the ‘gender order’ (Connell, 2002, 2005) that aligns gender and sexuality with binary categories (masculine/feminine, heterosexual/homosexual) that interrelate hierarchically (masculinity over femininity, and heterosexuality over homosexuality).

This is what Butler describes with the concept of heteronormativity: the norms and practices that construct heterosexuality as “natural” also reinforce dichotomies of male/female, constructing “feminine women” and “masculine men” (Butler, 1990), because heteronormativity and homophobia play a role in the regulation of gender.

Gender identities are moreover performed, negotiated and sustained at the level of everyday interaction, and in ways that result in institutionalised practices (S. Jackson, 2006; S. Jackson & Scott, 2000). Between sameness and difference, in situated contexts people are always “doing gender” (West & Zimmerman, 2009). Masculinity is a practice traditionally associated with men, but it can be performed by girls and women – tomboyism (Francis, 2010; Paechter, 2010; Pascoe, 2007; Reay, 2001) and ‘female masculinity’ (Halberstam, 1998).

As a practised social category (Connell 2003), the body is vital for the social construction of gender (Grosz, 1994; J. Holland & Adkins, 1996; Mol & Law, 2004).

Gender is hence understood as an embodied “doing” (rather than a being), a verb rather than a noun, acquired through repetitive stylised performative acts (Butler, 1990, p. 25). A person learns how to “do gender” through socially located interaction (West & Zimmerman, 2009), for example one can learn how to “throw like a girl” (I. M. Young, 2005) or “fake like a woman” (S. Jackson & Scott, 2007). Garfinkel (1967) refers to gender as an ‘ongoing accomplishment’, Goffman (1978) points to the performativity of “gender displays” through gender as a social ‘arrangement’ and a frame.

To say then that gender is performative and discursive does not mean that there is a free, willing individual choosing to express their identity either as a man or a woman – although some hyper-optimistic versions of post-modernism in its defence of fluid identities run the risk of this kind of misinterpretation. To say that gender is performative is not a matter of discursive or linguistic idealism (as if discursive was at odds with materialism), as it does not deny the material reality of differences, which are often on the basis of inequalities, experienced by real people.

Against a kind of “discursive idealism” it can also be added that gender intersects with class<sup>14</sup>, race, age, ability and intersectionality (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Frankenberg, 1993; Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2012).

### *Performing gender through music*

In *Music, Gender and Education* (1997) Lucy Green sets up her performative reapproach to music and gender, informed by a Foucauldian approach. Green argues that gendered meanings – inherent and delineated – act upon the musical experience of both performer and listener on musical practices and on the construction of music discourses. Green distinguishes (virtually) between inherent and delineated meaning: the former is “the sound of music”, music

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<sup>14</sup>The recognition that class differences are represented as sexual differences is not new. In *Formations of Class and Gender*, Skeggs (1997) shows how this leads to class dis-identifications – working class women do not want to be linked to that identity, as it means being pathologised as excessively sexual and/or bad mothers. As such, they use the reputation to self-regulate and maintain “respectability”.

materials and its interrelationships; and the latter are the connotations or associations which derive from the social context of music's use (production and reception). Inherent and delineated meanings are in a mutual relationship – although in some genres, such as popular music, delineated meanings are more prevalent (unlike in classical music).

The gender of the performer – and their attractiveness – is one of the strongest contextual factors of music's delineations, Green argues. Women singers “affirm femininity” through the association of women with nature and the body (supposedly devoid of technological mediation), and the appearance of sexual availability (Green, 1997, pp. 21–51). In contrast, Green contends that women playing instruments (Green, 1997, pp. 52–81) or composing (Green, 1997, pp. 82–115) “interrupt femininity”, and hence the scarcity of women and the restrictions placed on their musical opportunities as composers and performers (Halstead, 1997).

Two instruments constitute a historical example of “interrupting femininity”: the cello and the piano. In Victorian society, playing the cello between opened legs was seen as incommensurate with femininity and female cellists were required to play in problematic “side-saddle” positions to avoid it (Cowling, 1975). In the 19th century, playing the piano also became incommensurate with gendered notions of bodily decorum, after Beethoven's piano performances and their association with masculine musical aesthetics (DeNora, 2002).

But masculinity too can be interrupted. That is the case when boys sing (Welch & Howard, 2002). The case of women conductors also complicates gender performances. Due to the “bodily choreography” and bodily display required to conduct, women might be said to risk bodily decorum (and interrupt some notions of femininity). On the other hand, they also interrupt masculinity, as anxieties about the “feminising” character of conducting arise (Halstead, 2005).

The gender delineation of music also affects the musical experience of listeners and their perceptions of inherent meaning and the way women's work is assessed: “A great deal of music by women has been denigrated for its alleged effeminacy, other music has been more favourably received as displaying positive feminine attributes such as delicacy or sensitivity, and a tiny

amount of music by women has been incredulously hailed as equal to music by a man” (Green, 2009, pp. 145–146).

Green’s distinction between singers and instrumentalists is to some extent restrictive, not taking into account the practical action required by the singer, and further considering technology and mediation in a very narrow manner. However, Green’s theory of gender delineated meaning shows how music comes to signify extra-musical things. Hence, music is a cultural workspace (DeNora, 2011b) for gendered object lessons, e.g. what is (in)appropriate for females.

Gender places constraints upon musical opportunities. At the same time, musical practice, musical taste, instrumental choice and playing-as-performing is used as an active ingredient in the construction of a gendered musical identity. *People negotiate gender identity through musical practice* as documented by music education scholars, ethno-musicologists and music therapy scholars (Dibben, 2002a; Doubleday, 2008; Halstead & Rolvsjord, 2017; R. MacDonald et al., 2002).

In this vein, my empirical research looks at how gender and rock mutually shape each other in terms of subjectivities, identities and practices.

### 2.2.2: Feminist music mo(ve)ments and (sub)cultural participation

Rock is a male-dominated field. Yet there have been some noticeable feminist music mo(ve)ments, where girls and women have been active in their (sub)cultural participation in rock worlds.

Within a “compensatory [rock] history”<sup>15</sup> of women (Citron, 1993), that has reclaimed women’s (historical) contributions to (popular) music, a wave of scholarly (within the “new musicology” and cultural studies) and non-scholarly<sup>16</sup> studies have provided revisionist accounts of the history of popular music and musicians – Madonna, Laurie Anderson, the Spice Girls, more recently Lady

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<sup>15</sup>Inspired by women’s studies of “compensatory history”, feminist musicology reclaimed the works of women composers and performers whose lives and works were not part of the musical canon (S. C. Cook, McClary, & Tsou, 1994, p. 4).

<sup>16</sup>The study of women rockers is much indebted to women journalists’ indignation with male-centered histories of popular music. A revisionist account of the contributions of women to rock took place in trade publications in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, in the intellectual awakening of what has been termed third-wave feminism (Peraino, 2001, p. 692). For a historical account of the lives and work of women rock critics during the 1960s and 1970s, Ellen Willis and Lillian Roxon, see Rhodes (2005).

Gaga, and many more (O'Brien, 2002; Ono & Gaar, 2002; Raha, 2004; Raphael & Harry, 1995; Reynolds & Press, 1995). There have been many research articles published on pop singers, most notably during the 1990s and 2000s. There has also been a growing interest in the study of Anglo-American vocal girls groups of the 1960s (Bradby, 1990; Warwick, 2007), as well as 1960s all-girl rock bands (beat groups, in the wake of the Beatles) (Feldman-Barrett, 2014), that up to now held marginal positions in academic rock history – displaced by “cock rock” and male rock bands on the one hand, and on the other hand, by an emphasis on commercially successful individual artists<sup>17</sup>.

### ***Punk, grunge, riot grrrl and subcultural participation***

Punk was the first pro-feminist music movement in the late 1970s that opened up space for women in music-making. Punk's genre characteristics (Do It Yourself (DIY) punk ethos) afforded the increased participation of women as instrumentalists, and many female bands emerged – The Raincoats (O'Meara, 2003), The Slits (Cogan, 2012), The Runaways (E. McDonnell, 2013), The Bangles (Mercer-Taylor, 1998).

However, the rise of women performers did not translate into more equality within the music world. The commercialisation and male rewriting of punk<sup>18</sup>, as well as the misogynistic traits within the punk movement itself, tended to obscure women's presence (Downes, 2012b, p. 208; Green, 1997, p. 76; Reddington, 2004, p. 239; Rosenberg & Garofalo, 1998, p. 809). Still, the legacy of punk women was imprinted in the alternative rock music scene of the late 1980s and 1990s.

In the 1990s, female bands continued to emerge (e.g. Hole, L7). The grunge movement was responsible for the increase of women on electric bass<sup>19</sup> (Clawson, 1999).

Riot grrrl developed through the 1990s. It has its early origins in the USA, initiated by female-centred rock bands Bratmobile and Bikini Kill, and spread as

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<sup>17</sup>The rising field of celebrity and stardom studies (Rojek, 2001) has played a role in this trend.

<sup>18</sup> In a recent event, Viv Albertine, former guitarist of the punk band the Slits, literally “rewrote” punk history by adding female bands to the list of important (male) punk bands.  
<https://www.punknews.org/article/61344/the-slits-guitarist-rewrites-history-at-punk-1976-78-exhibition>

<sup>19</sup> Well known bass players of the 1990s are Kim Gordon (Sonic Youth) or D'Arcy Wretzky (Smashing Pumpkins).

a translocal scene (Schilt, 2004), reaching from the UK (Downes, 2010) to Germany (Reitsamer, 2009) and as far as Brazil (Guerra et al., 2017).

Riot grrrl is a grassroots feminist movement in music that addresses gender inequality within rock music and the cultural and political marginalisation of young women and girls, using extensive zine networks and online spaces, where girls and young women debated issues of music, gender and sexuality (Downes, 2012b; Kearney, 2006; Leonard, 2007, pp. 137–162; Schilt, 2003b). Riot grrrl challenged the gender power relations in many ways. It reclaimed girlness and girlhood – rewriting girl as grrrl, with a defiant political tone (Gottlieb & Wald, 1994, p. 266), and the sexist words “slut” or “bitch” were also reclaimed (Attwood, 2007, p. 236). Gig conventions were also challenged: “girls to the front”, which made the area directly in front of the stage (usually where the mosh pit<sup>20</sup> happens) a safe space for girls (Downes, 2010).

The creation of female-oriented spaces has been a strategy to raise public awareness of gender imbalance<sup>21</sup>. Beyond the riot grrrl movement, of utmost importance is the creation of women bands (Reitsamer, 2009), DJ collectives (Farrugia, 2009), and women-run activities. These range from women-only record companies and independent label distribution networks, such as Olivia Records (Green, 1997, p. 47), to online forums run by women and devoted to the discussion of women in metal (Vasan, 2011) or the creation of the Tom Tom magazine “dedicated to female drummers”. The creation of women-only events/festivals and gigs has been an important part of women’s presence in music over time (although these festivals differ from each other in their feminist aims, in the available resources, and in the media attention received). Various examples can be given. In the 1970s, there was Rock Against Sexism, which subsequently disintegrated (Berkers, 2012; Sara Cohen, 1991). In the 2000s, and in a continuum with riot grrrl, LadyFest began, initially in the USA and eventually spreading beyond (Schilt & Zobl, 2008) and queer

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<sup>20</sup> The mosh pit is the area in front of a stage where a specific dance (very physical and rough) takes place at a rock concert. Because of its violence and anger release, it is connected to masculinity, although this has been challenged. For instance, the mosh pit can be a liminal space for gender subversion. On gender and mosh pit (outside the riot grrrl movement) see Riches (2011) and Gruzelier (2007).

<sup>21</sup> Not without critique, as “gender solidarity” activities have their strengths and weaknesses (Gracyk, 2001). The concept of “women’s music” can be read in an essentialist manner, running the risk of being ghettoised. Also Riot Grrrls were accused of being separatists.

cultural festivals – Queeruption (Downes, 2010a). More recently, the phenomenon of “Girls Rock Camps”, where girls are taught traditionally “male” instruments and “implicit” feminism (Giffort, 2011) has spread across countries.

On a local grassroots level, it can take the form of individual action, such as bands who deliberately “feminize the gigs” – knitting before going onstage, asking for a sanitary towel onstage, as found by Bayton (1998, p.134). Female-only spaces can take the form of “ladies only” nights at death metal clubs (Vasan, 2011), or club nights and gigs for queer and/or feminist performers and audiences (Downes, 2010, p. 233), or even performers who “police” the audience for non-violent gendered behavior (Schippers, 2002).

Musical engagement should not be restricted to musicianship, listening or dancing but occurs here just for analytical purposes. If we consider cultural participation generally, not just in music, but in the material cultures of music, we see a more dynamic picture of the involvement of girls and women, as I hope to show throughout the empirical chapters.

Mostly within the riot grrrl movement, not-for-profit communal activities often take place, such as knitting, eating a meal or providing cake (Downes, 2012). Piano has argued that such kinds of DIY practices contribute to the establishment of a (third wave feminist) alternative economy, through the production and distribution of “women-oriented goods”, mostly zines, but also crafts, and clothing (Piano, 2002, 2003).

Previously, McRobbie (1993) demonstrated that girls and young women gained some economic autonomy through their engagement in aspects of music subcultures, such as art, graphics and most notably, style (by gathering and imaginatively re-creating items of dress and styles), going beyond the most well-known example of Viviane Westwood.

In fact, against the exclusion and marginalisation of women and girls in subcultures, and as a corrective to the under-theorisation of the domestic and mundane in subcultures (McRobbie, 1990), scholars have also documented girls and women’s broad (non-strictly musical) active participation within (sub)cultures.

In addition to fashion, clothing and style, girls and women are active (although not always visible) in the making of (alternative) music media – such as fanzines, rock journalism, webzines and blogging (Hickam & Wallach, 2011,

p. 255; Rhodes, 2005; Schilt, 2003b) or photography (Bannister, 2010). Girls and women also have important roles as band managers or record label personnel (Green, 1997; Kahn-Harris, 2007; McRobbie, 1989a, 1993; Vasan, 2011).

### 2.2.3: Gender performances in rock worlds

Rock scholarship considers two possible subject positions available to women rockers. On the one hand, as “one of the boys”: either the tomboy (Frith, 1981, p. 239), the woman with balls (Gottlieb & Wald, 1994, p. 260) or the “female machisma” (Reynolds & Press, 1995, p. 233).

On the other hand, rock scholarship has analysed how women rockers are positioned as sex objects, either in the roles of wives, fans (groupies) or musicians. This is a status that is difficult to transcend, especially for musicians; once sexualised, women are considered inauthentic (Schipper, 2002, p. 28). In fact, the physical attractiveness (physical capital) of women musicians might act against them – the more “sexually attractive the woman singer is constructed to be, the less seriously she and her music can be taken” (Green, 1997, p. 46). Ethnomusicologist Koskoff (as cited in Doubleday, 2008, p. 22) demonstrates that, in the male-dominated music worlds, it is common to heighten female sexuality as the quality of strangeness (or ‘oxymoron’) is capitalized upon.

This is also the case with female musicians in rock bands, as men in the music business treat women in sexual, marketable terms. Women were often recruited to “add glamour” or sex appeal to bands (e.g. singers), or due to their novelty value (e.g. a drummer in a band, instead of the cliché of the female singer) (Cohen, 1991, pp. 206-207).

Whereas some women explicitly reject seductiveness at the risk of not being hired or even of being rejected, others use it either a great deal or in a subdued way (Buscatto, 2014). The use of this “feminine capital” (Skeggs, 1997), either seductiveness or gender difference (Buscatto, 2014) can be seen as an attempt at “reversing stigma” (Goffman 1963), and where pride is often the theme of identity discourses. Organizational studies also found that some women prefer to enact femaleness, as having a sexualised status is better than having no status and being invisible (Watts, 2010b).

The literature on women rockers claims that women in rock succeed only by subscribing to masculinist conventions and ethos (with the exception of the riot grrrl movement). This approach takes a rationalist perspective on human action, understanding action as strategic choice. And yet, many decisions are accomplished by feel or intuition, unconsciously (DeNora, 2003). At the same time, to become “one of the boys” is seen as merely emulating masculinity. Women ‘doing gender’ in men’s terms are dismissed or considered inauthentic by many feminist readings, falling into the trap of gender essentialism<sup>22</sup>, as pointed out by some authors (Auslander, 2004, 2006b; Downes, 2010; Leonard, 2007).

The rock music literature seems to posit a straightforward relationship between oppression and empowerment: women by subscribing to rock’s masculinist conventions are oppressed/dominated in the rock scene, but they are also empowered and resist the norms of mainstream society. As with men, the opposite takes place, as the rock scene allows for a liberation from mundane and domestic life commitments.

However, a closer look at gender performances in the rock world based on empirical detail shows how and when musicians and fans face the ambiguities and (often contradictory) positionings of gender subject positions in the rock world.

Auslander takes musician Suzi Quatro’s performances as a case study. Quatro embodies a masculine image (androgynous) and cock-rocker gestures onstage. However, she disrupted conventions: she played the bass and not a guitar, but she took guitar’s leading role for her bass; she also did not change the subject of the male repertoire she chose<sup>23</sup>. As such, Auslander claims that she is not a mere imitation of cock rock, she destabilises its gender coding. She performs “female masculinity”, as she is a “masculine female rocker who was not fully understandable either in terms of conventional femininity or as “one of the boys” (Auslander, 2004, p. 212). However, Suzi Quatro was dismissed by

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<sup>22</sup>This critique of the framing of female cock rockers converges with Epstein’s critique of feminist positions that welcome women in the male-dominated world providing they do not act like men (Epstein, 1992, p. 244).

<sup>23</sup> Some authors consider that female performances of men’s songs are a strategy of gender transgression. Gracyk argues that “take-overs of male-identified songs, such as Aretha Franklin’s recording of Otis Redding’s “Respect”, are an important tool for demanding [gender] parity” in rock (as cited in Auslander, 2006b, p. 215).

feminists as a “gender traitor”, as according to the feminist critique “it is not enough for women to make rock music; they must also change rock by transcending its masculinist origins and making it somehow specifically female” (Auslander, 2006b, p. 209).

Women punk musicians have been exploring gender boundaries, from androgyny to hypersexual visual imagery. The latter is the case of Wendy O. Williams of Plasmatics (cf Downes, 2010), and the former is the case of Patty Smith. McRobbie, (1989, p.42) claims that “punk androgyny”, is best exemplified (and created) by Patty Smith’s iconic cover album<sup>24</sup>, which “was never unambiguously butch or aggressive, it was slim, slight and invariably ‘arty’.” Punk androgyny was “cautious but somehow threatening” (McRobbie, 1989, p.43).

Joan Jett also challenges conventional understandings of gender and sexuality (Kennedy, 2002), as well as Annie Lennox’s drag and camp performances (Rodger, 2004), among others.

The Riot grrrl movement displayed tomboyism and androgyny in new ways by valorising the (subversive potential) of “feminine signifiers” and recovering “femme femininity” for queer politics as Downes (2010) claims. Those elements have been downplayed and under-theorised in gender and sexual (sub)cultural resistance. Not just in rock – as rock’s masculinity devalues the feminine – but within classic lesbian-feminist<sup>25</sup> politics (Downes, 2010).

Gottlieb and Wald (1994, p. 268) claim that riot grrrl’s performances by making their bodies highly visible challenge sexism: “this visibility counteracts the (feeling of) erasure and invisibility produced by persistent degradation in a sexist society. Such performances recuperate to-be-look-at-ness as something that constitutes, rather than erodes or impedes, female subjectivity”.

As such, this complicates the version that women musicians are just the object of the sexually objectifying male gaze (and the gaze of (corporate) rock

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<sup>24</sup>As described by McRobbie (1989, p.43), the Robert Mapplethorpe cover of Patti Smith's first album made a strong impression. Smith appeared casual, unmade-up with a jacket slung over her shoulders and a tie loosened at her neck. The cuffs of her shirt were visibly frayed and she faced the camera directly with a cool, scrutinising gaze.

<sup>25</sup>As Downes argues, the historical representation of lesbianism also produced its “others”: “butch” was dubbed authentic “resistance”, at the expense of the “femme”, who lived with the stigma of femininity (Downes, 2010, p. 56)

culture, which tends to market women's sexual desirability at the expense of promoting their music or their legitimacy as artists). Women also display sexual power and thus sexuality is not only interpreted in terms of romance.

Schippers (2002) studied how alternative rockers do “gender manoeuvring” (p. 116), that is to say, how rockers “manipulate the relationship between masculinity and femininity in ways that impact the larger process of gender structuration” (Schippers, 2002, p. 37). This meant a process of negotiation, whereby meanings and gender norms are challenged, transformed, and re-established.

Finally, masculinity is also performed in different ways. Connell (2005) establishes four categories of masculinity: hegemonic, complicit, marginalised and subordinate. These are hierarchical and relational, hegemonic masculinity being at the top of this power hierarchy. Rockers and people doing music have been critics of hegemonic masculinity (and hypermasculinity), which goes back to disco (Dyer, 1990; Gottlieb & Wald, 1994, pp. 260-261). Criticism can be read in glam rock performers such as David Bowie (Auslander, 2006), or when male musicians adopt feminine styles from Queen in drag (appealing to the gay community) (McLeod, 2001) to Kurt Cobain (Schippers, 2002, p. 110).

The construction of “alternative masculinities” has been a feature documented in indie rock (Bannister, 2006; Houston, 2012). In the queercore scene (USA, in the 1990s), a wave of gay punk and hardcore bands’ stage shows intended to mock and challenge conventional heterosexual identities and the overall heteronormativity of the scene (Ciminelli & Knox, 2005; Leonard, 2007, p. 92; Rauzier, 2012; Shoemaker, 2010).

### *Gender performances offstage*

The popularity of rock’s masculinity among (real) girls and women is recognised in some studies (Halberstam, 2005; Leonard, 2007, p. 25).

Empirical work shows how women claim to have been tomboys when growing up, and that was what attracted them to male dominated music worlds, from punk (Leblanc, 1999) to rock (Bayton, 1998; Carson et al., 2004) to death metal (Vasan, 2011, p. 342). Bayton goes further to argue that gender rebellion – the tomboy – is one of the factors enabling women’s participation in rock, something which McRobbie and Frith’s early critique of the masculinity of rock

(“cock rock”) failed to acknowledge. In fact, the how, why and when of girls and womens’ use of masculinity in ‘doing gender’ is of utmost importance, and should be answered through empirical data and specific case studies.

In this respect, Leblanc's (1999) ground-breaking ethnography is an excellent example. LeBlanc documented how punk girls (in the USA), through behaviour, style and discourse, negotiate and construct gender within a punk subculture. Girls have to embody and enact a tomboy position. But punk girls never rejected the notion that they were themselves feminine. They engage in subversions by juxtaposing masculinity and femininity in both dress and behaviour. Punk girls occupy a third space: not just girls, not just punks, but punk girls. In challenging femininity, these girls are alienated from one another (they pay the price of isolation and confinement, the undermining of the generation of female solidarity).

In heavy metal cultures, there are the same type of contradictions as in punk, based on “a ‘whore/goddess’ paradigm which is in turn based on the knowledge of the female heavy metal fan; the balancing act of ‘acting male’ and ‘looking female’; and the gender ‘twilight zone’ of being insufficiently male for heavy metal culture, while being insufficiently female for the mainstream world (Nordstrom & Herz, 2013).

Krenske and McKay's (2000) ethnographic study of a heavy metal music club in Australia found “multiple femininities” beyond “emphasized femininity”. There are also internal hierarchies among women (intra-sex differences): “an array of competing femininities evident in Club Thrash, as it was clear that Metal Wenches, Glam Chicks and Hardcore Bohemians had different statuses” (Krenske & McKay, 2000, p. 302).

Vasan (2011), documenting the participation of women in death metal, also shows the differences between women’s participation: women who opt for male codes of dress and behaviour often consider themselves superior to women who “dress provocatively” and do not engage in specific codes of behaviour (such as moshing, headbanging, or singing along with bands in live performances).

In short, rather than prescribing gender performances, ethnographic work is needed to achieve a situated, ecological understanding of gender performances in rock worlds.

#### 2.2.4: The gender(ing) of a musical genre

Throughout history and across geographical locations (Doubleday, 2008), musical opportunities and musical agency are distributed across lines of class, ethnicity and – my focus here – gender.

Gender stereotypes and ideologies (discourses about expected characteristics and behaviours of women and men) contribute to gender segregation and other exclusionary forms of musical practice.

Gender stereotypes and ideologies inform gender segregated musical practices. There are many examples, across disciplinary fields, that document gender stereotypes, based on the dualities of hard and soft, strong and weak, aggressive and delicate, reason and intuition/emotion, creativity and physicality, culture and nature, all of which have privileged masculinity over femininity (Bray, 2007; Cockburn, 1985; Edwards & Wajcman, 2005; Pinch & Oudshoorn, 2003).

In their now classic paper, Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie (1990[1978]) point to two foundational gender dichotomies in rock ideology that are embedded in these stereotypes. The first is based on the opposition between the male creative, active, producer (playing “cock rock”) *versus* the female passive consumer, either a “groupie” or a “teenybopper”.

The second is the opposition between (serious, male) rock *versus* (frivolous, female) pop. These two (gendered) divides remain part of the rock discourse today (Beer, 2013; Frith, 1996, pp. 75–95; Schippers, 2007). Within this discourse, rock is often associated with the romantic ideology of “art *versus* commerce” (the romantic artist rejecting the material world) whereas the women/pop music axis is seen to be a form of ‘mass culture’ and therefore commercial. These discourses which highlight the inspired, autonomous, rebellious male artist and which promote values of originality and integrity, construct women as its Other<sup>26</sup>(Keightley, 2001; Mayhew, 1999; Pattison, 1987).

Gender stereotypes and ideology have consequences for people/music users’ subjectivities, and further marginalise women at many levels, as the literature on rock music documents.

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<sup>26</sup> Now and throughout the history of art (Pollock, 1988) and music (Green, 1997).

*Music press and the persistence of gender stereotypes and ideologies*

The Pop/rock divide has less to do with the music itself than the practices and discourses that organize music as a meaningful social practice (C. R. Martin, 1995). Here, the music press, as widely documented by rock music scholars, plays a big part in gendering aesthetic hierarchies of musical value. This has consequences at both the amateur and professional industry levels.

Music journalism discourses can be seen to construct pop music as commercial and artificial in opposition to rock as artistic and therefore “authentic” (N. Coates, 1997). The “myth of authenticity” is part of rock’s ideological effects (Frith, 1987, p.137). The genres in which women are most successful are portrayed as more commercial and thus lacking in cultural capital (Bannister, 2010; Faupel & Schmutz, 2012; Schmutz, 2009). At worst, women singer/songwriters are denigrated as “pop”, “folk” or “soft rock” as opposed to the “serious music” produced by male bands (e.g. Cohen, 1991, p. 30; Shuker, 2001, p. 119).

As Coates argues, and using de Lauretis’ concept of “gender technology”, rock criticism is a “technology which reinforces and reinscribes the male gender in rock at work” (Coates, 1997, p.54), ignoring (not writing about) the work of women performers and eroticising and sexualising them, foregrounding gender issues and physical attributes<sup>27</sup> at the expense of music (Bayton, 1998; H. Davies, 2001; Reddington, 2003; Wald, 1998).

The music press treats women musicians as a constant novelty, as groundbreaking practitioners challenging a male field, who are “discovered” against a backdrop of previous female bands, working against the normalisation of women rock musicians (Leonard, 2007, p. 35). The music press marginalises women by placing these artists in an exclusive female lineage, creating a distinction from canonised (male) musicians and, through endless comparisons with other women artists, by “lumping” them together, even if their music is totally different (Davies, Helen, 2001; Leonard, 2007, p. 36; Strong, 2011, 2013). Yet, even if female artists are assessed within a male lineage, there are representational issues that work to marginalise women (Kearney, 1997, p.

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<sup>27</sup>Even some of the few women who have reached stardom, such as Debbie Harry, became known more as sex symbols than groundbreakers (O’Hara 1999 as cited in Mullaney, 2007).

212), which persist over time, as the press coverage of Amy Winehouse and Janis Joplin attest (respectively, Berkers & Eeckelaer, 2014; Leonard, 2007, p. 37). These musicians are presented both as “one of the boys”, but also judged against accepted codes of feminine behaviour that frame their lifestyles (similar to their male counterparts), not, however, as heroes of rock’n’roll, but as “rock’n’fall”. Female performers are thus portrayed as victims of the enactment of hegemonic masculinity.

Another case study of the music press devaluing women musicians is the media portrayal of riot grrrl<sup>28</sup>. Considered to be a female derivation of a punk past, the music press has reproduced authentic punk as masculine, and women as inferior, undermining the explicit feminist intentions of riot grrrl culture (Downes, 2012, pp. 214-215). The restrictive and ghettoising categories work as “strategies of containment” (Coates, 1997, p. 53), explicit in the “women in rock” moniker (Coates, 1997, pp. 61-62). As with “women in rock”, the “riot grrrl” moniker worked to ‘lump together’ women musicians. Coates suggests that the moniker “women in rock” can be embraced as a (identity) politically useful term, to denounce the tacit rule of ‘men in rock’. In contrast Kearney (1997, pp. 212-213), has argued that media framing undermines and commodifies the political features of the riot grrrl movement. The literature suggests that Riot Grrrl was co-opted and commodified by the mainstream media, and it was rebranded in two different ways: as “angry women in rock”<sup>29</sup>; and in a commodified version of “girl power” by bands such as the Spice Girls (Bessett, 2006; N. Coates, 1997; Schilt, 2003a).

Riot grrrl’s alternative media press (fanzines), created by and targeted at a community of female readers is particularly relevant given the way music magazines have always targeted a male audience, reproducing rock’s masculinist culture (Kruse, 2002). In fact, guitar magazines were aimed at male audiences as discussed by Théberge (1997); and music journals aimed at a male readership (Sara Cohen, 1991).

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<sup>28</sup> Often mistakenly heralding riot grrrl critic, Courtney Love, as a riot grrrl leader (Strong, 2011; Schippers, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> Rage has been an emotion politicised by the riot grrrl movement (Bessett, 2006; Gottlieb & wald, 1994, p. 267), and it has antecedents in the feminist movement (connected to rage there have been feminist accusations of a lack of a sense of humour) (Brown, 1999).

The mass-media play a big part in the marginalisation of female fans too. The “screaming girl” stereotype has persisted over time, from the Beatlemania fans (Ehrenreich et al., 1992; Herrmann, 2008; L. Lewis, 1992) to the screaming girls for boy bands and girl groups (Duffett, 2013; Railton, 2001; Wald, 2002), creating “moral panics” (Stanley Cohen, 1972). The mass-media frequently represent female fans as either teenyboppers or groupies. That is to say as tasteless consumers of mainstream pop music (mass culture) – usually girls – or as sexual objects at musicians’ disposal – reducing women’s musical appreciation to a sexual experience only, and constructing sexual desire as inferior (and mutually exclusive) to musical enjoyment (Hill, 2016; Reddington, 2012, p. 3; Schippers, 2002, p. 28).

Beyond media representation, the issue that remains to be analysed is the female fans’ lived experience of music. Empirical studies of (female) fandom are scarce, with a few exceptions (T. Anderson, 2012; Bessett, 2006; Fast, 2001; Hill, 2016; Savage, 2003; Vroomen, 2004).

#### 2.2.5: Gender segregation in rock music worlds

Art worlds, as organisational cultures, are shaped by (and shape) particular gender segregation dynamics and a gender segregation of (music) labour and activities based on the idea that occupations should be divided according to gender: certain occupations/ tasks are for men, whereas other are best suited to women (Buscatto, 2014).

Gender restricts musical opportunities and has an impact on the actual musical practices and participation of women (and men as well as non-binary people), either as fans or musicians.

Regarding fandom, gender shapes musical taste as well as music-related leisure activities and their associated sound reproduction technologies.

There is a gender (and age) division of musical taste: whereas boys tend to prefer rock, ‘fast’ music or music that ‘has a beat’, girls prefer classical music and “slow”, “soft” music (Green, 1997). Women are said to prefer soft music and pop, and men hard rock (Frith, 1983; McRobbie, 2000). Men tend to be jazz or rock music lovers, whereas women tend to be classical music lovers (Buscatto, 2014, p. 46). Within the broad genre of heavy metal, female fans favour more

melodic extreme metal subgenres such as power and gothic metal (Kahn-Harris, 2007, p. 71).

Regarding musicianship, gender shapes music-making both at amateur and at the music industry level. Scholars have showed how music making is characterised by patterns of (horizontal and vertical) gender segregation within the popular music industry (Carson et al, 2004; Leonard, 2007), and at the local level of amateur and musical leisure practices (W. E. Baker & Faulkner, 1991; Bannister, 2010; Clawson, 1999a, 1999b; Sara Cohen, 1997; Finnegan, 2007; Groce & Cooper, 1990; Reddington, 2012; J. Robson, 2011).

In the music classroom, gender also impacts music practice. For instance, in British schools, the most popular choices of girls (or students whose “psychological sex type” was female) were instruments perceived to be “feminine”, and boys (or students whose “psychological sex type” was male) preferred “masculine” instruments (Green, 2010; Dibben, 2002c; O’Neill & Harrison, 2000).

Early (gendered) instrumental choices will be translated into later leisure and professional musical practices. As a result, gender segregation in music groups has persisted over time and across different locations. There is gender (horizontal) segregation in (professional) orchestras and ensembles (Ravet as cited in Buscatto, 2014; Conde, Martinho, & Pinheiro, 2003), as well as in choirs (Einarsdóttir, 2012) and rock bands (Clawson, 1999a; Sara Cohen, 1997).

This means there is male dominance over instrumental playing, with singing coded as a (natural) feminine activity across music genres (Bayton, 1998; Clawson, 1993; Green, 1997). Instrument playing is so strongly delineated as masculine that women are expected to be not just (back-up) singers but have the added pressure of being entertainers (Clawson, 1999; Mayhew, 1999; McRobbie & Frith 1990; Buscatto, 2007b).

#### 2.2.5.1: Gendering fandom: taste, leisure and sound reproduction technologies

Beyond musical listening, dancing has been a source of acceptable sexual expression open to girls (Sara Cohen, 1991; McRobbie, 1993; Pini, 2001), and one of the few out-of-home leisure activities that women engage in more than men (Thornton, 1995, p. 103). Within popular music, studies in club cultures, raves and EDM (Thornton, 1995; Pini, 2001), and more recently in break-dance

(Fogarty, 2012), take this form of female participation seriously. Pini (2001) showed how the rave dance-floor offered women a space to experience physical pleasures and affection in conjunction with “ecstasy happiness” and a sense of collectivity. New modes of femininity also emerged: raves were a way for single mothers in their mid-20s to overcome the hard work of being poor and raising a child (Pini as cited in McRobbie, 1998, p. 147).

The repertoire of bodily movements associated with rock music (e.g. headbanging, fist-raising, air-guitar, toe-tapping, finger-snapping, rhythmic clapping, pogoing, slamming and moshing) is not usually categorised as 'dancing', although we can consider these body choreographies 'dancing' in the broad sense of the word (Thornton, 1995, p. 71). The “rocking body” (the repertoire of rock’s body movements) has been taken for granted, but not explored – with the exception of moshing and the slam dance pit (Gruzelier, 2007; Riches, 2011). Thornton (1995, p. 71) situates this historically: “In the late 1960s, when rock'n'roll became rock, the music abandoned its *overt* function for dancing. (This is not to say that people did not dance to rock, but that dancing was not considered the optimal response.) If rock was to be taken seriously as an art form, then listening, not dancing, would be the requisite mode of appreciation”.

As this form of love became feminised, dancing and the dance floor became derided (N. Coates, 2003; McRobbie, 1993).

Unlike dancing, the practice of record collecting and audiophilia are masculinised and held as legitimate forms of music love. This is part of the history of the gendering (as male) of (domestic) sound recording technologies (Keightley, 1996).

Hi-fi has given rise to the figure of “audiophiles” (mainly white, middle-class men), who in search of “absolute sound”, invest financially in purchasing dedicated audio equipment for extreme hi-fi listening to recorded music and have their own special spaces in their homes – typically the basement (Perlman, 2004).

Another practice related to audiophilia is record collecting, a male-dominated practice (Shuker, 2010; Straw, 1997). The nerdish homosociality of the male record collector, who embodies the figure of the rock connoisseur, is “as fundamental to the masculinism of popular music as the general valorisation

of technical prowess and performative intensity more typically seen to be at its core” (Straw, 1997, p.15).

#### 2.2.5.2: Gender segregation in the music industry

In the music industry, there is a lack of women in (top) power positions (e.g. managers, senior executives, record company owners) and women tend to concentrate in lower status, and lower paid occupations, such as secretaries, within A&R departments, as well as in the press and public relations departments (Bayton, 1998; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011, 2015; Negus, 1992).

Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2015), in a recent study on creative industries, show that despite a rise in the number of women in the music industry, inequality patterns persist. The main forms of sexual segregation the authors found were “the high presence of women in marketing and public relations roles in the cultural industries; the high numbers of women in production co-ordination and similar roles; the domination of men of more prestigious creative roles; and the domination by men of technical jobs” (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015, p. 26). Gatekeepers such as radio DJs and music journalists are mostly men (Frith, 1983; Negus, 1992, 1999; Steward & Garratt, 1984); Negus explains occupational sex segregation of PR and marketing due to sex stereotypes of women as caring, nurturing and social, as the job “involves the employment of skills which have traditionally been associated with women rather than men: looking after sensitive artists, maintaining personal relationships, providing support, and acting as a facilitator and catalyst” (Negus, 1992, p. 114). Women are also under-represented in technical roles such as sound engineering and production (Negus, 1992; Bayton, 1998; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015, p. 28; Smith, 2009).

Gender representations intersect, moreover, with race (T. Bennett, Frith, Grossberg, Shepherd, & Graeme, 1993; Mahon, 2011). Wicke (1990) has analysed the history of Anglo-Saxon rock from the 1950s to the postpunk era, and relates the rise of rock in the musical aesthetic of African-American rhythm and blues (R&B) and gospel, and the politics of the social mentality of country music (conservative and tame). Women have been influential in some music sectors, perhaps especially African-American women, and in genres emerging

prior to rock, such as R&B, blues, jazz (Gottlieb & Wald, 1994, p. 271) and gospel (e.g. Sister Rosetta Tharpe, “the godmother of rock”, gospel singer and electric guitar player, performing gospel music in secular night clubs (Wald, 2004). Green (1997, p. 37) has highlighted the importance of blues women (e.g. Bessie Smith) who challenged (white) femininities, most notably the virgin/whore dualism, representing themselves both as sexually active (but necessarily heterosexual) and maternal. But even here women’s participation has been fraught. For example, Carson and colleagues (2004), describe in a case study of Motown how black female artists in the music industry, have been ghettoised in specific genres, and have endured other forms of discrimination, due to their gender, colour and sexuality.

#### 2.2.5.3: Gendered organisational culture of amateur rock

In the world of amateur rock, there are organisational practices – the band and gigging culture and its live performance which work to marginalise girls and women and which constrain their access to the “informal” world of rock music making.

Women lack access to rock equipment and transport as usually they have fewer financial resources (either as adolescents or as adults due to the pay gap and the sexual division of labour) (Bayton, 1998, pp. 35-48). Girls’ practices are more restricted than boys’, usually taking place in domestic spaces (commonly lacking a private space), and not in public spaces – in the bedroom, and not on street corners, and clubs/bars (McRobbie, 1990). When going out to music venues such as pubs, women engage in various procedures to avoid potential events, ranging from sexual innuendo to assault (Bayton, 1998; LeBlanc, 1999; Schippers, 2002).

The bohemianism that characterises rock ideology is also pointed to as another reason for the exclusion of women from rock music cultures (Frith, 1983, pp.85-88).

Time is also more constrained for both girls and women (Bayton, 1998, pp. 35-48). Feminist leisure scholars have focused on the political question of access to leisure as structured by (unequal) gender relations in the non-leisure world, showing how leisure sites are not ‘free’ from gendered relations (Adam, 1989). As a consequence, there is a gender gap in leisure. Women’s leisure is

experienced in fragmented and interrupted ways or combined with household chores and caring tasks – the “second shift” which persists (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000). Other differences shape access to leisure, namely, age and life-cycle (Roberts, 2012) as well as class and race (Watson & Scraton, 2013). Some scholars argue that girls and women involved in the cultural activities of punk rock are mostly white and middle-class, having the time and money to produce zines (Schilt, 2005).

*The rock band: a homosocial music-making group*

Even when girls and women have money and time to learn to play an instrument, rock is a group activity that takes place within the band, the privileged place of (informal) skill acquisition (H. S. Bennett, 1980; Campbell, 1995; Clawson, 1999a; S. G. Davis, 2005). The band can be seen as a “small group”, and its interactional (gendered) dynamic should be noted. Gary Allen Fine’s work on small group culture shows that it is in and through interaction in small group settings, according to the resources available in the local environment, that culture is located and produced (Fine & Harrington, 2004).

Learning is social, pertaining to those who have access to instruments and to musical learning; how musical knowledge and training is passed on affects access to music making. This is especially the case with popular musicians, for whom notation plays little or no role, and hence they do not need (and usually have little) formal training (H. S. Bennett, 1980, Finnegan, 2007). They develop their skills, technical knowledge and other “sensibilities” by maintaining relationships with other musicians, often more experienced (Green, 2001; Theberge, 1997, p. 174).

Bands are usually a “boy’s club”, with ‘no girls allowed’. Walser (1993, pp. 114–17) has showed how bands function as socio-musical spaces for male bonding (homosociality) and power displays, which they legitimate through sexism and misogyny (in song lyrics, album covers, music videos) and “exscription” (the creation of fantasy worlds without women).

As such, women are not just absent, they are actively excluded. Cohen (1997) found that in Liverpool, all-male bands tended to preserve music as a male domain. Wives and girlfriends are often kept away from rehearsals, recording sessions, gigs, seen as intruders and a (potential) threat to the band’s

existence. Also in the UK, Bayton (1998, pp. 36-39) documents how many young women are dissuaded or excluded by their male friends and boyfriends from band participation. Or, if women already have a musical career, they might give it up to support their male partner's career or to start or care for a family. A musician's homosociality and manhood, as in other male-dominated terrains, are built through familiarity with and mastery of technology itself and intimacy with other men (Bird, 1996). If men are constructed as technologically able, women are represented as technologically incompetent (Cockburn, 1983, p. 203), not just in bands, but in other homosocial spaces. The literature describes how female electric guitarists are patronised and even harassed when hanging out in the guitar shops (Bayton, 1997; Carson et al., 2004; Sargent, 2009).

As a result, exclusion from informal male networks means unequal access to the resources<sup>30</sup>, making it difficult for women to gain access to musical skills.

#### *Inclusion in male networks: homogamy and family background*

Women tend to be excluded from male peer groups and informal male networks, but it is also through male networks that women have succeeded, either by establishing a romantic relationship with one of the boys who form the boy's club (homogamy), or by belonging to their family (usually the daughter). Anecdotal evidence suggests that families play an important role in musicianship (Bayton, 1998; Carson et al., 2004; Finnegan, 2007, pp. 193–206). Specifically in the rock music world, the picture of 'the youth' rebelling against parents is far less commonplace, as rock baby-boomers age and rock enters the music industry (A. Bennett & Hodkinson, 2012). Bayton (1998, pp. 56–57) claims that in rock worlds, it is the father as role model that is of the greatest significance. Carson and colleagues (2004), referring to the USA, confirm the importance of fathers, although mothers also assumed a prominent role.

Clawson (1999) found that girls and young women were recruited into bands, not through heterosexual dating, but through their participation in mixed-sex friendship groups, recruitment by 'friends of friends'. In the USA, access to

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<sup>30</sup> Resources such as skills or other knowledge necessary to job success (cf. Swerdlow, 1989, p. 373).

male friendships and acquaintances is the main factor in women joining bands, not boyfriends or the women themselves forming bands.

Homogamy has been found in music for musicians in rock (Ortiz 2004 as cited in Buscatto 2014; Schippers, 2002) and in jazz (Buscatto 2007). In the British rock world, both Bayton and Cohen found that women gained access to musical participation through their relationships with male musicians. Homogamy is also found among music fans, as in metal (Arnett, 1996) or punk (LesBlanc, 1999).

Women might become musicians in bands due to the encouragement and support of their partners (Bayton, 1998), or they might become musicians or band managers as an attempt to integrate their social lives more closely with that of their partners (Bayton, 1998, p. 59; Cohen, 1991, pp. 207-208). This is part of the invisible and unacknowledged work and personal/private service carried out by (and expected of) women<sup>31</sup>, in their roles as wives/girlfriends, but also as mothers, in order to facilitate men's' careers (Bayton, 1998, p. 9; Cohen, 1991, p. 265; Finnegan, 2007). The opposite solution to pursuing music careers has been to give up having a partner and/or children (unlike their wives, husbands and boyfriends do not always support and service their partners, Bayton, 1998, Buscatto, 2007b).

#### 2.2.5.4: The gendering of rock instrumentation

The three instruments most commonly used in rock bands' traditional basic line-up are the electric guitar, electric bass guitar, and the drum kit – although some rock bands also use keyboards/electronic synthesizers and other instruments (Strong, 2011; Bayton, 1998; Green, 2001). Voice is also an “embodied instrument” mediated by the microphone (Frith, 1996). However, the literature has pointed out that singing is culturally framed as a natural (bodily) activity, as opposed to instrument playing, which is equated with real rock musicianship and acquired skill (Weinstein, 2004a; Frith, 1996; Bannister, 2012; Gay, 1991).

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<sup>31</sup>Bayton's interviewees' testimonies of this “invisible work” of musicians' wives is carried out in the public sphere (e.g. having to dance so that the others start dancing too). And it is in line with other findings (and in the biographies of male musicians, such as the work of Beatles' wives (Bayton, 1998, p. 10)).

Musical instruments are here conceptualised as sociotechnical<sup>32</sup> artefacts, in the vein of/as in the field of Science and Technology Studies and Sound Studies (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2004; Pinch & Trocco, 2002; Théberge, 1997). This approach to musical instruments captures instruments meanings in action, examining their performative, situated and distributed agency.

As “artefacts have gender” (Berg & Lie, 1995), so too are instruments inscribed by gender ideologies. Rock instruments like other instruments, technologies and artefacts have gender scripts. If uses are inscribed in technologies – scripts (Akrich & Latour, 1992, p. 208), the representations of masculinities and femininities is embedded in technological artefacts too – genderscripts *enable or constrain performances of gender identities and relations* (Pinch & Oudshoorn, 2003, p. 10; Wajcman, 2007, p. 295).

A body of literature in the fields of music education, ethno-musicology, musicology and music therapy have shown that instruments’ different musical roles, status, different physical characteristics, material features, as well as gender delineated meanings are mediators of people’s personal and musical identities, shaping the construction of gender identities and gendered self-presentations (Doubleday, 2008; Green, 2009; Hallam, Rogers, & Creech, 2008; Halstead & Rolvsjord, 2017; O’Neill & Harrison, 2000).

Most of the research on female rock instrumentalists has been on guitarists, a representative example of females playing traditional male-delineated instruments (Bayton, 1997; Bourdage, 2010; Halstead & Rolvsjord, 2017; Laurin, 2009; Reddington, 2004). Opposed to the archetypal figure of the male guitar-hero, the drummer and the gender(ing) of the drum kit has not received much attention in popular music research, nor has the electric bass guitar.

Within the rock band, vocalists (men or women) who are “dedicated singers” (non-instrument players) have a lower-status among band peers and their musical role is undervalued (Weinstein, 2004a, Bannister, 2012). This negatively affects women’s status as singers in rock (Clawson, 1993) as well as in other popular music genres (Buscatto, 2007a). As a consequence of being a female-occupied job within rock, the role of the female rock singer has been

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<sup>32</sup>The concept of “sociotechnical” was introduced by Hughes (1986) to capture the way in which the social and the technological are inseparable.

analysed along the binary axes of reproduction/resistance, disempowerment/empowerment (Whiteley, 2000). Female singers have been devalued in rock music discourses as the passive female singer and entertainer in some rock music scholarship as recent work on the 1960s vocal girls groups points out (Stras, 2010; Warwick, 2007). On the other hand, the female voice and singers (especially acoustic and singer-songwriters) have been celebrated as examples of feminist resistance (Whiteley, 1997, p. xvii; Sara Cohen, 1991, p. 203).

### *The white male guitar hero*

The electric guitar has been theorised as the iconic representation of masculine power, aggression and domination, including sexual prowess – a “technophallus” (Waksman, 1999). The guitar is used as a resource for masculinity displays within “cock rock” performances and heavy metal, epitomised in the figure of the male guitar hero (Frith & McRobbie, 1990; Strohm as cited in Laurin, 2009; Walser, 1993; Waksman, 1999). However, the guitar-based virtuosity of heavy metal and hard rock (Walser, 1993), contrasts with the indie rock rejection of the “guitar hero” virtuosity (Bannister, 2006).

Not just gender and sexuality, but also race have shaped the history of the electric guitar throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which became male, heterosexual and white<sup>33</sup>:

[in the 1970s] the process of heroization was already well underway, and a new hierarchy of masculine achievement was created, continually reinforced by magazine polls that ranked guitarists according to their abilities. Guitarists, Page included, were expected to combine virtuosic display, bodily flamboyance, and mastery of the ability to control and manipulate technology” (Waksman, 1999, p. 252).

Guitar design has influenced its players, and its players have reshaped the guitar. The guitar began as a predominantly female instrument, but as the guitar became a male instrument, so too it increased in size (e.g. the Martin guitar in 1916), making the instrument more difficult for women to play (Carson

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<sup>33</sup> This is part of the broader process of whitening rock music, especially in the 1970s, whereby the influence of male and female African-American guitarists (eg: Chuck Berry, Sister Rosetta Tharpe) has been omitted from the history of popular music (Mahon, 2011; Waksman, 1999; Wald, 2004).

et al, 2004, p. 11). However, as girls and women in the 1990s and 2000s started becoming visible as guitarists, guitar manufacturers also turned to this market segment, making guitars with smaller bodies and slender fingerboards “for women” (Carson et al, 2004, p. 12). In the 1970s, Charlotte Ackerley (as cited in Halstead & Rolvsjord, 2015) described how female guitarists were discouraged from playing lead guitar, with most women learning to play rhythm guitar or accompaniment guitar, a phenomenon which still holds true (Bourdage, 2007; Halstead & Rolvsjord, 2017).

Bayton (1997) starts with the question: “why are there no great female electric guitarists?” Based on interviews with female electric guitar players in the UK, the sociologist and guitarist analyses the role of the musician’s body in guitar playing, and examines how guitar design, as well as its playing conventions, work to exclude women. Women cannot escape the issue of how to stand and hold the guitar: at the pelvic level? Above the waist? The fact that women are left with the “dilemma of either “looking good” and playing in a masculine way, or “looking sissy”, denotes the implicit masculinist design. Perhaps if guitar designers considered that women have breasts, maybe guitars would be designed to be held above the waist (Bayton, 1998, p. 115). A further consideration can be put forward: cutting short the fingernails, necessary in picking the strings, is also incompatible with ideals of conventional femininity; further, technical jargon around amplification technologies works as an exclusionary male power strategy (Bayton, 1990, 1993, 1997). Not just the iconic guitar, but the power chords (an amplified, overdriven guitar riff) have become delineated with performative masculinity (Kearney, 2017, pp. xv–xvii; Leonard, 2007, pp. 89–114).

#### *The feminisation of the electric bass guitar*

Clawson (1999b) discusses the feminisation of the bass, using a sociology of work approach. Clawson shows that due to men controlling access to the guitar (the most valued instrument within the band), they push women out from guitar playing to the bass, a low-status instrument with a “supportive role” – unlike the leading roles which the guitar and drums have assumed in the band. The bass

also combines lower entry-level skill requirements (although it is hard to play) with greater demand.

As women become bass players, there is a growing identification of the bass as a women's instrument, contributing to its low-status. At the same time, there is a claim to the gender-appropriateness of bass. Bass is a “woman's instrument” because bass playing is a form of emotion work at which women excel (an explanation given by both men and women), and because women have a natural (physical) propensity for rhythm. This explanation was put forward only by women bass players themselves, who often used notions of gender difference to claim a status of superiority, grounded in a framework of difference (falling into gender essentialisms of inborn traits such as a claim to a natural, female sense of rhythm).

Clawson concludes that although bass playing ensures women's participation in bands, the feminisation of the bass guitar has reinforced, rather than challenged, rock gender ideology. By stereotyping women as bass players, leaving the lead and rhythm guitar for men, the bass has been devalued on the assumption that it is easier to play. The women in Clawson's study are, as such, engaged in contradictory processes of resistance and reproduction.

### *Drummers and the drum kit*

Women are under-represented in drumming in popular music genres, such as rock and jazz (G. D. Smith, 2013).

The drum kit is represented as a masculine instrument<sup>34</sup> as studies on gender-biased instruments and instrument gender-stereotypes show (O'Neill & Boulton, 1996; Hallam, Rogers, & Creech, 2008), and the loudness and physicality of the drums have been coded as “masculine” (G. D. Smith, 2013).

The two most comprehensive studies on drummers and the drum kit are by Berger (1999) and Gary D. Smith (2013), a drummer himself. The former is an in-depth innovative phenomenological account of a heavy metal drummer, but leaves gender aside. The latter includes a chapter on female drummers.

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<sup>34</sup> Interestingly enough, this masculinised version of the drums in popular music contrasts with other (gendered) musical discourses and practices in other musical genres, as revealed in ethnomusicological studies. For instance, in Portugal and Spain, the frame drums are played almost exclusively by women (J. R. Cohen, 2008).

There is a gap in the study of the artistic careers of female drummers<sup>35</sup> and in the use of the drum kit for gender displays.

Despite the (gender) scripts, there is no essential or ultimate use that can be prescribed onto the object itself. As such, technology in itself is neither inherently patriarchal nor unambiguously liberating (Wajcman, 2010, p. 148). One needs to analyse “technologies-in-use” (Suchman, 2007). Following this research strand, and following actors as they do things with music, I intend to examine both the traditional roles of women in rock (as singers) – and detach them from a priori assumptions – as well as non-traditional roles throughout the empirical chapters.

## Part III – “Made In Portugal”

### 2.3.1: Aesthetic cosmopolitanism, national and local socio-materialities

My research takes place in contemporary Portugal (1990-2014). This chapter provides background information about the country and the rock music “made in” Portugal.

Two main socio-political events in the 20<sup>th</sup> century left their mark on Portuguese society, shaping the reception of rock music in Portugal, as well as women’s socio-political status. Salazar’s dictatorship (1933-1974) sustained a long-term patriarchal, colonial legal order that was put to an end with the Carnation Revolution or the April Revolution (25th April, 1974). This top-down revolution put an end to the colonial war (1961-1974) and the secular Portuguese colonial empire. The other event was the integration into the European Community (1986), with its convergence policies and structural and cohesion funds as political-economical devices (B. D. S. Santos, 1993).

Altogether, the April Revolution and the integration into the European Union furthered the democratisation and the modernisation of the country, increased urbanisation (Lisbon and Oporto), increased literacy levels, and the growth of an urban middle class – in which rock played a role, as part of the

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<sup>35</sup> With the exception of an edited collection of women drummers’ personal testimonies, across genres (A. Smith, 2014); or documentaries, such as *Hit so hard*, the documentary on Patty Schemel, drummer of the '90s rock band Hole (Ebersole, Hughes, & Soletti, 2011).

opening-up to foreign influences, and in the emergence of a certain post-modern 'movida' (leisure community) (Guerra, 2010, 2013a).

Another major socio-political transformation in Portuguese society was women's status, concerning education, work and politics/civil rights. Girls went to school, women entered the labour market and began to participate in political and social life, although with limitations.

Although the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic in 1976, established the democratic principles of equality and universal suffrage, it was not until 1979<sup>36</sup> that equality was established between men and women in employment. This meant a top-down legal transition, in which there was no need for negotiation with the old regime, and resulted in a "weak civil society", and a strong State (B. D. S. Santos, 1993). In fact, women's movements in Portugal are characterised by their weakness (V. Ferreira, 1999; Tavares, 2011). There is low participation in trade unions (V. Ferreira, 2002) and in political decision-making positions. In 2006, affirmative action was taken and a Parity Law was established<sup>37</sup>. The only exception, effective in mobilising the fragile women's movements in Portugal, was the issue of abortion. In 2007, in the aftermath of a national referendum, abortion became decriminalised<sup>38</sup> (Monteiro, 2012).

A major change over the last 40 years has been the rise in the educational level of the population, and especially women. Nowadays, Portugal has highly feminised rates of qualification, especially in Higher Education<sup>39</sup>. However, the high qualifications of women have not translated either into an equal participation in political life nor into equal access to the labour market and

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<sup>36</sup>Law nº 392/79, 20th September.

<sup>37</sup> Organic Law nº 3/2006, of the 21st August, Parity Law, which establishes that the candidates' lists for the Parliament, for the European Parliament and the local municipalities shall take into account a minimum representation of 33% of persons of each sex. (Dina & Santos, 2011) it faced a lot of resistance from politicians and non-politicians. In their study, Amâncio & Santos (2012) claim that this social resistance/suspicion derives mainly from gender ideology and organisational context: political parties' organisation and persistence of gender stereotypes that frame the private sphere as female and politics as a men's world, demanding men's skills.

<sup>38</sup>Law nº 16/2007, 17th April. Monteiro (2012) analyses this law as an outcome of the complex process of articulations and disarticulations between women's movements, old claims, political parties and official devices for equality.

<sup>39</sup> According to the European statistics compilers, Eurostat, the Portuguese rate of feminisation in the universities is higher than in the UK or Germany. It is also significant that the female presence gets lower as the university posts become more senior (Araújo, 2010) – the glass ceiling.

wages (Araújo, 2010, Casaca, 2010, Abrantes, 2013). Women tend to do degrees which offer fewer prospects of getting well-paid work after graduation, and are mostly absent from technologically-related degree courses with better employment prospects.

Significant advances for gender equality in Portugal come from the territorialisation of European policies, as a “mainstreaming strategy”, formulated in the “National Equality Plans” – although they are not without their pitfalls<sup>40</sup> (Monteiro & Portugal, 2013).

After this short overview, I will provide a portrayal of the history of rock music produced, distributed and consumed in Portugal before and after the democratic revolution. This portrait is guided by previous scholarly work on the topic (a short literature review of the sociology of music in Portugal), following the general thread to periodisation by decade.

The study of popular music by Portuguese social scientists is fairly recent. This is explained by the late institutionalisation of the social sciences and gender studies in Portugal (Amâncio & Oliveira, 2014; Neto, 2013; Pereira, 2017), which only became possible after the dictatorship.

Currently, systematic research on music in Portugal is being conducted<sup>41</sup>, privileging an empirical focus on topics related to the country’s history and social reality, and a theoretical frame dominated by a production-of-culture approach<sup>42</sup>.

Studies have focused mostly on music industries (Abreu, 2010b; Losa, 2013; Neves, 1999; P. Nunes, 2014; Pestana & Silva, 2014); the music industry

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<sup>40</sup> The discursive analysis of this equality device show how these policies end up establishing an unequal work-life balance, because of the definition of the problem itself. The work-life balance is constructed as a “family issue” – promoting family life – and not as a problem based on the gender division of labour and gender inequality. The “interpretative frame” of state discourse is familism and not feminism. Familism has been considered the informal provider of well-being in the absence of an effective welfare state (Portugal, 2014).

<sup>41</sup> There is now systematic research on popular music being conducted at the Institute of Ethnomusicology (INET-MD) of the New University of Lisbon and at CESEM. And also at the Institute of Sociology in the University of Porto (IS-UP), in a partnership with the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra (CES). IS-UP hosts a research project on punk music, “Keep It Simple Make It Fast - KISMIF”, that is a series of annual conferences, and it is also connected to the Ppunk Scholars Network.

<sup>42</sup>This can be seen as what Prior (2011, p. 128) calls the “strategic deployment of Bourdieu’s theories as a necessary first move away from orthodox histories of music in particular (national) cases.” (...) [incorporating] questions of power, struggle and exclusion. His function, in this sense, has been to help modernise studies of music by providing ammunition against internalist histories”.

and the Internet (Oliveira, 2012) on music institutions and its education services (Quintela, 2011)) and music archives (A. M. Nunes, 2011; Pestana & Silva, 2014). There is also a body of work on music journalism/press, music radio and music criticism (Augusto, 2016; Lima, 2011; I. R. Martins, 2011; P. Nunes, 2004, 2010).

Music reception tends to study (outdoor) consumption practices, such as Music Festivals (from jazz to rock), at the cross-roads of cultural policies, local development and tourism, using quantitative or mixed methods approaches (Guerra, 2017; Lourenço & Gomes, 2005; Martinho & Neves, 1999; Sarmiento, 2007). Empirical studies on music fans and personal listening (or their actual practices of engagement with music) are scarce. Contador (2001) has analysed issues of ethnicity among young black music fans; Campos (2015) has studied the music habitus among jazz lovers, and Vítor Ferreira has studied youth microcultures around music consumption and sociability (V. S. Ferreira, 2008).

The identified lack of studies on amateur cultural practices (Abreu, 2000) seems to persist, with the exception of the study of amateur musicians in the context of group music-making, such as choirs (Pestana, 2011, 2015), philharmonic bands (Mota, 2009), Portuguese afro-descendants' music-making practices (Pais, 2013) but mostly in the context of pop-rock bands. Regarding the latter, there are studies on garage bands or youth underground music-making (Gomes, 2013, 2014; P. E. A. Martins, 2013; Nóvoa, 2011; Pais, 2004; T. T. Santos, 2012) and studies on specific (male) bands: Parkinsons (Guerra & Quintela, 2016); Tédio Boys (Alcaire, 2005); Mata-Ratos (Lemos, 2011). Doctoral researcher, Pedro Félix (2013) has conducted an ethnography<sup>43</sup> on a very popular rock band Xutos & Pontapés, which has been in existence for 30 years<sup>44</sup>.

This fits the trend towards studying producers (creators and artists) across genres. Luis Campos (2007) has studied some professional (male) rock

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<sup>43</sup>Pedro Félix (2013), using Bruno Latour's "sociology of associations" and Mol's "multiplicity of reality-in-practice", did an ethnography of Xutos & Pontapés, analysing the processes and actors who are fundamental in the making of the group: its repertoire, sound, phonograms, persona, and shows.

<sup>44</sup>Beyond these in-depth works on bands, the *Enciclopédia da Música em Portugal no Século XX* offers multiple entries of short biographies of the most relevant bands in punk, rock, heavy metal, and so forth. Also, there are some non-academic biographies on male bands, such as Sitiados (Alexandre, 2011) or Censurados (Conteiro & Figueira, 2006).

musicians, and there is a concern with musicians' internationalisation (Neves, 2007).

Studies on music communities, scenes or neo-tribes usually explore both musicians and fans – that is the case of rock and punk (Abreu, Silva, Guerra, & Moreira, 2017; Guerra, 2010; Moreira, 2013) and of rap and hip-hop practices, such as graffiti and break dance (R. Campos, Nunes, & Simões, 2016; Fradique, 2003; Raposo, 2010; J. A. Simões, Nunes, & Campos, 2005). The relation between online and offline in these communities has been analysed (Fradique, 2003; J. A. Simões, 2010; J. A. Simões & Campos, 2016), and also in heavy metal (H. Silva, 2010).

In this body of work, the issue of gender is at most a side topic, acknowledging the under-representation of women and/or profiling the few women in the fields. Studies on the relationship between music and gender are rare<sup>45</sup>.

### 2.3.2: Portugal is a punk rocker: emergence and contemporaneity of rock music in Portugal

The mid-1950s are seen as the time when the first rock music projects in Portugal emerged<sup>46</sup>. Group or solo, Portuguese musicians oscillated between two main Anglo-American musical role models: The Shadows or The Beatles (Guerra, 2010, p. 202).

In her doctoral research on the (male-dominated) Portuguese phonographic industry over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Abreu (2010a) shows the importance of this industry in establishing pop rock. Fado de Lisboa was well-established in performance circuits/spaces (House of Fado), but pop-rock, as well as other genres (Coimbra song, Balada, protest song), had reduced

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<sup>45</sup> Not just studies on women and music, but on the relationship between gender and music. For instance, there is a gap in the studies of masculinity and music which is related to the newness of the topic in Sociology. The research group NEGEM (Research Group in Gender and Music, at CESEM, FCSH-UNL) counters this trend; e.g. the 2015 conference *Musical Trouble: After Butler....* At CES a conference on rap had a roundtable for feminist rap with its practitioners (*Rap-pensando as Ciências Sociais*). Also at the moment there is an ongoing research project on women in Philharmonic Bands led by Graça Mota (Inet-CIPEM). Also, as I write, there is a conference which approaches gender and music in the work of António Variações, an iconic 1980s queer pop-rock performer, unique in the Portuguese musical landscape.

<sup>46</sup> It must be noted that throughout the 1960s, the hippie movement, the mods or the rockers had no cultural impact on the country. Only after the Revolution did Portugal get in contact with subcultural expressions (Guerra et al., 2017, p. 29).

performance spaces. For instance, pop-rock was performed in high-schools' proms/balls. It was the phonographic record that allowed for these musical genres in the cultural public sphere (Abreu, 2010a, p. 299).

Rock/pop music first appeared in the form of phonographic records in Portugal in the 60s, through two different phonographic companies/labels: Valentim de Carvalho (VC) and Orfeu. The former was one of the biggest phonographic companies operating in Portugal, also representing international labels such as EMI and Decca, and Columbia; and the latter had the status of a small independent label (Abreu, 2010a, p. 294-294).

It is important to note that in the 1960s, with the Colonial War breaking out (1961), there was an expansion of the musical genre Balada, Música de Intervenção and Fado de Coimbra (José Afonso is one of the best-known examples) which became associated with resistance to the fascist regime; whereas Fado de Lisboa, became associated with the fascist regime's cultural/national policy (crystalized in the popular Fado singer Amália Rodrigues). At the same time, because many pop-rock musicians were university students, the pop-rock bands broke up when their young male musicians were conscripted to fight in the war.

Valentim de Carvalho had an important role in promoting the first pop-rock Portuguese musical groups<sup>47</sup>, like the Sheiks – who sang in English, and had both covers and originals – or Quarteto 1111 (Abreu, 2010a, p. 296). Orfeu combined in its Portuguese catalogue a more traditional strand with a modern one, and in 1967 they edited the EP of the Portuguese band with English influences Pop Five Incorporated (Abreu, 2010a, p. 297). This was quite unique at the time because it branded the “made in England” issue.

The Portuguese radio programme “In Orbit” (from Radio Clube Português) was the first one to be dedicated solely to promoting British popular music like the Beatles. The only exception was when they played Quarteto 1111, for the first time, which then became considered the first musical success of “Portuguese rock” (Abreu, 2010a, p. 297).

Pop-rock was emerging (competing) at the same time as other musical genres. It must be noted that Balada and Nova Canção de Coimbra, unlike pop-

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<sup>47</sup>They were also important in promoting other Portuguese musical expressions such as national-cançonetismo and música ligeira.

rock music, were musical genres which were considered disruptive and publishing/releasing them was censured by PIDE (the political policy at the service of the fascist regime). VC distanced itself from this political repertoire, and did not risk editing that kind of music, while Orfeu embraced it. However, even with the support of a big phonographic company such as VC and even without the opposition of the regime, the socio-political circumstances in Portugal did not allow those pop-rock musical experiences to flourish (Abreu, 2010a, p. 340).

In the wake of the Carnation Revolution, the previously forbidden songs and musicians became national icons for freedom and liberation – while other musical genres, such as Fado de Lisboa, were linked to the previous regime, stigmatised and their performance in public spaces diminished – a situation that has now changed, with claims to Fado as world heritage (Mendonça & Abreu, 2013). With the nationalisation of radio and TV, the pop-rock that had only recently, and in an extremely restrictive way, begun to be broadcast was banished. Also, the economic activities of the phonographic industry (as well as other sectors) were restrained, affecting all music genres.

The post-revolutionary musical landscape was composed of national protest songs. The 1970s saw a broad/general decay of pop-rock – although the late 70s also saw the first steps of punk and the emergence of heavy metal soundss (Almeida, 2009; Guerra, 2010, p. 211). In 1979, Hot Club started a jazz school that remains an important music school for both jazz and rock musicians to this day (Mendes, 2016; Roxo, 2010; H. Santos & Abreu, 2002, pp. 242–244). This is particularly important regarding popular music education, as there are no other rock schools, and popular music has been largely absent for a long time from the school music curriculum (Mota, 2015).

### *Democracy Rocks: 1980s-2011*

The 1980s constituted a benchmark for the history of music and rock in Portugal. It was the time of the “New Portuguese Rock”. There was a boom in bands<sup>48</sup> and performance venues. Indie record labels appeared and a dynamic phonographic industry bloomed (Abreu, 2010a, p. 340; Guerra, 2015, p. 13).

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<sup>48</sup>Few are up to doing rock now. Most notable for their longevity and popularity are Xutos & Pontapés, Mão Morta or Mata-Ratos.

Music journalism and criticism were established, for example, *Blitz* was launched in 1984, and has survived as the only specialist title (P. Nunes, 2004), as well as radio shows which played rock and heavy metal, but also new wave punk and post-punk styles (António Sérgio in Lança-Chamas (Augusto, 2016; Guerra, 2013a).

After 1986, several changes led to the creation of a Portuguese alternative rock<sup>49</sup>, as Paula Guerra (2010) explains in her doctoral thesis<sup>50</sup>, in which she traced its genealogy (1980-2010). She examined the existence of agents and structures opposed to the ‘establishment’, as well as the country’s socio-political situation – its opening-up to foreign influences, increased urbanisation and the emergence of a leisure community (‘movida’) and the expansion of leisure structures (bars and nightclubs), mostly in Lisbon and Porto.

In the 1990s, the music-industry reached its “golden age”: the establishment of the former big five music corporations (EMI, Warner, Polygram/Universal, Sony and BMG) (Abreu, 2010a; Losa, 2009; P. Nunes, 2014).

The 1990s were the time of the expansion, professionalisation and internationalisation of music production, creation and distribution (Félix, 2010). Portuguese popular music journalism achieved consolidation from 1992 onwards (Nunes, 2010), as well as MTV. In Portugal, this meant the emergence and the consolidation of new popular music genres<sup>51</sup>, namely dance music (drum’n’bass, trance, techno), heavy metal and punk<sup>52</sup>. Grunge also had local manifestations – e.g. Blind Zero (Félix, 2010, p. 1054).

In the 21st century, a pluralism of styles and aesthetics characterises music in Portugal (Cidra, 2010, p. 1386). In the second half of the 1990s, two

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<sup>49</sup>Portuguese “alternative rock” is considered a (sub)field within the mainstream field of pop-rock music. It shares common traits with what has been named indie rock throughout the globe, such as fans’ base and local scenes’ organization, genres, patterns of composition and musical referencing; labels are located away from majors; bands and musicians do not achieve massive recognition. Guerra (2013) chooses instead the term “alternative rock” as it is the term popularly used in Portuguese.

<sup>50</sup> The first doctoral thesis on rock music within the field of Sociology in Portugal.

<sup>51</sup> Non-popular music genres that also expand from the 1990s onwards: immigrants’ community music – especially African, but also Indian — started to be recognized in the public space (Abreu, 2010A).

<sup>52</sup> If throughout the 1980s, the punk scene was centred in Lisbon and its urban area, from the 1990s, it has spread through the national territory – Punk’s urban culture becomes hegemonic in all areas it reaches, be they metropolitan, suburban or even rural (Guerra & Silva, 2018).

different (not opposite but in a continuum) patterns emerge regarding the different ways in which musicians appropriate music materials and language in their musicianship, constructing their (local) identity in a transnational market. In the first pattern, musicians appropriate music materials and language (Portuguese) in articulation with international popular music genres. The second pattern is more in line with “alternative rock” (but also post-grunge, nu-metal ) relating to subcultural trends and history or to the international music industry. The musicians’ hybridity is related here to their appropriation of sound and music materials recognised mostly by specific transnational music communities, and using English, not Portuguese (Cidra, 2010).

The participants in this research tend to conform to this second pattern. It is this second pattern that matches Regev’s notion of the existence of a “global structural dimension” of pop-rock, which is overlooked in cultural sociology. Regev claims there is a process of standardisation of national music cultures along the lines of the pop-rock aesthetic (what he calls expressive isomorphism). Portugal has similarities with transnational scenes, as rock’s circulation in a global mediascape (Appadurai, 1996) is an outcome of a process of cultural syncretism, a process accelerated by the use of new technologies (Guerra, 2013a, 2015).

The tension between domestic/national and international repertoire, between writing/singing in Portuguese or in English, pervades music discourses and practices in Portugal at every level. It is a theme in the imaginary and in the Portuguese cultural public sphere. There is a tension for musicians and music scenes, majors, indie labels, music journalists and consumers. It is frequently claimed in the media that Portuguese music is under-appreciated by Portuguese audiences<sup>53</sup>(Félix, 2002; P. Nunes, 2003). In pop-rock, punk, metal and alternative rock, English gained a particular relevance in the 1990s and 2000s, regarding band names, lyrical writing and phonographic registries (Félix, 2010, p. 1053).

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<sup>53</sup> These claims tend to be confirmed statistically by high rates of foreign music consumption, although there are nuances (P.Nunes, 2010, p. 42). The Portuguese Phonographic Association (AFP) is the main organization responsible for quantitative data.

However, Portuguese has a music language which has gained new strength from 2007/2008 onwards<sup>54</sup> (Guerra & Silva, 2018, p. 8; A. S. Silva & Guerra, 2015).

The way in which the key Portuguese punk actors interpret the relationship between Portuguese punk and the global punk scene is also illustrative of this tension.

As Guerra and her research team found, Portuguese punks' discourses revealed three broad positions. The first defines the relation as mimetic (just imitation); a second prefers to describe it as an adaptation and appropriation of themes (it stresses the specific dimensions of Portuguese punk); and the third denies in itself the existence of any autonomous Portuguese punk, and questions the relevance of such a relationship.

The work of Nunes regarding music journalism and record labels illustrates one of the angles of this tension. Music journalists face the challenge of deciding how much attention should be given to Portuguese artists in the press. This is especially important in a small-scale music industry where the national repertoire is peripheral to multinational record companies, journalists and the Portuguese media in general are an important referent for the national industry in the promotion of Portuguese music.

Journalists have taken up positions either as “the good Samaritans” with a proactive, engaged attitude towards Portuguese music, or as the (industry) “cheerleaders” with a more detached position. But in some moments this tension is more acute than others. From 2001 onwards (arguably, 2008), the global recession/crisis in the music industry, caused by the growth in the digital distribution of music, and the loss of sales in physical recordings (Nunes, 2014) had local effects: major record labels were reluctant to expand or invest in local musicians. For labels and the music industry, the way music journalists deal with coverage of the national repertoire is difficult, especially in times of recession (P. Nunes, 2010, p. 42).

This tension between domestic and foreign is also illustrated by the music recording industry and alternative music industries. The “golden age” of

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<sup>54</sup> To which the 2006 Law on national airplay played a role (Abreu, 2010a). The Law nº 7/2006, 3rd March prescribes a quota of airplay Portuguese Music, between 25% and 40%. However, in 2009, this quota went down to 25%.

record labels in Portugal (1988–2000) served mainly the marketing and distribution of international repertoire (non-Portuguese). However, it also meant that Portugal was now part of a transnational music industry, as the Portuguese divisions of majors either merged with local independents (e.g. EMI and Valentim de Carvalho) or invested in the local repertoire – with the exception of Warner (P. Nunes, 2014, p. 91). This contributed to raising the profile of independents as well as majors, and, more importantly, the commercial profile of Portuguese artists – the global crisis did not impact negatively on local and domestic music repertoires (Nunes, 2014, p. 93).

### 2.3.3: Portuguese gender segregated music world

Music-making in Portugal is male-dominated<sup>55</sup>. In classical music, women are a minority in orchestras, a gender segregated musical space. There is an opposition between the male-dominated management and leadership roles and the feminine “base”, as well as a contrast between the high proportion of women in string instruments and their almost complete absence in brass/percussion (Conde et al., 2003, p. 292).

While only one woman conducts an orchestra, in contrast, choral direction opens doors to women, with 38% of choral directors being women (Conde et al., 2003, p. 281). In Philharmonic bands, there has been a slow rise in the number of women conductors – from three to twelve (Mota, 2009). In higher education music schools, the only traditional and clearly feminine field is that of singing (74%), with women also represented favourably in ancient music and keyboards (female rates of 50% and 58%), and the intermediate cases of orchestra and chord instrumentalists, (41% and 43% respectively), (Conde et al., 2003, p. 281).

The picture is not too different in popular music. Electronic Dance Music is also a male-dominated world, at production and consumption levels (Lopes, Boia, Ferro, & Guerra, 2010). In every sub-set (trance, techno and drum'n'bass), men are over-represented as producers of music and DJing, as well as event organisers. When women participate, they do it in non-musical

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<sup>55</sup> According to the Census of the Portuguese Population, from 1991-2001 women represented 17% of composers, musicians and singers, the lowest level in Europe (Conde, 2003, p. 263-264).

roles (ticket selling, drink selling). However, in trance there is a growing presence of women as DJs (called DJanes), who founded a women-only agency. The research carried out on women club goers (a minority, when compared to men), has revealed a diversity of practices, which reveal both empowering and more traditional versions of femininities.

Women are under-represented in hip-hop (J. A. Simões, 2013) – virtually absent from DJing, breakdance and graffiti (a heavily masculinised field within hip-hop, (R. Campos, 2010). Only one all-female crew exists: OGA (Only Girls Aloud). Women’s participation (often by male invitation) is more relevant in rap, but usually in the (less prestigious) role of backing vocals<sup>56</sup>.

Heavy metal is also a male-dominated world. In the analysis of LOUD!, the single and long-lasting Portuguese magazine dedicated to heavy metal, Martins (2011) found that women are under-represented as music journalists (two in twelve) and as topics of writing – from a total *corpus* of 870 articles (interviews, album and concert reviews), only 67 articles mentioned women in any way. Besides the unbalanced differentiation, the issue is also how women are represented discursively as a stereotypical and homogenous entity, which reinforces hegemonic ideological constructs. The construction of the pseudo-genre “female fronted metal” (based on the sex of the lead singer/vocalist, regardless of the musical genre or style) illustrates segregation of the women-artists’ musical activities in metal, aimed towards their containment in a space of alterity - women’s othering in the music press.

Punk, like rock, is a male world, considering the social profiles of its protagonists (Abreu et al., 2017). Between 1977 and 2014, female punks not only constitute a small minority (from the 214 respondents, 86% are men and only 14% women), but also generally occupy subaltern and background positions in the punk scene: 43% of women say they are just fans (compared with 9% of men); 40% had or have a performative musical activity (compared with 74% of men); only 23% say they have it now (compared with 49% of men); only 17% say they now perform mediation activities (compared with 37% of men). In-depth interviews with ten punk women who experienced the arrival of punk in Portugal (late 1970s, early 1980s) show that although punk was

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<sup>56</sup> One of the most popular female rappers is a white woman (Capicua, also a sociologist), and she tends to be treated by the media under the logic of exceptionalism, as she explains herself.

experienced as freedom and openness, it was never a space for gender equality. Those women were part of a socio-cultural economic elite, as most Portuguese punks at the time were. Women accessed punk worlds via their traditional roles as girlfriends or wives (they describe how they hung out with punk boys). They complained about the sexist and catholic society where they lived, being criticised for their “anti-feminine” punk looks, feeling secluded from the public sphere, and pushed towards the domestic sphere and traditional female roles, (Guerra et al., 2017, pp. 29–30).

In line with these findings, Rui Telmo Gomes' (2013) recent ethnography on Lisbon's underground musicians shows a young, male-dominated world<sup>57</sup>. The few women musicians have higher educational qualifications. Women were present in Gomes' fieldwork mainly as audiences and in sociability networks.

From classical to popular, the findings point to the fact that for Portuguese women musicians, the feminine condition is less important than their professional identity – women wish to stand as musicians. Despite strong inequalities in musical practice that have segregated women in less prestigious roles, a discourse on gender equality persists – difficulties are attributed to the artistic profession, and not to their sex status and discriminatory institutional(ised) practices.

It was in this landscape that my academic interest in researching women rockers took off.

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<sup>57</sup> In a first exploratory survey, of 477 musicians, 41 were female.

## METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I detail how the fieldwork was designed and carried out. I describe how participants were selected and recruited, and I present the profile of the sample, discussing the advantages and pitfalls of the methods used, and the practical problems encountered as well as ethical procedures.

I employed a grounded approach (Charmaz, 2006) and conducted the research in several stages. I combined this grounded approach with an ethnographically informed approach to data collection (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Here, I argue that qualitative methods best suit the exploratory nature of this research with women rocker amateurs in Portugal if we are to explore the diversity of these women's musical engagements.

As everyday rock fans, my informants were not always connected 'physically'/locally to each other; they were not specifically involved in any subculture/scene or any fan club, although they were sometimes friends or acquaintances. And they were geographically dispersed; there was in other words, no specific "field" to which I could gain access. Instead, I could explore personal and professional networks.

The ethnographic work on popular music (and gender) has traditionally been carried out by researchers involved previously as participants in the field, although with different depths of involvement<sup>58</sup>. For example, Bayton was a guitarist, and Downes was a drummer involved in the British riot grrrl scene. Leblanc used to be a punk. Reddington, Finnegan and Cohen were also musicians. That was not the case for me. Although I do like rock, and I build my rock *persona* as someone who listened to the "classics" (Ramones, Clash), I was not involved in any (Portuguese) rock music scene.

Being neither a current nor former member/participant in any (Portuguese) rock music scene, I found the interview to be a particularly flexible research tool and interactive device that suited the research aims throughout the different research stages (Denzin, 2001; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002).

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<sup>58</sup> For a review see Grazian (2004).

In-depth interviewing was a way to learn the (emic) meanings of participants' actions (J. M. Johnson, 2001, p. 106). For that reason, the interview schedules followed DeNora's appeal to keep "the right level of analysis" and move away from the "why" questions to the "how" questions (DeNora, 2003a) – or in Hennion's words (Hennion, 2001, p. 5), I tried to de-sociologise the interviewees, by asking them to talk about their ways of doing things (with rock music).

In this sense, I designed the interview questions with the aim of

leading respondents back to the practical level of real-life examples of who-did-what-when-how, the 'nittygritty' level of mundane action that has the capacity to undermine accounts and the various identity claims, posturings and role play that often occur within an interview. Sticking close to the level of respondents' musical practices helped to reveal how respondents used music rather than their depictions of relations between themselves and others.(DeNora, 2000)

Studying an unfamiliar setting, my researcher role was that of a novice and I adopted the (acceptable) incompetent position of the outsider<sup>59</sup> (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 76). In the field of popular music, this role has also been termed the "ethnographic tourist" strategy (Kotarba & Vannini, 2009, p. 5). This has implications for the research. My outsider role allowed me not to take anything for granted. I made the most of my ignorance and got permission to ask, and request clarifications throughout the interviews – or interviewees themselves would clarify; "you might not know this, but...". On the other hand, as a non-participant/novice, it takes a long time to begin to "hear" what members are saying about their lived experience (J. M. Johnson, 2001, p. 107; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

I am, however, Portuguese, and grew up in Coimbra, the city that was arguably labelled the "Portuguese capital of rock music", due to the active rock music scene in the 1990s (Alcaire, 2005; Guerra, 2013a). Despite I was never directly involved in Coimbra's rock music scene, coming from Coimbra contributed to my welcome when entering the field (and to being asked if I could book gigs there).

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<sup>59</sup> The distinction between outsider and insider is not straightforward and it can be problematic (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 87). However, the fact that I was not previously involved in any music scene influences not just access to the field and access to information, but also my presentation as a researcher.

In the sense of classical ethnography, and geographically speaking, I can say I am a “native anthropologist”, as I study my own society, and not a distant community. Hence, there is a shared culture between me and my interviewees. However, this status is complicated by the fact that I was a Portuguese emigrant in the UK, studying Portuguese women rockers in a foreign (British) university.

The fact that the study was funded and being conducted in a foreign (English) university, generally increased the sense of legitimacy of the topic<sup>60</sup>. On the other hand, non-participants that were not musicians found it quite odd (and even outrageous) that this research had public funding – I started my fieldwork at the dawn of the austerity crisis in Portugal (2011-2012).

### 3.1: The Participants

The participants were sixty white Portuguese women<sup>61</sup> who self-identified as rock music fans and/or musicians<sup>62</sup> and/or DJs (see Appendix 1).

Most of the participants were non-professional musicians who were active in the time period of 1990-2014. Only four were professional musicians, making a living from music making and playing – in which I include teaching music, either “moonlighting” or as their main job. In fact, one of these four women owned a music school where she also taught, and another was a school music teacher.

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<sup>60</sup>My status as an emigrant – studying and living in the UK – served as an ordinary topic of mundane conversation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 89).

<sup>61</sup>People who self-identified as women. Concerning nationality, I interviewed one woman who was an immigrant in Portugal (for ten years), and another woman who had dual citizenship.

Another limitation of my sample is that I interviewed only white people. In my observations, I only found one black woman backup singer, Selma Uamusse, of the band Wray Gunn, “a mix of rock, soul, gospel and blues”. I also watched on-stage a black male heavy metal guitarist. Among fans, I never saw black women on the dance floor or at gigs, and, when I asked interviewees, they said they did not really know black women rockers/punks. On the one hand, this may represent the ethnicity of the Portuguese rock world as a whole, as well as of Portuguese music and Portuguese society (where the black population is still a small minority). Even if hip-hop has been “raced” black, in Portugal it is a very white dominated world (J. A. Simões, 2013), and it should be noted that the most well-known Portuguese female rapper is white. On the other hand, there could be non-white women rockers I have not reached, who would provide a different picture of rock worlds.

<sup>62</sup>Some of these women did not regard themselves as musicians, which was also found in other research on women rockers (Bayton, 1998; Green, 2001). Musicians’ self-concepts will be in itself a topic of inquiry, throughout the data chapters.

Participants played several instruments, which was data in itself as I will explore throughout the empirical chapters. Considering their main instrument (the ones they have been playing for the longest period), and with a sense of the participants' profiles in terms of musical roles, I interviewed six guitarists, ten drummers (and three more drummers who played the drums as their second instrument), ten singers (five of whom also played the guitar, so they are also in the category of guitarists), and eight bass players. I did not find any participant who played the keyboards exclusively, although musicians who were mainly singers and a bass player also played the keyboards. I did five group interviews with female bands (although I interviewed individually women who play(ed) in female bands).

I conducted interviews with thirteen DJs (including collectives of female DJs). Twelve interviewees were fans: they had no current or former musical experience as rock/electronic instrumentalists and/or singers and/or DJs (although some had contact with the acoustic guitar or the piano). They all live in urban areas of Portugal (Lisbon, Oporto, Coimbra, Santarém, Aveiro, Viseu, Faro). The majority had at least one degree (only ten did not attend university at all, eight of whom had completed secondary education).

The oldest interviewee was fifty years old and the youngest eighteen, but most of the interviewees ranged in age from their late twenties to their early forties. This age range has had limited coverage in studies on popular music, which usually focus on youth and subcultures (in Portugal, see V. S. Ferreira, 2017; Gomes, 2013; Guerra, 2013b; Pais, 2009; Pais & Blass, 2004) or, more recently, on ageing (A. Bennett & Hodkinson, 2012; Jennings & Gardner, 2012).

This age range allowed me to follow women's musicking at different life stages. Some of the interviewees gave retrospective accounts of their musical trajectories in childhood, but mostly their accounts covered their adolescence and (emergent) adulthood, which allowed me to follow meaning-making experiences throughout the course of their lives. These transitions (informed by decisions concerning professional/academic careers and leisure activities, as well as personal relationships) are often musically mediated and have consequences for musical engagement.

The socio-demographic features of the participants in my sample, namely their age and qualifications, match those of the (mostly) male participants in

Guerra's (2010) sociological research on the Portuguese alternative rock scene. The creators and producers of Portuguese rock music in Guerra's study were mostly men in their thirties (followed closely by those in their twenties and forties), with a high level of educational skills and correspondingly high social positions. The profile of these rockers contrasts with the average Portuguese population, but is similar to profiles of other artists (Guerra, 2015, pp. 2–3).

### 3.2: Doing the Research: Documents, Interviews and Observations

The data for this research was mainly gathered through interviews, some of which included elicitation techniques. Most interviews were individual, but I also conducted group interviews with female bands and DJ's collectives.

The interviews with musicians were supplemented as much as possible with observations at rehearsals and gigs. I tried to do one observation for each interview, but some bands no longer existed, or musicians were not in a band at that moment, or were not active as musicians any more.

I made an effort to track and interview female bands from the 1990s until 2014. Following the lead of Reddington (2012) and Bayton (1998), I assumed that many female bands existed but were not covered by mainstream/traditional media. I thought that information and contacts would pop up (by word of mouth and online ads), when I started the research. However, this was not the case. I do not claim I was able to track all the female bands that existed in this time period in Portugal, but I think I covered the ones that had something recorded (a single, a demo-tape) or that have gigged.

However, as I closed my fieldwork, from 2015 onwards, new (self-identified) queer/queercore bands<sup>63</sup> emerged in Lisbon – some of which were assembled by people that had belonged to other female bands.

Group interviews with disbanded female bands brought debate (different versions of what the band had been, etc.), which I found particularly useful. Also the opportunity to attend a reunion show of a disbanded band (after having interviewed them) was a fortunate event. Two interviewees said they had set up female bands that “never left the garage”, not even for a gig. I do not know how many female bands never left the rehearsal room, but this goes beyond the

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<sup>63</sup>See Appendix 2.

scope of this research. In any case, I realised that belonging to a female band was the exception (and not the rule) in the musical trajectories of the women interviewed.

The interviews with DJs were complemented with observations on the set. In the case of female fans, I did not undertake observations, with one exception.

I attended a one-day music festival with a participant. In the aftermath of the interview when the participant, in her early forties, complained she had no friends or company to attend a music festival with, and she would not go alone, I invited her, and we went together. This “hanging out” produced very rich data, not only about the interviewee, which I used as triangulation, but it also gave insights into the presence of women in music festivals – young, white, heterosexual and committed.

### 3.2.1: “Documents” as second-hand and naturally occurring data

Besides first-hand data, documents were used as second-hand data. In order to build background knowledge for this research, I collected “documents” (in the broadest sense, both digital and paper).

I read the “formal” documents – the academic works on rock music in Portugal. I collected newspapers articles on Portuguese rock women musicians, as well as navigating through websites, blogs<sup>64</sup>, forums, Facebook, YouTube and MySpace musicians’ pages. Not just in the beginning, but throughout the doctoral period, I paid attention to the news, as well as to the very few documentaries, TV series<sup>65</sup> and trade books on Portuguese rock bands and musicians – confirming the absence of women as key actors.

Given the Anglo-Saxon literature on fanzines and digital communication as alternative media in rock worlds, especially within the riot grrrl movement, I expected to encounter those fanzines when I started browsing, which I did not (and I was not interested in studying the representations of women and

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<sup>64</sup>I would often contact the blogger/site manager directly, describing my work and asking for contacts of potential interviewees.

<sup>65</sup> A Portuguese TV series “Os Filhos do Rock [The Sons of Rock]”, produced and broadcasted by State Television (RTP1), aired from December 2013-June 2014 (26 episodes). The TV series portrayed the 1980s and the “rock boom”, and all the female characters were involved in romantic relationships with musicians, and personified classical female stereotypes from “the Madonna” to the “whore”. Just one female musician was cast.

feminism in non-feminist fanzines). During the fieldwork, I always asked interviewees if they ever participated in and/or read fanzines. Very few had. Only three participated in fanzines: two of them had boyfriends who were involved in zine making, the other one was a punk. The empirical Portuguese reality is in contrast with the Anglo-Saxon context. In Portugal, fanzines are mostly linked to the punk movement (especially in the 1980s), and only during the 1990s did new ethical and political topics such as women's rights, feminism, sexism, homophobia, among others, gain in relevance in Portuguese fanzines<sup>66</sup> (Guerra & Quintela, 2014; Mateus, 2016).

Although I did not conduct a systematic analysis on this documentary and archival material, it helped me to have a sense of the field, as well as "(sensitising) concepts" (Charmaz, 2006) and to stimulate (analytic) ideas.

This body of documentary material helped me to narrow down the research chronologically to the 1990s onwards. I realized that the 1980s were already well documented and canonised. If I chose the period of 1960s-1970s this would have to be historical research, where access to (live) informants – not only former musicians, but mostly, fans – and music and archival material<sup>67</sup> would be extremely difficult to get. Instead I chose a contemporary take on amateur women rockers.

As my main goal was to collect first-hand data among "hidden musicians" and fans, I wanted to track the women rock musicians whose biographies/trajectories were available in the public domain, either through academic work<sup>68</sup> or media accounts<sup>69</sup>. This body of documentary material also

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<sup>66</sup> Paula Guerra and her team started a project in 2012 that aimed at studying and collecting Portuguese punk fanzines (1977-2012), among other goals. In 2014, the analytic corpus was constituted by 93 fanzines (Guerra and Quintela, 2014), of which only 7 fanzines were riot grrrl/feminist (Guerra & Quintela, 2014).

<sup>67</sup> I did not consider doing archival research, given its scarcity and the difficulties of access to archives (Quintela, Pedro & Guerra, Paula, 2017). Only recently, a large team of scholars under the direction of Salwa Castelo-Branco (INET) has published a comprehensive *Encyclopaedia of Portuguese Popular Music in the XX century*, the result of a decade of work. Also INET holds the PortMuse database (at the moment only available to INET researchers).

<sup>68</sup> That was why I chose not to interview Xana (of Rádio Macau) and Sandra Baptista (of Sitiados), two "big names" in the Portuguese rock world. Xana's oral history was the only oral history with a female musician collected by the sociologist Paula Guerra (and available in her thesis), and Sandra Baptista had been video-interviewed by the historian and popular music researcher Soraia Simões – interview available at her online archive *Mural Sonoro [Sound Wall]* (<https://vimeo.com/111591789>). Sandra Baptista and Xana are also the oldest professional women rock-pop musicians in the Portuguese music industry. The others are Manuela Azevedo (Clã) and Viviane (Entre Aspas) and, a bit younger, Sónia Tavares (The Gift).

allowed me to exclude those (few) women musicians from my list of interviewees. Not only did I have access to material that I could work from as second-hand data, but also, those women musicians were, to some extent, public and popular. Also, people who often appear in the media can be considered “well-trained informants”, who privilege analysis rather than description (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 221), and this was another reason to exclude those musicians from the body of interviewees.

Given the problems pointed out by the literature on the representations of women rockers in the mainstream media, and given their lack of involvement in fanzines, I had a particular interest in musicians’ and DJ’s self-publishing materials and social network sites (mostly Facebook and MySpace); not just because musicians have more control over their representations, but also because their self-presentation online is of extreme importance in a time when there is an embeddedness of the new media in everyday life (H. Horst, 2012).

Prior to the fieldwork and often before interviews, I would “lurk” on interviewees’ public pages/content (Facebook or MySpace). Most of the time, musicians had a Facebook profile picture of themselves playing in a concert – indicating that their amateur activities were of the utmost importance for their identities. In some cases, they became my “Facebook friends”, and I could access their posts.

The textual, sonic and visual elements published and made public can be used as ‘naturally occurring’ data – although always representations of reality. These elements can be used ethnographically<sup>70</sup>, especially in the first stage of ethnographic fieldwork (Pink, 2001, p. 98).

This online lurking was not used as data in itself, but as elicitation for the interviews – usually at the end of the interview: “I could see on your Facebook page that ... Could you tell me more about that?”.

Knowing from the literature review that rock is a world of “sound and vision” (Frith, Goodwin, & Grossberg, 1993; Hauge & Hrac, 2010), I had a

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<sup>69</sup> That was the case of the female band Pega-Monstro, and the bass player Cláudia Guerreiro (Linda Martini). I initially planned the interviews with “media musicians” for later stages of data collection. But by then, I had already reached saturation and decided not to interview them.

<sup>70</sup> And not in a semiotic vein.

public space<sup>71</sup> to watch the colours (dark colours, black, but also red), the body postures (moving bodies, spread out bodies), the gestures (mouths open, the popular “rock hands”, the rock hand gesture ‘rock on’ with hands-horn).

### 3.2.2: Fieldwork: 2012-2014

The fieldwork was carried out from 2012 to 2014, covering different time periods.

I started the fieldwork in the summer of 2012. In the following (academic breaks) of Christmas and summer (2013 and 2014) I went back to Portugal, and returned to the field to collect more data. Contact was maintained up until the end of 2014. Some participants kept in touch by e-mail, writing to me voluntarily to share news in their musical lives, or added me as “friends” on Facebook (either prior to the interview or after).

I conducted a total of 51 semi-structured in-depth individual interviews, 7 group interviews (2 to DJ’s collectives, 5 to female bands, which included a skype interview), 2 follow up interviews and 14 observations directly related to the interviews (6 in DJ sets and the rest in gigs and rehearsals). I also conducted 7 e-mail interviews and 1 online interview (by Facebook chat).

The interviews done through online platforms (eg: Skype interview, e-mail interview and the Facebook interview) not only have a residuary weight, but also they took place only when it was not possible to interview in person due to the costs associated with travelling or due to the unavailability of the interviewees. As such, there are specificities of online communication which I did not consider when analysing data (L. Gibson, 2010). Regarding e-mail interviews, they took place with residents outside the main cities where I did the research. The skype interview was with a disbanded female band. The Facebook chat was to a former punk drummer, living in a remote area in Portugal.

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<sup>71</sup> There is a debate in digital ethnography as to whether online content counts as data, which is often compared to the situation of social scientists doing observation in a public space (H. A. Horst & Miller, 2012). I took that stand regarding musicians’ webpages, and regarding Facebook pages of the fans – people can set their profiles to have some content public and some content private.

All the interviews were audio recorded and some were also video recorded – group interviews with bands and DJ's collectives and when interviewing musicians while playing or rehearsing.

The interviews took place in the cities where participants lived. Interviews were conducted in different locations. Most of these were in public spaces, both outdoors and indoors such as cafes and public gardens but also at participants' homes, offices/working place or rehearsal place (studios, garages, houses). The interviews were conducted at different times during the day to suit participants' schedules and mine, as I would often travel from my hometown (Coimbra) to other cities. The observations in gigs and DJ sets took place at night. The organisation of time in rock worlds is around gig schedules, which in Portugal, are late (especially when compared to the UK<sup>72</sup>). Gigs start around 11pm/midnight and finish at 2am/3am (this is why bands do not like to be the last ones playing). Afterwards many people go to clubs and after-parties (with DJs). Clubs close from 4 to 6 am. Interviewees, musicians, DJs and fans, often complained that it was late and that is why people with jobs could not attend more concerts (also found in Gomes, 2012). In order to attend sets and gigs, the participants were kind enough to put me on guest-lists whenever the event cost money, although most of the gigs and sets I attended were free or cheap.

For purposes of observation, I tried to make my presence at gigs and DJ sets non-disruptive. At gigs I often took the role of an audience member (sometimes I filmed or took photos, which is also normal “fan behavior” at gigs and part of local visual cultures). In DJ sets I also took the role of an audience member or the friend of the DJ (with her “in the cabin/booth”). Whenever I did interviews or attended gigs/sets, I tried to dress accordingly, which meant most often wearing more black clothes.

The interviews varied in length from one hour to six hours. The lengthier interviews took place in specific circumstances: interviewees were on holidays and/or they welcomed me in their homes or rehearsal studios.

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<sup>72</sup> For instance, in Portugal, there is not a “pub rock scene” (Bennett, Andy, 1997), as there are very few pubs (usually branded as “Irish pubs”). The approximate cultural equivalent of the pub are cafes, which are open until late – and where there are DJs at night, but usually not live music.

### *First stage of fieldwork: Summer 2012*

A first set of 35 semi-structured interviews and observations was carried out in the summer of 2012.

The participants were first recruited by convenience from my personal networks<sup>73</sup> and in gigs<sup>74</sup>. DJs and musicians were recruited by identifying their websites/social network sites (Facebook, MySpace), by using snowball sampling and word of mouth<sup>75</sup>. I also posted online recruiting advertisements (see Appendix 3), hoping to expand the age and geographical scope of my sample<sup>76</sup>.

All interviewees were asked a set of questions about their listening activities, concert going, tastes (see Appendix 4 for Interview Schedule 1). For interviewees who were also musicians and/or DJs, I added another set of questions about musicianship (instrumental learning, gendered on-stage performance) and DJing.

In the first stage of fieldwork, my goal was to capture the range/diversity of musical uses and practices of rock for women, from which to examine the similarities and differences between them to obtain an overview of the overall process of (gendered) rock music use. This allowed me to have a bigger picture on different ways of being in rock by “following” the biographies of individual women as they move over time (and space) across instruments, stages of musicianship, bands, and fandom.

I selected respondents according to socio-demographic diversity and representativeness of the experience. I tried to ensure diversity and

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<sup>73</sup> Although I did not interview personal female friends of mine, I asked contacts of women rockers to email friends and active participants in the field of punk and heavy metal who happened to have a background in social sciences and humanities.

<sup>74</sup> The observation started in Coimbra, where I attended a rock/heavy metal gig of several local bands in a venue that has a historical meaning as a local “rock venue”. Especially in gigs, I would have some “business cards” with my name and contacts to distribute to potential interviewees. My open participation at that particular gig as a researcher on women rockers in Portugal prompted a lot of contacts.

<sup>75</sup> I did not just ask participants to refer women rockers, but usually even before I could ask, women musicians would suggest I interview other women musicians they knew, and often inquired whom I had spoken to.

<sup>76</sup> Vroomen (2004) showed the importance of Internet communication in enabling the virtual gathering of socially and geographically dispersed older women fans. To my disappointment, I had very few replies to the online ads, which could be related to the fact that in Portugal since 2010 Facebook has been an online platform which is much more frequently used than blogs, forums, etc.

representativeness in terms of music sub-genre affiliations, musical and instrumental role, and in terms of age, educational background, socio-economic status, as well as in terms of geography.

This methodological choice brought both advantages and limitations. The fact that I did not focus on a specific genre, nor represent all musical genres and styles equally, and that I did not focus on a specific musical role impeded me from having a deep understanding of a specific (sub)genre and style (e.g. hardcore, heavy metal, punk, indie rock, rockabilly or even blues), or a deeper understanding of specific musical practices (e.g. personal listening).

This last issue was data-driven – and it will be reflected in the size of the empirical chapters. Initially, I considered interviewing more fans. But when I thought I was going to interview a fan, either in the initial contact, or during the interview, they would often surprise me by saying they had played an instrument in their youth, or that they had been DJs or were still DJing. Also, the women rockers recommended (through snowball sampling) were often musicians. And the few “just fans” I interviewed regretted not learning to play an instrument. I took this as data which allowed me to understand that being a woman rock musician has a particular social and musical status for both musicians and fans.

My starting point was to consider the categories of musician, fan and DJ with analytical flatness. That is to say, I make no distinctions between these categories, they are just different forms of music love. However, empirically, social actors draw distinctions, and draw hierarchies of value between musicians, fans and DJs (passive-listener, active-producer). These are part of popular music cultures, reproduced through boundary work, giving way to symbolic and material exclusions (Frith, 1996; Lamont & Fournier, 1992).

Even though the flexibility of the first slot of interviews allowed me to interview a great many participants, and produced rich data, it had some drawbacks. It made the use of visual elicitation to supplement the participants' accounts impractical. It was only possible at home or in the rehearsal studio for the participants to have visual memorabilia (albums, posters, old videos) at hand or to pick up the instruments and play. The interviews were also really lengthy, especially with musicians and DJs, as I would also interview them both as musicians and/or DJs and as fans.

This is why I made some changes regarding the following stages of data collection.

### *Second stage of fieldwork*

In the second stage (Christmas 2012, Summer and Christmas 2013 and 2014), I carried on with (pending) interviews, follow-up interviews and follow-up observations.

Using a “funnel” approach to research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 160), and bearing in mind sampling principles, in this second stage of fieldwork, I had a grounded, comparative framework to work with.

As the research developed, navigation in the field was guided by emergent themes, and I moved from a convenience sample to recruiting participants through purposive theoretical sampling (Morse, 2007).

For this reason I decided to interview only “active” musicians<sup>77</sup>. I also decided to focus on drummers -- as I understood there was a gap in the literature<sup>78</sup>, and the first set of interviews pointed to a strong female drummer identity. I also continued with the exploration of the emergent topic of motherhood<sup>79</sup>.

At this stage, I redesigned the interview for musicians. The new interview schedule became more focused on the musical and gender performance, the modes of playing and the appropriation of the instrument, which allowed me to keep a thematic focus (see Appendix 4 for Interview Schedule 2). I was more demanding about the interview setting/conditions. I only interviewed musicians who agreed to do home/studio interviews, with elicitation (photos, video, sound, collections, real-time playing).

I also re-designed the observation in the DJ set. When I did the first observations of DJ sets, I was not close to the DJs, I was on the dance floor,

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<sup>77</sup>In the second stage, the only “inactive” musicians I interviewed were the ones who belonged to disbanded female bands.

<sup>78</sup> When I first collected data, in 2012, there was nothing published on female drummers. Gareth Smith’s book on drummers, which included a chapter on female drummers was only published in 2013 (G. D. Smith, 2013, pp. 139–165).

<sup>79</sup>I also interviewed childless women over forty, but I did not feel comfortable exploring that issue in the interview, as it felt a sensitive topic (I did not know if it was an option, and maybe part of a rock attitude, or alternative womanhood, or if it was experienced as an undesired condition), and it could be perceived as out of the frame of an interview on music.

where I thought I had a privileged view of all the action that was going on. In the second stage, I tried to be in the DJ's cabinet, and as close as I could get to the DJ, so she could talk to me while DJing, and I could observe what she was doing. This was particularly relevant as all the DJs told me they do not prepare their sets, which meant that a DJ's set is a site for tacit, embodied and "on the spot" musical decision-making.

### *Elicitation techniques*

I used elicitation techniques during the interview (e.g. musical maps, photo-elicitation, video-elicitation, playing demonstrations and Facebook Tours).

Elicitation techniques – either with musicians or fans – were inspired by the "home tours" (Pink, 2001, 2003) and by music-elicitation techniques (Batt-Rawden & DeNora, 2005; Hara, 2013).

In this first set of interviews (in the first stage), I had planned a procedure where I would ask the participants to draw me "musical maps" representing their music trajectories and their music affiliations (across different genres or bands, or songs, whatever the significant unit was for them), and the emotions and people they associated with the music that was important to them. However, I did not find it particularly useful and I felt it interrupted the flow of the interview and put off participants. In the second-stage I abandoned this idea. There was only one exception, reproduced below (see Figure 1). Inês, in an interview which took 6 hours, happily drew a map of her relationship with music, where we can see how it is mediated by human actors (father, friends, record store owner) and non-human (TV, tapes). These are mediators in action in specific contexts (home, concerts, and her grandparent's house).

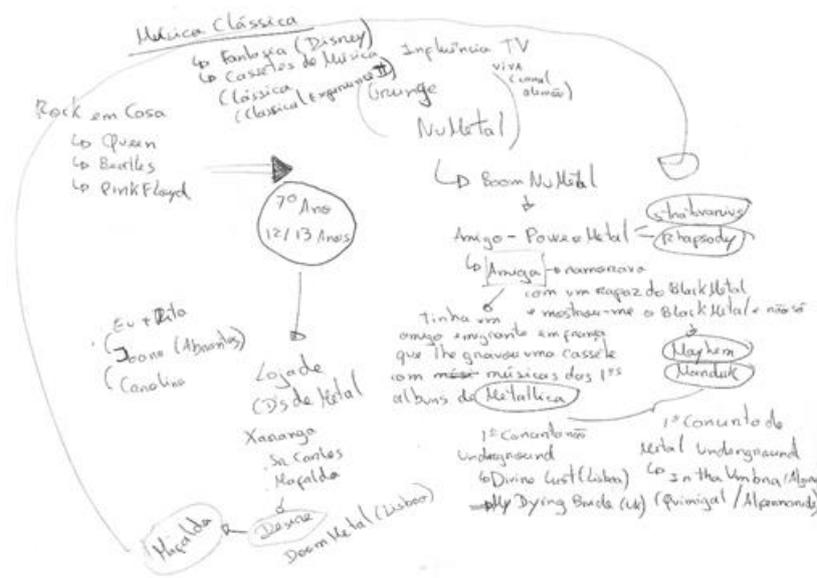


Figure 1- Musical map draw by Inês, heavy metal fan.

I found it more useful when fans would talk (and show, if the interviews took place at the participants' home) about their audiolibraries (most were digital, and many had a very sophisticated organization), music lists and other music memorabilia; fans kept tickets of memorable concerts, concert posters, bands' posters, tapes, t-shirts.

In interviews with musicians and bands I asked them prior to the interview to bring/prepare whatever material related to their musical activity they had so they could "show and tell". Musicians and DJs brought newspapers clips, photos and photo-albums, posters (of their gigs), set lists, tapes, letters/notes to each other, drafts of lyrics, videos.... This material worked as elicitation during the interview, which I tried to film (not just record).

The photo-elicitation was particularly important for (former) bands and musicians active in the 1990s, before the advent of the Internet (e.g. Pickle puss, Black Widows, Muses Land, etc.) (see Figure 2). This technique prompted some nostalgic accounts, and, when in a group, conflicting accounts of the band's identity and activities.



Figure 2 - Photo-album elicitation with Black Widows' founder Rute Fevereiro (snapshot from the footage)

Regarding video elicitation – mostly with footage of musicians' concerts – I asked the participants to “watch-and-stop”: to make comments and stop the video at any point if they wanted to make a deeper comment. I also asked questions while we watched it together (Haw & Hadfield, 2011).

Regarding instrument playing elicitation/playing demonstrations, I drew on previous work on the use of video in studying action and practices which are not always verbally accessible (embodied action). Namely, the innovative Acord (2010) work on museum curators, and Boia's (2014) work on viola players<sup>80</sup>. In the second-stage especially, I would set up the camera, leaving it steady and staying next to it. I started asking questions, and when reaching the topic of instrumental playing, I asked participants to demonstrate their way of playing/their own style and give a comparison of playing in different genres or bands while explaining it to me. A selection of these snapshots will be in the empirical chapters on drummers.

I also asked some participants, DJs and musicians, to do a “Facebook tour” (see Figure 3). This technique was inspired by Bakardjieva's (2005) computer tours and Internet-related spaces in the respondents' homes. I would sit with participant(s) in front of a computer, and ask them to go through their

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<sup>80</sup>Boia is also a viola player. In fact, much of the literature describes the advantages of being a performer or learning to perform as part of the research technique and part of the fieldwork (Baily, 2001; Robertson, 2010). However, I tried to balance my non-participant status through video-elicitation and instrument playing elicitation.

public Facebook page, commenting on their posts (and comments to their posts) as they would like to.

This enabled a better understanding of their activities and the surrounding 'off-screen' contexts.



*Figure 3 - Facebook Tour with Swinging Sisters (a female DJ collective).*

### 3.3: Data analysis and validity

The data was analysed using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006). It is advised that data collection and data analysis are not separate processes (Morse, 2007). However, the first stage interviews were not determined by the need to write memos, as I had a limited amount of time to collect data, and the constant travelling and finding accommodation in friends' houses and (busy) hostels made it more difficult. The planning and the tracking of interviewees added to the difficulty. The feeling that this research stage was somewhat exploratory in nature also made it difficult to just start writing. Although I did not engage in proper memo writing during the time I collected data, I took descriptive but reflexive fieldwork notes, which helped me in the following stages of data analysis.

After each interview I would jot ideas down in my notebook. Sometimes even during the interview I took notes, although not many, as I did not want to lose the conversational flow (prior to the interview I asked consent to record the interview, and I informed interviewees that I might also take some notes just to guide me). In DJ sets and gigs, I often took notes on my mobile as if I was texting – which helped me in the following ways: 1) it allowed me to keep chronological track of the action in the setting; 2) it was not disruptive or socially awkward as it could have been if I was writing in a notebook on the dance floor;

3) it avoided unwanted attention as a woman alone on the dance floor<sup>81</sup>, as it looked as though I was texting someone.

I employed a “formal data analysis process”: collecting data first, followed by analysis. Hammersley and Atkinson draw attention to the fact that “engaging in sustained data analysis alongside data collection is often very difficult in practice.” They go on to say, “Some level of reflexivity can and should be maintained, however, even if it is not possible to carry out much formal data analysis before the main fieldwork has been completed” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 160).

When I left Portugal and went back to Exeter, I started an iterative process of listening to the recorded interviews, reading my notes, and writing analytical memos. Each interview was strategically and selectively transcribed, and at the same time as I was transcribing, I started the “initial coding”. As advised by Charmaz (2006, p. 46), I tried not just coding themes, but describing (coding) action, and accounting for the processes, for which the use of the gerund was helpful – what Saldana calls “Process Code”. I chose as my code unit not line-by-line, but incident-by-incident (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 53–55).

After these initial types of coding, I used the Constant Comparative Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The main themes were identified through constant comparative data analysis: I compared coding amongst “clusters” of interviews. These clusters were organized around interviewees’ musical roles and band membership. I looked for similarities and differences within each cluster and between clusters (e.g. becoming a rocker was a similar embodied process common to all), and it was the presence of a male peer – friend or boyfriend – in adolescence that made them become musicians or DJs, with very few exceptions, which worked as “deviant cases” or “negative cases” (Silverman, 2011, p. 20).

I simultaneously wrote analytic memos and several times read the interviews transcripts and fieldnotes thoroughly, and watched the videos – I

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<sup>81</sup> The dance floor was the most sexualised setting I attended while observing. Although I felt a bit vulnerable, it also made me understand that flirting (and/or recruiting sexual partners) is part of the dance floor functions. The fact that I was not really alone, as people saw me “hanging around” with the DJs, and as I could pass as a friend of the DJs, lessened my sense of vulnerability.

cross-referenced particular themes and codes across that varied data produced, in a comprehensive way.

In the last stage, the initial codes turned into “focused codes” (focused on key analytic ideas) (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 57–60). I also tried to understand the “how” of action, but at the same time not to forget the way in which a story is told. Stories (with their metaphors and narratives) have functions, from passing on a cultural heritage to maintaining a collective sense of the culture of an organization (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, pp. 56, 63–68). For instance, I used some “horror stories” as a way of talking about the dependency of women on men in female bands, as I explain in section 8 of data chapters

### *Getting “lost and found” in translation as a process and analytical tool*

The process of language translation<sup>82</sup> played a big part throughout the research process, a bilingual one. The most challenging translation moment was translating the empirical material and the data collected and produced in my native language (Portuguese) into English. The translations were done by me, and checked or suggested by other Portuguese speakers (Pereira, Marhia, & Scharff, 2009; Temple, 2002).

I often got “lost and found” in translation (Pereira, Marhia and Scharff, 2009). The task of translation was time-consuming and demanding, not just because I am not a native speaker of English, but also because the context was frequently very specific, e.g. instrumental playing. Translations cannot always retain the linguistic richness, the deepness or symbolism of some expressions or convey the differences. This *loss* can be frustrating, especially for “in vivo” coding, “emic” categories and folksonomies/ethnocategories. At the same time, some things were also *found* in the incommensurability of language difference – ideas and concepts can emerge here. Translation became a (analytical) tool to think with. It helped me gain some distance from the familiarity of language – in Garfinkel’s terms, it helped me to make the familiar strange (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 161).

The main examples are related to the main topics of my thesis: popular music and gender. Popular music – literally translated as “música popular” – in

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<sup>82</sup> Beyond other forms of translation which are part of all research, such as translating raw data to sociological analysis.

Portuguese mostly refers to traditional musical genres and styles, folk music and national-singing (nacional-cançonetismo) or fado or protest songs, (Lisboa *apud* Guerra, 2010, p. 196) and “pimba”. Also, the term used to refer to rock music in Portugal has historically varied, from “ié-ié” to “modern music” to “rock”.

The word “gender” translated into Portuguese (“género”) is homonymous with genre (“género musical”, “género literário”). In Portuguese, the adjective “feminino/a” means both female and femininity. For instance: in Portuguese the female voice [“voz feminina”] might not be feminine at all [“uma voz feminina masculina”].

As in other Latin languages, the words in Portuguese are highly gendered. In this sense, translating a more gender neutral language into English was easier. For instance, the term musician is sexed: “músico” is a male musician, “música” is a woman musician. However, “música” is homonymous with the word “song” and “music”. It gets a bit confusing in the writing. The fact that I wrote in English erased this difficulty, but it softened its potential as a political statement. Also, in Portuguese when people want to signal musical belonging, rather than using the Portuguese word for “rocker” (which would be “roqueiro/a”) they more commonly use the expression “s/he is of rock”, as if rock was a place. This spatial metaphor of musical belonging also gets lost in translation.

Having to translate “miúda”, helped me to understand that this word had a meaning I had not thought of. It was not the same as girl (“rapariga” is the formal word for female child/adolescent/young woman) nor chick (“gaja” is more of a slang word for young adult female). “Miúda” is the female for “kid” although it is also used for girl and chick. However, there are also reappropriations, and the English word “chick” was also used and “Portugues-ized” – i.e. chica, which is also the Spanish word for “female” broadly speaking.

The word for tomboy in Portuguese is “Maria-Rapaz” (a literal translation would be Mary-Boy). Although these two concepts perform the same cultural role/function, it must be said that the word in Portuguese still retains a female element – Maria is the most common Portuguese female name, and it has been used in the history of feminist Literature (e.g. *The Three Marias: New Portuguese Letters*). I believe the trope/moniker “Maria-Rapaz” still has an

important symbolic currency in Portuguese society. It is used by girls, boys and adults to classify girls (as one can see through school ethnographies), but it is also reacted against, through its feminist re-writing to “Maria-Capaz” (a word-play with rapaz (boy) and capaz (able/skilful)).

In Portuguese, the use of English words and expressions is very common. However, as I soon found out, they do not mean the same in English. For instance, in Portuguese, the term “wanna be” is used in music scenes to describe people who are not “authentic” music lovers. And it is especially used for girls/women who dress properly, but who do not engage with the music deeply. However, as I found from the literature, the Anglo-Saxon term for that is “try-hard”.

Another example was the word *groupie*. In Portuguese people use the word *groupie* to refer to female fans in derogatory terms. However, to be a *groupie* in Portugal does not mean engaging in prolific sexual activity with musicians – that is framed as an American phenomenon.

A further example: interviewees when referring to authentic music would say a song or a musician must have feeling [“*tem de ter feeling*”] in order to move someone. Another expression, associated with playing was to “play ‘*com garra*” (like playing with soul, but also, strongly, energetically). Both these expressions were usually associated with musical performance that goes beyond technical ability and are about emotional journeys. But “*com garra*” was also used across different (sub)genres to characterise women rockers. This suggested that women rockers seem to be “women of value”, combining “strength and sensibility”, which is the performance of an alternative femininity (alternative to sense and sensibility, for instance). This is an illustration of how I “found” that rock is an active ingredient in gendered subjectivities through translation.

### *Validity*

Triangulation is one of the strategies for ensuring the validity of research findings<sup>83</sup>, that is to say, checking codes and interpretations (Silverman, 2011, p. 365).

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<sup>83</sup> The other is respondents’ validation/member’s test of validity (William Foote Whyte as cited in Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 118-120) which I did not use. I did share with a female band (Anarchicks) the paper (powerpoints) I presented about them at APS 2012 (Portuguese

The fact that I collected data from different sources and that I supplemented interview data with observational data and, to a lesser extent, with documental material, both hardcopy and online, which included Internet lurking (Silverman, 2011, p. 106), constituted a variation in the methods of triangulation, allowing for different angles on the same phenomenon.

The second stage of research also worked as a (reflexive) triangulation source as I did follow-ups, video-elicitations and collected more data in a different time period (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, pp. 183–185).

Unlike Lucy Green (2001) I did not try to triangulate musical quality. In fact, the participants had different levels of instrumental proficiency and musical expertise (interviewee's longevity of playing varied from beginners to experts/advanced/professionals); different musical ambitions and expectations (some wish to become professionals, others just want to keep it as a hobby); and diverse band membership experiences. However, I see this as an asset to my work. For instance, proficient musicians might find it hard to go back to all the hazards of musical learning, therefore having beginners and advanced musicians helped me to capture the minutiae of musical experience as it unfolds.

Given the methodological triangulation, the longitudinal scope of the research (distributed across stages), the use of primary and secondary data sources and the use of elicitation techniques, I kept my (theoretical) claims grounded in participants' experiences, in participants' real-time and everyday life engagement with socio-musical activities, achieving "ecological validity" (Cicourel, 1996; DeNora, 2013).

Finally, another form of triangulation was peer research – a variation of "team research" (J. M. Johnson, 2001, p. 114) -- through presenting data and drafts to supervisors and SocArts' colleagues, as well as by presenting papers in European conferences, and getting critical feedback.

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Sociological Association Annual Conference). In the second interview, they criticise the paper for the too schematic way in which I was presenting rock, arguing that rock goes beyond my scheme, as it is something quasi-spiritual. This comment was very useful as it alerted me to the fact that the language I used to describe rock was still too "sociological", leaving aside the "artwork" itself and what it does to subjects (a spiritual power). This female band was "de-sociologised" already. However, it also pointed to the difference in reading contexts: my Powerpoint presentation had been prepared for an academic conference and employed a sociological language appropriate to a conversation with other sociologists/peers.

### 3.4: Research ethics and privacy

The participants were informed at the beginning of the research what it would involve when I contacted them by e-mail. The information was repeated at the beginning of each interview, when we signed the consent form (two copies, one for me, the other for participants) (see Appendix 6). Before the interview, I asked participants if they had any questions for me, and reassured them I would always be available through e-mail if they had any questions.

I made it clear that I wanted to learn from their musical experiences. Although I had some guiding questions, I framed the interview as an informal conversation where they were the experts, not me.

Confidentiality was fully assured: only I would have access to the interview recordings, and the interview material would be used for research purposes and in publications.

Concerning anonymity, the names of the fans (or of the musicians in their role as fans) have been changed, and I assigned them (or they chose) pseudonyms.

Anonymity for musicians was discussed with each of them. Musicians have “public personas” they want to promote/publicize and most musicians did not want to remain anonymous. When I use interviewees’ full names (first name and last name), it means that the interviewees wished to be identified by their real names or actual stage names/scene nicknames (in which case I used commas, e.g. “Suspiria Franklyn”). When I refer to interviewees just by using a first name, it is a pseudonym, indicating that the interviewees wished to remain anonymous. However, throughout the interview, musicians asked me to keep their statements private in a particular area: (personal) critiques of other musicians’ and/or bands’ musical work/performance.

I do not think the topics were particularly sensitive, and participants are not part of what is traditionally considered a “vulnerable group” However, research always plays a role in “deprivatising” participants’ lived experience (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

I kept the principle of doing no harm. However, what counts as harm is multi-dimensional, ranging from the threat to personal safety to reputation (Watts, 2006, p. 386). Because reputation is very important among artists, I re-considered musicians’ anonymity while writing-up, informed by “representational

tact” (Strathern as cited in Skeggs (2001, p. 436). Even if they chose to be identified, I anonymised the names of the musicians in some parts of the text I considered sensitive to their reputation/self-esteem.

Overall, I established mutual trust with the participants. The shared taste for rock fostered closeness – I felt what Cavicchi (1998) describes as “not feeling at odds” with other fans. However, Cavichi was a “serious” Bruce Springsteen fan, and I am more of a casual rock fan. Interviewees would often feel disappointed or surprised that I knew so few songs and bands’ names (not only Portuguese but Anglo-Saxon). And they would talk enthusiastically about their music favourites, e.g. “Oh you don’t know [band’s name]? Oh, you gotta listen to them, they’re great!”

Some interviewees added me on Facebook<sup>84</sup>. Of those, some posted content on their walls, usually a song with a comment related to the issue of women and rock music, as approached in our interview, and tagged me (publicly) (see Figure 4).



Figure 4 - After-interview Facebook Tag: “This [song] is for you, Rita Grácio... It was a pleasure ☺”

### 3.5: Reflexivity

My academic interest in women rockers was much welcomed in the field, especially by musicians and DJs, although fans were also supportive. In the

<sup>84</sup>I found it a bit hard to manage a Facebook page during the research process. I did not require friendship from interviewees who were fans, only if interviewees first sent me a request, would I then accept the friendship request. In the case of musicians, and especially former musicians, I ended up sending a friendship request if they did not reply to my Facebook messages.

field, people would agree there was an absence of women musicians, and that my research should contribute to increasing the visibility of Portuguese women rockers. However, people in the field showed less interest in women fans. Sometimes male musicians that I met while doing the fieldwork would also joke about how unfair it was that they were left out.

Musicians and DJs were the ones most interested in my topic. Musicians, especially the “older” ones, had a sense of “fitting in” in my research – some had a feeling of being valued and (finally) recognized. Many musicians thanked me for including them in the research, especially those in female bands. By the end of the interview, musicians often told me that it was a “therapeutic” moment for them, and it was good to have an occasion to talk.

In contrast, most of the fans I interviewed had a sense of not being research-worthy. The fans agree to be interviewed as they were “willing” to “help me”, but they had doubts about whether they were the right people to be interviewed, claiming they probably would not have anything interesting to say to me.

Throughout the interviews, both fans and musicians would apologise for talking too much, for not being so articulate or for “rambling” in the interview. Apologetic rhetoric is strongly gendered female and can also be seen as part of the (polite) turn-taking in conversations.

Women musicians’ partners also expressed their interest in the project, and enthusiasm (pride) about the selection of their partners for the study. I often met interviewees’ partners, as they were present at rehearsals, gigs and sets. The women I was interviewing would often claim I should be interviewing their (male) partners – “he’s a music encyclopaedia” – and not them, as they claimed they lacked the skills or the connoisseurship (not remembering names of bands, albums etc). I would often reassure them it was in their experience I was interested, not their partners’. Also, this comment was never made by the few lesbian or bisexual women I interviewed, although their partners were also present in the rehearsal/gigs/sets too.

In one case, the interviewee said her husband was not so happy that I, a stranger, had come to their home, and in another case, the partner’s interviewee was angry the interview took so long. In yet another case, the interviewee’s partner stayed at home (in the same room) while we were doing

the interview. However, no joint interviews were taken. And, also important, this “presence” (or reference) of partners was only relevant for women (both musicians and fans) in long-term relationships (both heterosexual and homosexual).

The fact that (long-term) male partners shaped their wives’ musical participation will be discussed throughout the empirical chapters. The fact that they also shaped women’s participation in the research project itself is mentioned by other studies (Storr, 2003; Wilson-Kovacs, 2004).

Although I took the role of the ignorant novice and cast participants in the expert role, I would still be cast in the role of the expert as someone who had a “deep music culture”, who would know all about music labels and names of bands. Interviewees (especially fans) expressed concern that they were not the ideal (competent) interviewees. I avoided that role by using my disciplinary identity as a sociologist as opposed to a musicologist – someone who would be interested in that kind of musical knowledge, in labelling through strict musical analysis what is and is not rock. As a sociologist, I assured them I would be interested in how, why, where and with whom they listened to music, so our interview would be more of a conversation about their relation to (rock) music, where I would learn from them.

There are always issues of power asymmetry between a researcher and participants to be considered. For starters, researchers have the time and resources that participants often do not have. However, the fact that most of the participants self-identified as women, were white and had a very similar educational background, generational belonging and class to me contributed to the “narrowing” of the power gap.

Regarding power asymmetry issues, most importantly, the research has to deal with representing the other.

In this case, it has historical implications in the process of women musicians canon-making. Due to the newness of the topic in Portugal, there is a sense of “doing history” and “doing archive” in many academic accounts (Sara Cohen, 2015; Reitsamer, 2015), including my own. I cannot ignore the fact that an academic work on women rockers that includes musicians becomes part of the process of canonization (despite the fact that as sociologists we do not take the issue of musical value for granted at all ).

That is reflected (and constituted) in the expectations of interviewees. My work was often presumed to be a historical work on women musicians in the history of Portuguese Rock Music, and as such, a valuable piece of archival and feminist research. In this sense, there were concerns that I would “get the story right”. For instance, a disbanded band organised a dinner the day before the interview to catch up and get the story right to tell me the next day. Generally, musicians (both men and women) worried about which people I had interviewed, and would often advise me on whom I should talk to. This “memorialising” strategy – in this case, memorialising women musicians – was also found regarding other topics “with no official or academic history but with a collective mythology results in multiple versions of events being accounted, and multiple parties claiming to have been the first or most significant in some involvement in these histories” (Strong, 2011).

For instance, disbanded female bands from the 1990s were curious to know who “banded together”/set up the band first. A disbanded female band also started a Facebook page -- which acted as a digitised archive on its own – after the interview that reunited them. Even in the present, female bands were curious to know if they were “alone”/the only ones – even if just locally – or if I had found more active bands in the country.

Beyond nostalgia and memory, participants also asked me to mediate their female networks. Some (older) women musicians asked me if I knew of other women musicians that I could put them in contact with, because “finding women musicians, especially good ones, is so hard!”. And from 2014 onwards, I realised the women musicians I had interviewed were “crossing paths”, and playing with one another in female bands.

Beyond the issue of recognition of the absence of women, feminist issues were not brought up spontaneously unless I asked, which I did, usually at the end of the interview – even with all female-bands, where I expected that the issue of feminism would be brought up.

In fact, at an early point in the fieldwork, I thought my research had very little to add to the feminist agenda, and was not even sure whether gender was a relevant category at all, as most interviewees kept saying that they rarely (or never) felt discriminated against or excluded for being a woman in the rock world.

Participants arguing that their practices are gender free are also found in other research on women rockers, namely Schipper's (2002) and Clawson's (1993) as well as in other fields. Within the sociology of work, Lewis (2006) claims that female entrepreneurs' endeavours to "keep gender out" just shows the centrality of gender to the assessment of their performance. In the world of work, the naming of the practice of sexual harassment is often absent from women's stories, although they reluctantly describe threats to their safety and varying forms of sexual harassment (Watts, 2010a, p. 183).

And, most notably, long-term, Skeggs' ethnography on working-class women, demonstrated how they engaged in class dis-identification and "maintained a critical analysis and distance on the categories that were used to position them whilst putting their energy into showing they were something else. The process of 'becoming respectable' was a continual repeated performance, produced against dominant classificatory systems" (Skeggs, 2001, p. 433).

This misunderstanding has often raised the issue of "false consciousness". However, women's experiences of their lives are not necessarily the same as feminist knowledge of women's lives, and women's discourses are not always feminist: to be a woman is not necessarily to be a feminist, as a feminist standpoint is a socially constructed position (and not available to all women) (Harding, 1991, pp. 10–11; Simpson & Lewis, 2005, p. 1269).

## DATA CHAPTERS

Data chapters are divided in four main sections. Section I shows in which ways pathways into rock musicking are gendered (chapter 5 to 7). Section II describes band membership in a male and female band (chapter 8 and 9) and chapter 10 summarizes the participants' discourses on musicianship. Section III describes how gender identities are mediated by the most common rock instruments in the band: the singing voice, the string instruments and the drum kit (chapter 11 to 13). Finally, a reappraisal of what counts as an instrument, allows me to introduce in section IV the unusual pathways of musical transmissions, as rock is distributed by DJs, crafters and mothers (chapter 14 to 16).

### I – Gendered pathways into rock musicking

From the beginning of their involvement in rock worlds and throughout their (rock) lives, young girls'/women's experience of rock musicking is shaped by gender. The participants enter rock worlds through family heritage and male networks of peers and partners. In the process, rock music and its material culture become an active ingredient in “doing” and “undoing” gender.

#### 4: Daughters of rock

Most interviewees referred to belonging to a “musical family” where fathers and brothers play an especially important role in their musical beginnings<sup>85</sup>. When the interviewees talked about their musical preferences in terms of a specific musical genre, rock was identified in their personal musical maps as something

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<sup>85</sup> Research on Fado singers also points to the importance of family transmissions (Gonçalves, 2016). This resembles the findings in other male-dominated fields, such as digital gaming. Research on girls' gaming practices points to the importance of male peers (boyfriends), but also family, mostly fathers. Girls' and young women's games culture are mostly private, domestic and “casual” (they do not play long hours and do not buy games, they share and rent). Carr (2006) found that girls not only talked to their friends about games, they played at home, with their older cousins, sister or their fathers, as a regular and enjoyable activity (with mothers policing the play), as part of their childhood. Kerr (2003) also found that girls played at home, mainly with brothers (although, sometimes with sisters) – contrary to Carr, Kerr found an intergenerational gap between these girls and their parents.

inherited from the “rock father”. These “daughters of rock” were born in the 1980s and there is a correlation between this age group and the reproduction of rock music tastes in Portuguese families, since they are the daughters of the first generation of rock music fans in Portugal. This is very similar to the situation in Japan, as described by Koizumi (2011), who highlights the importance of intergenerational shared music listening, reconfiguring the meaning of popular music in Japan - from a symbol of youth rebellion to a communication tool between parents and their children. In the same way, these Portuguese women proudly described rock music as “inborn” or “genetic”, part of their “upbringing”: “I don’t have that prejudice of seeing rock as aggressive, because my father is a rocker and I always grew up with rock” (Inês ‘Bunnie’, DJ).

The “rock father” is presented by the interviewees as an audiophile who owns records (an audio library) and sound technologies (stereo, turntables, etc.). Participants recalled, with some nostalgia, shared listening practices with their fathers involving recorded music and described rock music as part of their home soundtracks.

Participants’ families also played an important role in providing access to instruments and sponsoring music education (pay for music lessons in music academies or private instrumental tuition), especially in childhood and adolescence<sup>86</sup>.

Instruments available at home were owned mostly by male relatives – fathers, siblings, cousins - who incited participants to tinker with those instruments. Instrumental tinkering at home, and the emotionality attached to it, was described as a very significant form of early musical engagement.

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<sup>86</sup> This is especially relevant given the Portuguese educational system and the (late) professionalization of music teaching. Music education only has a fixed place in the curriculum in the second cycle of studies (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade), where it is taught by a music specialist, and only since 2006 has been established as an extra-curricular activity (Mota, 2015). Moreover, general music education is bound to the Orff tradition, which, combined with a lack of teacher expertise, as well as limited access to different instruments and to music technology, leading to a restricted repertoire. Moreover, although the curriculum prescribes the three areas of composing, listening, and performing, composition is largely excluded (Mota, 2001, 2015). As a result, in Portugal state school plays no role in providing access to electronic instruments, equipment or rehearsal spaces for rock bands.

The presence of the (father's) acoustic guitar at home<sup>87</sup> is an enabling factor to start “plucking and strumming” (Carolina, Bruna, Violeta, Teresa, Liliana). Sometimes it was accompanied by musical instructions and tips on guitar playing.

If acoustic guitars are affordable and easily accommodated into the household, the drum kit is by contrast considered one of the most expensive instruments, as well as one of the loudest and least space-efficient. It is rare to have a drum kit available as a home instrument. Only two interviewees mentioned having a drum kit available at home – one belonged to an older brother (Zélia), and the other to an uncle with a music-related job (Diana Peste).

When not home available, parents or grandparents can sometimes offer musical instruments, sometimes accompanied with financial support with music lessons.

#### *Gender negotiations in girlhood*

Parental gift-giving contributes to the (re)production of instruments as gendered. Electronic keyboards (small ones), pianos and acoustic guitars are perceived as being proper instruments for (young) girls, with parents sending their children to music academies and paying for them to have private tuition to learn these instruments. If this is a tacit assumption, there are more explicit cases of instrumental gender stereotypes constraining girls' access to what are perceived as male instruments: Helena Fagundes and Shelley Barradas both wanted to play the drums in their teens, but their parents thought that was not an appropriate instrument for a girl. In both cases, their parents presented them with an acoustic guitar as an alternative and paid for private guitar tuition.

Parental gift-giving is often the result of active/dynamic (gender) negotiations between the participants who request the desired musical instruments and their parents, through “nagging” them (Beatriz Rodrigues, Sara) or “saving up” their pocket money. Sónia Cabrita presents a unique case,

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<sup>87</sup> As in the USA, so too in Portugal the fact that acoustic guitars become a mass-manufactured, instrument – turning into a fashionable commodity - shaped musical experiences of its consumers (Ryan & Peterson, 2001; Waksman, 1999). Interviewees reported to have bought their acoustic and electric guitars in paper shops and supermarkets.

relating how she got her first drum kit: at high school. She collected money from her school mates to buy a drum kit so the all-female band Pickle Puss could start up as “a real band”. This proto-crowdfunding is described proudly, as Sónia Cabrita frames this musical event as an early sign of her entrepreneurialism; the spirit of initiative and proactivity being characteristics she needs to have in order to make a living as a musician: “I can be a [professional] drummer, because I do things, I make things happen.”.

For the participants, getting their first instruments demonstrated high levels of motivation towards music, extending to commitment and the capacity for financial decision-making. “Taking it [music] seriously” was a sentence repeated by most interviewees, showing how musical commitment and maturity are an important part of these girls’ identities<sup>88</sup>.

In contrast, the participants’ interest in music is regarded as merely another leisure activity by their parents. In exchange for instruments and permission to participate in bands, parents do not expect (or even desire) their daughters to become musicians, but simply to do well at school/be a good student.

Girls are usually more subject to (informal) pressures, calling for responsible behaviour (Fonseca, 2007; Griffin, 1999), which is intensified when girls enter male-dominated domains<sup>89</sup>. Parents tend to have a sex-specific protective attitude towards girls’ leisure<sup>90</sup>. Even when they are good students, some parents might see participation in rock bands as a threat to their children’s educational success (Bayton, 1998). That explains why the guitarist of the all-female teenage band, Pickle Puss, now a lawyer, had to drop out of the band. Band-related activities were forbidden by her father as he was afraid her musical commitments would jeopardise her school achievement.

Parents can also develop strategies that are both controlling and supportive at the same time. For example, Alice’s parents would watch all her

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<sup>88</sup> Teenage boys are perceived as taking music far more seriously, and the commitment of young women is more easily called into question (Bayton, 1998).

<sup>89</sup> For instance, Walkerdine finds parental regulation on video gaming strongly gendered: girls are strictly regulated where game playing is concerned – they are left to play “educational games” only, which has consequences for their gaming competence level (Walkerdine, 2007, pp. 101–136).

<sup>90</sup> In line with leisure scholars that show sex differences regarding leisure time and the gender leisure gap (Aitchison, 2003). In this case, what is significant is the type of leisure, the activities and spaces where girls and women are allowed rather than how much leisure time they have.

concerts, and they would pick her up promptly at the end of rehearsals. Although Alice's parents allowed her to hang out with boys in this controlled way, Patrícia's parent might not have – she doubts her mother would have allowed her to tour with the male-centred band she was in at the age of 16, because it was composed of older males (band members' ages ranged from 27-35 years old). When a teacher offered to take Shelley Barradas to music classes in the nearest city (she lived in a remote place), her parents would not allow it, because they were afraid of leaving their daughter alone with a male teacher.

Beatriz Rodrigues' vignette illustrates (generational) conflicting views on rock music activities and what participants had to negotiate when entering rock domains:

Finally [at the age of 14], I talked my parents into buying me an electric guitar and an amplifier. At that time, I remember my father looking at the guitar and saying: "just another piece of junk that's going to be put away, gathering dust". And that just made me want so badly to take things seriously! (...)

I always passed as a "rebel" and "tomboy" [Maria Rapaz]. So this was a label that would allow me the opportunity to get away with doing things... now it is more "the artist" [label], like... the crazier you are... it's not crazy, but... well... it's all ok, it's all part of it. I always have an excuse. I don't surprise my parents anymore. Of course I had to educate/teach them, right? Because there are a lot of people who are put off by that [parental restrictions]... but my parents are open-minded. And although in some moments they weren't, we ended up reaching an agreement. But this is why: I never failed at school, I never had bad marks, they could see I could do everything, and I was happy doing it, so why should they deprive me of all that?

The sentence "I never failed at school" was proudly repeated by virtually all the interviewees. As opposed to the British working class boys and girls who developed a gendered culture of resistance to formal education – aggressive 'laddism' and hyperfemininity respectively (McRobbie, 1990; E. Smith, 2003; Willis, 2000); the participants in this research developed a culture of compliance with formal education. Lucy Green also found that school girls are seen to conform to their teachers' and school's values, expectations and standards of behaviour: through their engagement in classical music, girls can display their femininity safely (Green, 1997). My findings relate to the fact that most of the participants are middle or upper class. The production of girls'

educational pursuits as a middle-class trait was also found in other studies (Walkerdine, 2006), but it is also a Portuguese specificity. Given the high levels of illiteracy after the dictatorship, girls and their parents in particular invested highly in education regardless of their social class (Fonseca, 2002; Fonseca & Araújo, 2007; Portugal, 2014).

### Summary

Tinkering with instruments is a significant part of musical engagement. Getting an instrument, either by inheriting, nagging or saving up, is an important moment for a girl's musical engagement and display of musical commitment ("taking music seriously"). It is also a musically mediated display of maturity.

Musical activities are subject to gendered and classed parental regulation, and to sex-specific protective attitudes towards what parents see as girls' leisure.

It was school achievement in combination with specific gendered performances (the tomboy), which enabled these girls to resist (gender) norms and access otherwise male-only spaces.

The good student discourse regulates girls' musical activities and identities. If on the one hand, it acts as a (Foucauldian) disciplinary technology of parental control; on the other hand, the good student discourse is part of these girls' identities, and girls invest emotionally in their educational achievement – "I never failed at school".

## 5: Rock couples' cultures

Boyfriends, partners, cross-sex friendship and male siblings enable participants' access to electronic instruments, instrumental learning/skill acquisition and participation in bands. It is mostly heterosexual dyads that allow young and older women's musical engagement<sup>91</sup>. Homogamy characterises Portuguese

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<sup>91</sup> In fact, the only negative experience with male partners was reported by Carla, a musician in a female heavy metal band. Her bandmates' boyfriends and hers, who were also musicians, demonstrated some degree of jealousy of their musical success – even if not explicitly in words. They also felt threatened by their girlfriends' public exposure (to the gaze of a mostly male audience). This was also reported by Bayton's interviewees (1998, p. 180). However, a word of caution. Given that the participants in this study are the ones who succeed in rock worlds, it is

music worlds as it does in classical music (Conde et al., 2003) and hip-hop/graffiti (J. A. Simões, 2013), and rock is no exception.

If the literature has shown that access to male networks enables rock music participation<sup>92</sup>, it has not fully unpacked this process.

Electronic musical instruments, mostly guitars and bass, are borrowed from friends, boyfriends/partners and sisters' boyfriends/brothers-in-law.

To hang out with male (boy) friends who are band members is also an opportunity to tinker with instruments available in (private) rehearsal rooms. Attending (boy) friends' rehearsals and trying out instruments during the band's rehearsal break was mentioned by some participants (Katari, Liliana, Alice) as an important event/occasion for connecting with the instrument, especially those not so often available at home such as the drum kit and the bass.

(Boy) friends not only provide insider information such as how to reach good rock music teachers with "pedagogical authority" (G. D. Smith, 2013); but also they provide instrumental tuition and informal mentoring themselves.

As found in other studies, for Portuguese female rockers membership in a male network is social capital, and the role of these supportive<sup>93</sup> males (whether or not romantically involved) is similar to the role of the "senior mentor" in organizations (Amâncio & Santos, 2014; Ibarra, 1993) who enable access and a kind of "upward mobility" (e.g. accessing non-traditional female instruments).

### *Couples' musicking together*

Music is an active ingredient in couples' identity work: it is shared leisure, it is a lifestyle. Women valued their romantic relationships built through a shared love of rock music, which could include listening to music together at home, attending concerts, being in a band or other music-related activities. Inês Misha,

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likely that they are not the best representatives of how women's leisure is structured by male exclusionary strategies (Rojek, 1995, p. 29). In a similar vein, studies in sports, where homogamy was found, also suggest that if women are introduced, trained and managed by partners (or relatives), it is not likely that such men would exploit their boxers for example (Halbert, 1997, pp. 14–15).

<sup>92</sup> Reitsamer (2011, p. 34), studying Austrian female DJs, claims that social capital is more important than female DJ's "subcultural capital". However, my research points to the need for both simultaneously.

<sup>93</sup> Partners attend each other's gigs, and provide feedback on their performances (usually praising), as well as assessing audiences' reactions.

a heavy metal fan who became a co-producer of her male partner's heavy metal fanzine claims: "It's like that song says: 'you can't love someone that doesn't listen to the same song'<sup>94</sup>". Love is musically mediated<sup>95</sup>. However, couples' shared musical culture has not been explored very much within the popular music literature beyond the homogamy frame<sup>96</sup>.

Not all the interviewees had partners who shared their love of rock music but the majority did. When they did not, that influenced the relationship negatively. Lúcia could not stand her (recently acquired) partner's taste for pimba music, and Sílvia claims that as "open" as she might be, "I couldn't be in a relationship with someone that listened to Toni Carreira<sup>97</sup>". In Portugal, pimba music is a popular music genre associated with working class and uneducated people (Lopes, Louçã, & Ferro, 2017). Participants *do* (white middle) class through their disidentification with pimba music. However, because the self is shaped by social and musical interaction with others (Halstead, 2013, p. 84), class is also musically mediated not just by personal music choices and dislikes, but by their partners', to whom their social identity is (or would be) attached.

Couples build a shared culture through their attachments to rock, and being in a band is one aspect of this. Some interviewees reported having joined a band and developed a love/romantic relationship with one of their band mates (Carolina, Sílvia). Others reported setting up bands with their boyfriends and then gathering together the rest of the musicians (Filipa, Patrícia), and another group of interviewees reported being brought into partners' existing bands (Sofia Silva, Isabel Newton). Some participants were also in two different bands at the same time with their partners (Katari, Helena Fagundes).. Only two interviewees reported keeping their bands separate. One interview revealed

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<sup>94</sup>The interviewee quotes the chorus of a Portuguese musician Rui Veloso's song. He is considered a major figure of the Portuguese Rock Boom in the 1980s. Although the interviewee is not a fan of this musician, his songs are very popular.

<sup>95</sup> Sociology has focused on the role of social factors in romantic and intimate relationships – age, class, educational level, sexual attractiveness (Van Hooff, 2013), leaving unexplored the important role music and other aesthetic materials play in those relationships – with some notable exceptions (Denora, 1997; Wilson-Kovacs, 2004)

<sup>96</sup> There are some journalistic accounts that go beyond the muse-creator relation and account for (heterosexual) rock couples that actually did music together. To name a few media rock couple celebrities: Lennon and Yoko Ono, Lux Interior and Poison Ivy (The Cramps), Jack and Meg White (The White Stripes) and Kim Gordon and Thurston Moore (Sonic Youth), Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithfull.

<sup>97</sup> Toni Carreira is a famous Portuguese pimba (romantic) singer.

that it was her great instrumental skills that enabled her to gain acceptance within the boyfriends' circle of (male) friends. He was a musician as were his friends.

Musical instruments can be exchanged as gifts (not just borrowed) in romantic/love relationships.

Partner/boyfriends' music tuition or just shared guitar plucking or other musical engagements were reported to take place mostly in the domestic realm. In the case of adolescent or young couples, they hang out at each other's parents' homes (and garages). Adult couples live together, and home becomes a shared musical setting.

When boyfriends take the role of a supportive (informal) teacher, musical learning becomes a positive learning experience, which can counteract bad experiences within a formal learning environment, as reported by interviewees.

Two interviewees had bad experiences with formal guitar lessons in music academies. Filipa and Sara mentioned that they had trouble with memorisation. Filipa could not memorise the names of the strings after a month of classes; and Sara could not memorise the names of the notes that match the chords – she knew what a C sounded like, but she could not play a C on request. Filipa's teacher screamed at her and as a result she believed she was untalented and gave up the guitar; but Sara's boyfriend, also an electric guitarist, kept mentoring her and she became a guitarist.

Partners/boyfriends can also make a difference to women accessing non-traditional musical roles. Filipa (who gave up the guitar) started playing the drums after her boyfriend assessed her rhythmic skills as good. He suggested the possibility of becoming a drummer:

Rita: How did the drum kit appear in your life?

Filipa: I was dating L. and he was playing the guitar, we were at his home. He had a djembe. And I started to play the djembe. I've always had... well, my father always motivated me to have rhythmic skills. He would go: "can you do this?" [claps a different rhythm with each hand]. This kind of thing, he used to do this with me. And I think it helped. So, I was playing djembe and L. said: "you would be good at playing the drums". So I decided to have drum classes (laughs).

Filipa already had the motivation (she was classically trained, and she had tried to learn the electric guitar), but lacked the confidence her boyfriend

helped her to achieve. Having her drumming skills assessed on “rhythm” and not on “strength”, perceived as a manly category, also opened up opportunities for action. After Filipa gained drumming skills, she and her boyfriend started a band.

The band can become another space to foster couples’ relationships, as Fátima exemplified:

We got together [as a band], not really because I played – I’d never really actually played any instrument – but because it made sense that we would be together all the time. And they needed someone to play the bass, I said yes, just for fun, but it got serious because we set up the band. (...) So I took the bass, he [her partner] taught me. I was never a great musician, I’m not a musically gifted person [smile], but I could do the basics, which works in rock’n’roll, so I did well [laughs]

When sharing the love of music, some of these women tend to display some “accommodative behaviours”, which are “other-oriented” as also found by scholars who analysed how women’s leisure is dependent upon their (heterosexual) romantic relationship (Herridge, Shaw, & Mannell, 2003). Fátima mentioned she did not like to play the bass that much, but in order to accommodate to her husband’s band’s needs, she played the bass.

This has some resemblances to Pitts’ findings regarding collective music making in other musical genres: it is not uncommon for people to enjoy playing together, and to enjoy the social side of music even when they do not like the musical repertoire itself (Pitts, 2005, pp. 53–72).

However, in the case of rock, women’s musical opportunities are narrower. Not just the repertoire, but the instruments and the social side of music are dependent upon their partners. Women access band membership through their partners, and this is defined in their partners’ and/or their partners’ band’s terms, as also found by Bayton (1998, p. 59) and Cohen (1991, p. 207). Also, homogamy configures the vulnerability of women’s musical participation – as found among jazz singers (Buscatto, 2007a). All the participants reported that when the relationships end, the bands also split up.

#### *Fitting in as ‘women’s work’*

Clara is a 36-year-old woman with a (non-musical) day job. Clara’s partner is a (part-time/non-professional) popular musician. They have been together for

more than fifteen years and they live together. At the time of the interview, she was the vocalist in her partner's band. Her partner had asked her to write the lyrics for his musical compositions, which she did. As he had started a band and had no one to sing, Clara became a vocalist.

Clara describes her musical experiences throughout her life, since learning music in childhood (and the inspiring figure of her violinist grandparent). Clara like most of the interviewees is "bi-musical" (Green, 2001), having both formal and informal learning experiences. In childhood, she had piano lessons where she learned to read notation and in her teens, she learned acoustic guitar. Clara also played the bass in her teens, just for one gig ("a very short-lived experience"). This is how it happened: her partner's band had a benefit gig and they had no bassist, so she borrowed a bass and learned the band's songs by ear, just to play for that particular benefit gig.

Feminist scholarship has shown how wives contribute in diverse ways, directly and indirectly, to their husbands' work and leisure, and how wives' (unpaid) labour benefits both employers and their husbands personally (Delphy & Leonard, 1992; Finch, 1983). And so too (aspiring or part-time) musicians can benefit from having as partners "musical" women. Clara works as a kind of backup musician, always on call, filling in whenever necessary (similar to a session musician). Much of Clara's servicing and "relationship work" (Delphy & Leonard, 1992, p. 174) is thus musical work. Musical roles in her partner's band become an extension of the wife role (Bayton, 1998). Musicking becomes part of the "labour of love"<sup>98</sup>.

Although Clara had the musical skills "initially", she describes how her partner always acted as her "musical mentor" as she refers to him. More specifically, he gave her a guitar, which she enjoys playing: "If I could commit myself to the guitar, I could play better because my partner has been teaching me how to play". After detailing her diverse musical engagements, Clara concludes:

Despite being able to play this and that, I can't really play anything. I mess around with the instruments, but... I can't say I can really play any instrument. (...) Of course I'm not tone-deaf, but please, let's keep it real, don't compare me with my partner, he is a real musician.

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<sup>98</sup> I accept that the labour of love is not exclusive to women (Tilley, 2009).

Clara holds a view of herself as a musical person, but not as a musician, despite her long-term engagement with musical activities and instrumental playing. In Western popular music discourses, being a musician is frequently equated with being able to play a musical instrument (O'Neill, 2002). For Clara, being a musician is equated with songwriting and a skilled performance. For Clara, being a musician is equated with songwriting and a skilled performance. Clara is making the distinction between being a musician and being musical by comparing herself to her partner, who writes songs and is a “seriously good player”, as well as being her “musical mentor”. The kind of musical work she does, the one of musically ‘fitting in’— writing lyrics, singing, playing different instruments, for specific occasions, in different bands, suiting the musical needs of her partner is not seen by Clara as a proper, real, serious musical skill. This type of work is crucial, but it is non-specialised (she is not specialised in any specific instrument as she explains) and it is occasional (not on a daily basis), leading to Clara’s view of herself as not being a musician. Similar to the work of a personal assistant (Pringle, 1988; Truss, Alfes, Shantz, & Rosewarne, 2013), Clara gets little personal/individual recognition. To recognise her partner as a musician and herself as (“just”) musical is also part of the way she sees her musical self, not individually, but as a by-product of her partners’ musicianship in close (hierarchical) relation to her partner.

However, Clara feels rewarded by her musical work and takes pleasure in being “on [music] call”. Clara experiences band membership not only as a leisure activity (as opposed to labour/work), but more importantly, as “a good hobby”. It enables her to mark off a space where she can temporarily get away from all the seriousness and responsibilities demanded of her at work<sup>99</sup>.

The acceptance of given (non-leadership) musical roles can be a tactic of “calculated ignorance”. In the same vein, Ann Gray studying the gendering of a leisure technology such as video cassettes, found that “women resisted becoming involved in the VCR simply to avoid yet another domestic servicing function” (Gray, 1992, p. 151). In the case of Clara, she might avoid heavy musical tasks in her spare time, as she is already heavily committed in leadership roles in her work.

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<sup>99</sup> Also, in terms of couples’ shared serious leisure, Clara does not have to spend time planning leisure, something Herridge and colleagues’ (2003) interviewees complained about.

Being “pushed into” musicking can be a pleasurable experience, as these “musical obligations” can also be a site for demonstrating skills (e.g. lyric writing, singing in tune, having a good ear, being a band member) – it is not the same as being pushed into non-glamorous, mundane activities such as domestic chores.

Despite Clara considering herself the ‘non-musician’, we will see how she renegotiates her status through her role as the singer of the band. Being in a band is about gaining aesthetic agency, and this is part of her biographical narrative. Clara puts great value on her musical activity and on the band (and the band’s other activities, such as travelling and encountering new places and people) as a source of reward and enjoyment.

### Summary

In line with other studies, this research shows how women’s musicianship is dependent upon belonging to male networks as a form of social capital – providing access to electronic instruments, musical skill acquisition in a positive learning environment, engagement in non-traditional “female” instruments, as well as participation in bands. Homogamy configures access to band membership, and at the same time women’s precarious musical participation (e.g. multi-instrumentality instead of instrumental specialisation), is dependent upon their partners and their bands’ needs. Despite asymmetries, musicking together is an active ingredient of these couples’ shared culture. More than asymmetries or exclusion, the interviewees’ discourses highlight men’s support and mentorship – the practices are unequal but the representation of those practices is one of equality.

## 6: Gender performances in rock worlds

Gaining access to rock’s male networks demands specific embodied gender performances. LeBlanc’s (1999) work is exceptional in this regard, showing how punk girls access male friendships. This meant earning the *respect* of the boys, accomplished “through the adoption of masculine characteristics, such as aspects of male punk dress (e.g. Mohawk or boots) or aspects of male punk

behaviour (e.g. toughness or coolness)” (Leblanc, 1999, p. 120)<sup>100</sup>. Expanding LeBlanc’s focus on youth, Schippers (2002) has elaborated on how adult alternative rockers do ‘gender manoeuvring’, manipulating the relationship between masculinity and femininity through dress and behaviour within the localised setting of the rock show.

Schippers’ and LeBlanc’s accounts are illuminating. However, they do not mention that beyond dress and behaviour, the music itself is a resource for doing gender. My research builds upon, but extends the scope of LeBlanc and Schippers’, not just in terms of age and genre, but also by considering the use of music itself.

The participants managed the (contradictory, sometimes conflicting) positioning of femininity and masculinity through embodied behaviour and gestures, and rock music material cultures, such as clothing and styles (the latter explored in section 7.2); but also instruments, as well as through the music itself (here explored more deeply in section 7.3 and throughout section III).

Becoming a rocker means looking like a rocker and sounding like a rocker in everyday life. As DeNora (2014, p. 52) notes (in a Wittgenstein reading of instances of reality “must” look like, and using Hoschild’s concept of emotional work) “one learns to ‘cooperate’ with an image. They are realised time and again in open-ended, but still structured ways”. Aligning oneself with the “image” – mediatised, sensed – of what the “rock chick” is expected to be like, requires the reflexive monitoring of one’s own behaviour, clothing/ways of dressing and musical tastes.

Tapping into cultural and material resources (gender stereotyped embodied behaviour, clothing) intricately bound up with historically produced and culturally situated imaginations of rock femininities and masculinities, these women compose a cultural repertoire as they engage with the world where they operate.

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<sup>100</sup> This was found among pre-teen girls too, for whom being a tomboy guarantees male friendship and respect (Reay, 2001, p. 162).

## 6.1: Doing rock'n'roll, rockin' gender

A structuring element of most of these women's discourses on their (early) participation in rock music worlds is the theme of identifying with or distancing themselves from being a tomboy<sup>101</sup>.

It is worth quoting this interview excerpt with Patricia at length, showing how the assimilation to masculine norms is not a straightforward process. Instead, gender performances are an intuitive 'tuning-in' to a specific environment:

Rita: When did you start noticing that there were not so many girls around, that girls would "just watch, not play" [as she was saying]... when did you start noticing that?

Patrícia: I noticed immediately. And that made me sad and... in a way, I started feeling masculine. Because I was always like that in other things... like doing what boys like to do, enjoying the boys' company more than girls', because they got to do the fun stuff. In a way, you end up having to wear pants, and assume that role, so you can hang out with boys, without being harassed all the time, or having to put up with silly comments

Rita: Can you give me an example of what it means to wear pants?

Patrícia: (silent) I can't recall any concrete situation... it's more about your [overall/general] posture. I started noticing that even the way I spoke... I would become aggressive, and my voice would go down half a tone [laughs], my voice deepened when I was communicating in that masculine environment.

Rita: But just in that music environment?

Patrícia: Well, in other things dominated by men, yes. You end up adopting that posture, so you can feel respected, even if it's unconscious

Patricia illustrates how adopting rock's masculinity does not just mean following a (pre-set) code of norms, but is achieved reflexively and cumulatively, over time. Patricia, like other interviewees, taps into what are culturally gendered male attributes (assertiveness; low-pitch, deep voice), which become incorporated into embodied constructions of specific femininities.

Being a 'tomboy' is described in the literature as a rebellious childhood gender identity (Paechter, 2010; Reay, 2001). If this gender rebellion in childhood is not only accepted but celebrated, as the girls grow up, its acceptability decreases and becomes problematic (Halberstam, 1998; Pascoe, 2007). However, punk allowed tomboys to extend tomboyism into adolescence

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<sup>101</sup> Interviewees do not always use the word "tomboy", but they describe associated behaviours, which can fall into the broader category of female masculinity. The use of the word "tomboy" might be age-related (women over thirty used the word "tomboy" more often), as was suggested by Brandão (2009) in her study of Portuguese lesbian women "queer, but not too much".

and young adulthood (Halberstam, 2004, p. 192). Halberstam coins the term 'female masculinity', calling into question the easy association of masculinity with male bodies (Halberstam, 1998, 2002). Participants described how they *undo* traditional femininities, and *do* female masculinity.

For Patrícia, as for other interviewees, “doing boys’ things” – engaging in practices associated with masculinity – is a way of inflecting the usual restrictions on girls’ activities and their restricting femininity<sup>102</sup>. Having “more fun” means enjoying the freedoms associated with boyhood, accessing boys’ privileges (Fonseca, 2007, p. 91). Some of the masculine freedoms are appropriated not just in girlhood, but also in adult years. For instance, many interviewees asked if they could swear during the recorded interview. Others referred to excessive drinking practices when going out (although it becomes less frequent as they age). However, not all masculine freedoms are taken: no sexual excesses<sup>103</sup> or recreational sex. The participants were in monogamous heterosexual relationships. Halberstam’s (2002) discussion on female masculinity (masculinity without male bodies) focuses on lesbian female masculinity (epitomised by the dyke or the butch). However, Halberstam acknowledges that heterosexual female masculinity still menaces gender conformity, although it is a licensed, socially approved form of female masculinity<sup>104</sup>.

Participants describe how they learn to talk and behave not just “like a girl”. The process of embodying acceptable femininity demands a constriction of

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<sup>102</sup> The participants’ gender performances also allow them to be less subject to parental control while adolescents. These interviewees’ parents had a big concern with their girls’ sexualisation, as found in other studies (Skeggs, 1997; Walkerdine, 1998), which was soothed by their non-sexualised, even androgynous appearance. Other studies found that middle-class girls are discouraged by their mothers from displaying too much femininity - they have to display femininity “with taste” and “without sexuality” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 117).

<sup>103</sup> Unlike queer subcultural lives (Halberstam, 2006).

<sup>104</sup> Although one can say that the participants adopt laddish behaviours and attitudes (for one thing they ‘act hard’), and that these participants are more (hetero)sexual than tomboys, they are not the “ladettes” as described in the Anglo-Saxon literature. Either the schoolgirl ladettes (Jackson, 2006) or the post-school ladettes (McRobbie, 2009, pp. 83–86). Regarding the former, schoolgirl ladettes stand in opposition to ‘nice girls’ and swotties (C. Jackson, 2006, p. 350), as they are openly sexual, loud, excessive and hang out in big groups. Regarding the latter, the participants are not ladettes as they are not taking up all the sexual freedoms granted to men, such as recreational sex. Hence, my participants’ gender performances are closer to female masculinity as proposed by Halberstam. Jackson (2006, p. 354) states that ladettes actually verge towards what Halberstam termed ‘female masculinity’. However, ladettes are heterosexual, so they are a ‘mild’ form of female masculinity, because ladettes are less disruptive of gender order (than tomboys too).

space, body and voice from an early age. Girls learn not to use the physical possibilities of their bodies, and learn to “throw like a girl” (I. M. Young, 2005) and to display a powerless body (Bartky, 1990)<sup>105</sup>. It is precisely this restricted femininity – a “super-feminine girl with an angel-like posture” – that is contested by participants, when they make claims about their “irreverent side”. Thus, participants do other femininities, such as the “tough-one”, as Carina Frazão, a former hardcore vocalist describes herself:

Carina Frazão: I’m hardcore. I’m fearless! I take responsibility... I’m not afraid to stand up... it’s all about my school, it’s the hardcore school. If I listened to electronic music, it wouldn’t be me. That’s it.

Rita: Ok

Carina: And I think people see me as the chick who... well, I’m much softer than I appear, but I don’t mind if people think I’m tough. Then they don’t bother me, or they don’t bother me as much...

Rita: Ok. I was about to ask you whether hardcore influences your life, your everyday life.

Carina: Hardcore influences everything, all my life, and the way I think about others.

Rita: Could you talk a bit more about that thing you said about being soft and tough?

Carina: What do you mean? It’s like people think I’m tough ‘Gee! There goes Carina, the tough one’. All that bullshit, but Carina ‘the-tough one’ is not a thing, she is a person. It’s much easier to say ‘oh, this chick thinks she’s a badass’. It’s easier to say than asking yourself “oh, what’s beneath that attitude?” or to think “why should I also take action [and not just cross your arms?]”. I was taught that way, to fight for what I believe in.

Toughness ensures the survival of girls and women within the male domain of the rock culture, and being able to use that social space safely – “no one bothers you” (Carina Frazão). For participants, performing toughness ensures cultural approval from rock peers, and gaining access to instruments, bands and informal mentoring. Otherwise, engaging in cross-sex activities can be risky, as described by Patrícia: sexual harassment, unwanted sexual attention, receiving social scrutiny or mistreatment<sup>106</sup>.

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<sup>105</sup> Expansive body postures from men gave rise to the social contestation of “manspreading” on public transportation.

<sup>106</sup> What Halberstam (2006) found among homosexual women, applies to these heterosexual rockers: toughness not only allows safe access to rock, but it works as an alternative to the misogyny and mistreatment girls find/expect in adolescent relationships.

Interviewees who act masculine are not trying to pass as male or trying to be boys, nor do they identify as transgender. Participants often express some anxiety about not becoming “too masculine”.

Carina Frazão does not see herself as unfeminine. On the contrary. She explains how she deploys her hardcore way of being (toughness, fearlessness), with her feminine posture: “I cross my legs (as a girl)”. Carina Frazão is both “tough” and “soft”. As she explains, she is “nice” to customers as part of her customer service day-time job (“I have never had any problems at work”). Carina is both a nice<sup>107</sup> and tough girl.

Participants often engage in gender performances that combine masculinity and femininity traits, through clothing and beauty practices:

I was always a tomboy. I didn't care for make-up, but then I started liking it. Although I was always a tomboy, wearing my Doc Martens [army boots], I always cared for my red lipstick, my eyeliner, and the nail polish. Although I was always into the masculine stuff, the shirt, the boots, I always cared for the feminine stuff: the eyeliner, red lipstick, nails. And I always wore my hair short. (Isabel Newton)

Patricia states she never lost her “feminine side”:

Rita: Ok, so you felt that need... and about the way you dressed?

Patrícia: Not in the way I dressed... I don't know... I never lost my feminine side, I never dressed as a boy, not really.

Rita: What does it mean to dress as a boy?

Patrícia: For instance, not that it's really like this, but... not wearing skirts, or... wearing trousers all the time, or not wearing any dresses...

Rita: Was it difficult for you to balance that feminine side of yours with a tough posture? Or did it all make sense?

Patrícia: Sort of... you end up having conflicting feelings, like “men, I wanna be a chick, I wanna be delicate”, but here I have to be tough, because... but this is not conscious, I mean, there are some moments of consciousness about this, and others not really.

One cannot look ‘too masculine’, because it is necessary that these bodies do not endanger heterosexual femininity – avoiding the lesbian threat<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> The nice girls are schoolgirls described in the Anglo-Saxon literature as hard working, well-behaved and high achieving students, but also unpopular and boring (Reay, 2001; Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001). What I have been calling “the good student”. However, I borrow the term ‘nice girl’ as described by feminist research as part of white, middle-class femininity, to expand it to post-school ages into the labour market age.

<sup>108</sup> The same has been found in what are considered traditionally masculine pursuits. Women who participate in sports (especially those which are physically demanding or high-risk), are often considered unfeminine, and see their (hetero)sexuality questioned, facing the lesbian stigma (Choi, 2005; Melton, 2013).

(Halberstam, 1998, p. 28). To reconcile their masculinity – which the rock culture valued – with expected (heteronormative) femininity on the other hand, these interviewees, as well as LeBlanc's (1999), counteracted masculinity with elements culturally gendered feminine ('acting feminine'). Rock's female masculinity is heteronormative and should not preclude attractiveness. Female masculinity and the less restricted practices it engenders is far more acceptable when performed on bodies whose heterosexuality, whiteness and middle-classness is not called into question.

If embodying 'too much' masculinity is heavily derided, also 'too much' femininity is discouraged. If it is important to maintain markers of femininity, it is crucial not to look too feminine. In rock worlds, there is a disdain for traditional or 'emphasised femininity' (in its compliance to patriarchy (Connell, 1997)) and a disdain for feminised activities and leisure (shopping, over-concern with fashion and beauty practices).

This is reproduced in interviewees' discourses, as they police theirs and others' appearance, especially the ones that dare to approach mainstream femininity and sexualisation, either onstage or offstage (also found by LeBlanc and Schippers). For instance, a punk rocker (in her thirties) criticised another rocker for looking "too pretty" when attending concerts, "with her hair done as if she'd just come from the hairdresser".

It is expected that rockers care for clothes, but not excessively. Otherwise, one runs risks: if they are musicians, they risk being labelled "a poser"; if they are fans, they risk being mistaken as "try-hards" – those who are more interested in the aesthetics than in the music itself. However, "some girls can reach the music [heavy metal] through the aesthetics [clothes]" (Inês Misha), implying that there is a possibility of conversion into an "authentic" fan, one that is "really there for the music".

### *Rebel and Shy Rock Femininities*

Carina Frazão, voicing other participants' experiences, found in hardcore a template to be "herself": "I was always a rebel girl, you know? In a way, it seemed that [in hardcore] I finally found my role and my home... and a place to... let it all out". Or, as Iolanda, a heavy metal fan, puts it: "I like metal because it is just like me: there's no stopping us".

Unlike these “tough” and “rebel” participants, other participants described themselves as shy. Shyness has been defined as a social problem in contemporary societies. It is seen as an undesirable personal feature associated with vulnerability (S. Scott, 2004).

Zélia, a drummer who describes herself as very shy<sup>109</sup>, explains how participating in a masculine rock world and playing a male delineated instrument changed her way of being: “You’ve got – to use the popular expression– to have the balls!”. Other participants made claims to have (metaphorical) balls<sup>110</sup>, another way of referring to toughness.

If rebels and tomboys find in rock music a template to be themselves; shy girls too find in rock music a template to act upon (rework, reimagine) self-identity. Interviewees who describe themselves as shy, quiet or well-behaved, also find in rock music the same pleasure in this “heavy”, “loud”, “rebellious” music:

[Rock] gives you energy, it gives you power, power is the word, it really gives you power” (Luisa)

Rock, generally speaking, is always connected with a certain flippancy, not to accept things, a willingness to change, and a certain rebellion, which has always seduced me. Although I’m a really quiet, shy person [laughs], but I like that in rock music (Ema, 40 year old, ex-guitar player)

For shy girls, rock is “a prospective device of agency” (DeNora, 2000), a template for aspirational identities.

Filipa, within specific conditions (e.g. a specific album from a specific band, a specific place), feels powerful and protected:

When I listen to Nine Inch Nails, I feel aggressiveness, it’s a thrill, I feel energy. It depends on the CD. When I listen to “Still”, I feel like crying. That’s the most depressing thing I’ve heard. And also the prettiest. But it’s... I don’t know... you feel... powerful, powerful, in a certain way. You feel strength. You feel aggressive. And as I walk down the street listening

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<sup>109</sup> Shyness is particularly problematic for musicians, as I will explore in section II and III. Other studies have found this. In a study of young musicians in a specialist music school, a child told the researcher : “I’m not really a musician because I’m shy and my teacher says you can’t be a musician if you’re shy” (O’Neill, 2002, p. 85).

<sup>110</sup> Claims to metaphorical balls have been found in the discourses of women entering male-dominated field such as bullfighting (Pink, 1997) or the army (Höpfl, 2003). In the fieldwork, only self-identified lesbians or feminists reclaimed “clit power” and “Estrogen”, in oppositional but also complementary relation to the balls metaphor. Most literature on the meanings and symbols of genitals has focused on the clitoris, especially its omission in our language and education (Waskul & Plante, 2010).

to Nine Inch Nails and I look at people passing by with a menacing look – I give them the eye. And I hope I'm scaring them! Or it's just a fantasy as if I could scare them and I would be respected. People would be afraid to come closer...

Rock “shields” women from potential external threats and shields them against their perception of vulnerability as shy girls. This transformation is (facially) embodied.

Zélia uses the metaphor of hard music as a “shield”. To be in the rock world, one has to have “a hard shield to overcome some things”. Unlike the shell metaphor that Scott's shy participants use to describe the shyness of their character (S. Scott, 2004, pp. 125–126), this “shield” is constructed in specific situations through the music itself.

Participants who described themselves as shy and quiet, use rock music reflexively to enact (and embody) attributes (that they perceive themselves as lacking), namely strength, assertiveness, power.

Rock'n'roll configures specific gender performances, which have many discursive nuances: tomboy, rebel, tough, ballsy, defiant, strong, assertive, confident, different, women “com garra” [women of value], chicks with attitude. We have also seen how Beatriz Rodrigues claims she was always a tomboy, and how, in the present she states she can “get away” with things by being an “artist”.

A distinction between assertiveness and aggressiveness was repeated by several participants, encapsulated in this sentence: “Rock gives me the balls: it allows me to be assertive without being aggressive” (Adélia). In any case, being a “women of rock'n'roll” precludes also being nice, being responsible and/or being a good student.

The participants are legitimising other gender configurations, are doing a (as interviewees often put it) “different” girlhood and womanhood, and undoing traditional femininity portrayed as passive and submissive. Virtually all the participants (either self-identified tomboys, shy and even sexy rockers) display an oppositional identity towards those who epitomise more traditional notions of femininity.

More than youth (gender) rebellion, the participants use rock'n'roll<sup>111</sup> as a mediator of “alternative femininities”, as a way of life. Although there are temporal variations on what counts as a rocker, rock'n'roll enacts biographical continuity throughout their lives.

### *A gendered aesthetics of “dissonant juxtaposition”*

Tactical deployments of specific forms of both masculinity and femininity are done and undone through embodied behaviour, clothing, footwear, beauty practices and hairstyles, underpinned by an aesthetics of “dissonant juxtaposition”.

I borrow the term from Bayton, and I want to push it further, as the idea of “juxtaposition” is also present across a number of works on gender and rock music, as well as in other studies on girls and women entering male-dominated fields<sup>112</sup>.

Bayton (1998, p. 114) uses it to describe a strategy of British female bands' onstage gender presentations that combines the use of ball gowns with Doc Martens. Punk girls engage in subversions by “juxtaposing” masculinity and femininity in both dress and behaviour (LeBlanc, 1999). Riot grrrl musicians, through the “juxtaposition” of a feminine visual aesthetic and feminine signifiers [femme femininity] within conventionally masculine acts of music, create a powerful effect resistance (Downes, 2010). The aesthetics of “dissonant juxtaposition” can be seen as a combination (juxtaposition) of “having attitude” (the rock attitude) and *having feeling*”. In the same vein, Schippers (2002, p. 42) describes one of her participants as “an interesting combination of girly-girl and badass”.

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<sup>111</sup> Participants would often use the term rock'n'roll instead of rock to refer to a meta-genre (as a rock's zeitgeist), encompassing all musical genres, from heavy metal to punk.

<sup>112</sup> This “dissonant juxtaposition” (although with nuances) is also described in other male-dominated fields. Walkerdine describes how girls playing videogames present themselves through the choice of avatars that combine cuteness with power, “and therefore may come closest to the possibility of competitiveness and classic femininity” (Walkerdine, 2006, p. 524). In the collected essays *Action Chicks*, Inness describes how a new tough aesthetic is emerging for women in popular culture (films, TV series, from Ripley to Powerpuff Girls, going back to Wonder Woman). The tough aesthetics – much indebted to second-wave feminism – enables women to be heroes (not the rescued ones) and to be more muscular and aggressive than in the past. However, tough women still have to be beautiful, slender, heterosexually desirable. If some tough women characters are still representing stereotyped female roles and do not completely escape traditional gender roles, simultaneously they still leave a space for subverting and challenging representations of womanhood (Inness, 2004, pp. 12–15).

This aesthetic of “dissonant juxtaposition” pervades the everyday life not only of musicians, but also fans. Gender performances are done and undone through embodied behaviour, rock music and its material culture. As found in other organisational worlds, in rock worlds because it is men’s bodies that are the norm it is women’s bodies that are defined as problematic (Edwards & Wajcman, 2005, p. 84). The aesthetic of “dissonant juxtaposition” is a way of managing the (contradictory) positioning of femininity and masculinity in rock worlds – the female body and the male sound. Different looks and body types give access to rock worlds in different ways. Whether for musicians or fans, the presentation of the “right” body image participates in the legitimation of certain actors and gender performances – and not others – both onstage and offstage. It is the aesthetic discourse of an aesthetic of contradictory juxtaposition (with its specific variations, and embodied and materialised in bodies and uses of objects) that enables girls and women to operate and remain in the male-dominated worlds in a safe manner, either as musicians or as fans.

The concept of “dissonant juxtaposition” is used as a valuation criterion in itself. Participants are praised: the little girl with the powerful voice, the petite girl holding the big electric bass, the thin girl playing the loud drums, the woman holding and playing a guitar, the sexy DJs playing dirty rock, the fan’s combination of the rockabilly sexy looks with the “heavy”, “dirty” soundtrack and in-your-face attitude. The aesthetic of “dissonant juxtaposition” produces specific gender configurations in rock worlds<sup>113</sup>.

## 6.2: Dressing like a woman of rock’n’roll

Styles, clothing, hairstyles, are a well-documented topic in popular music scholarship, but with a focus on “spectacular” subcultural styles or with a focus

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<sup>113</sup>The “aesthetic of dissonant juxtaposition” might also work as a value criterion for women entering other male-dominated musical realms. In the 1950s male dominated world of classical music, a woman (Ruth Gipps) could stand out as a woman conductor, a musical role discursively constructed as masculine, but which, due to its physicality could see its masculinity interrupted (Halstead, 2005). I believe Ruth Gipps’ innovative way of presenting herself, as described by Halstead, fits the “aesthetics of dissonant juxtaposition”. Halstead (2005, p. 231) describes the image of Gipps in a poster: “(...) she cuts a glamorous figure, a body that unequivocally suggests the sensuality and sexuality of the female form. Yet at the same time the image assumes the posture of power and authority: with strong raised arms, expressive and assertive, commanding attention and action. Moreover, not only her physical image but also her name dominate the poster”. Halstead concludes that “Gipps’ juxtaposition of a knowingly sexual, yet active and mindful female body” was provocative, challenging the mind/body dualism of the time (Halstead, 2005, p. 233).

on subcultural capital – to have and display objectified and embodied subcultural capital that often grant status, serving as a form of social distinction (Thornton, 1995). However, subcultural capital is not a given (either you have it or not). Analytically, and building upon but expanding the subcultural capital frame, I want to explore the idea of body modification, as accomplished through clothing practices, which can be thought of as low-tech body modifications<sup>114</sup> (temporary and often cheaper).

Appearance matters. When the love of music does not go hand in hand with the looks, this mismatch is commented upon: “I dressed as a *betinha*, but inside I was punk” (Shelley Barradas). In contrast to this is Virgínia who claims that she dressed as a metalhead among *betinhas*, but she was, really a *betinha*<sup>115</sup>. This was the only occasion when participants would use the word *betinha* to describe themselves in a positive way when referring to themselves as good students, detaching *betinha* from its visual meaning.

Clothing practices have to be understood not only as individual choices and preferences, but also as forms of social positioning (S. Woodward, 2005), related to the rock world’s expectations. I am interested in the details and the minutiae of how assembling material culture (clothes) is done, through adjustments, over time, and on specific occasions. The way one dresses varies over time, with age and life stages, body shape and musical affiliations.

Regarding what to wear (colours, types of clothes), “starting to dress all in black” is narrated as a foundational moment in becoming a rocker.

At the time these participants were adolescents (1980s and 1990s), it was difficult to get black clothes, especially in summer, claims Sofia Silva - consumer culture was still restrictive, and black clothes were not available in (high-street) shops, and neither was there an established alternative/subcultural

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<sup>114</sup> The literature usually refers to high-tech body modification, often permanent or semi-permanent, from surgery to tattoos, piercing - the latter very common in rock aesthetics.

<sup>115</sup> The term and category *betinha* (the diminutive form of *beta*) cannot easily be translated. The Portuguese word refers to a middle-class girl/woman who embodies conventional notions of femininity and is prim and proper in her dress and behaviour. She also might be a bit of a swot. In American English, the closer term conveying *betinha* would be preppy. However, the term *beta/betinha* can also mean that someone is acting like a wimp/sissy. Both these two different meanings apply to men/boys (the masculine form being *beto/betinho*).

market<sup>116</sup>. The older participants (now in their fifties) remember with nostalgia the times when they “didn’t have access to anything” in Portugal, and how they would make and customise their own clothes or managed to get clothes from England. This is why the question of where to buy clothes also matters. As one interviewee complains; “Now everyone buys Ramones’ T-shirts from Primark, and they don’t even know who the Ramones are!”.

To have and wear (rock) concert T-shirts is seen as a sign of belonging to rock worlds. However, there is a gender segregated market (concert T-shirts for men and women), of which participants complain about preferring to buy men’s T-shirts. How to wear clothes and what to wear them with also matters: “I would buy boys’ trousers, but I would wear them with crop tops” (Carina Frazão).

Occasion also matters: “I’m not going to buy courgettes at the supermarket wearing my spike belt!” (Rosa). Participants who dressed the same way at work as in concerts explained that their occupations and lifestyle ‘allowed’ them to dress as they did and be who they were<sup>117</sup>.

For many participants, to “stay dressed in black” is important for maintaining a sense of self as they grow older and age. Many interviewees, especially those who were punk, stress the “toning down” of their image. Holland’s study of “alternative femininities” found that “toning down” was a metaphor for ageing (S. Holland, 2004, pp. 117-138). In my study, as women “tone down”, they tend to “glam up”. This is illustrated by a former punk drummer (always wearing punk outfits and a dyed spiked hairstyle), who as she became older not just “toned down” (“I dress much more tidily and subtly nowadays”), but “glammed up” into a rockabilly pin-up style – she works as a photographic model as an odd job.

Other interviewees stress that toning down was accompanied by continuing to wear black. When participants cease dressing all in black, there are still clothing items that they keep using, even if occasionally (e.g. leather

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<sup>116</sup>The first shopping centre opened in Lisbon in 1985, and the second major shopping centre opened in 1998. Unlike nowadays where there is a proliferation of small markets and flea markets (C. Ferreira, Marques, & Guerra, 2015).

<sup>117</sup> A way of keeping their lifestyles was to have jobs in the (subcultural) market (two interviewees owned clothing stores, one worked in a clothing store) or in the (subcultural) night-leisure industry (five interviewees worked for night clubs, as Public Relations, managers, bar tenders).

jackets and skinny jeans, torn jeans, concert T-shirts...). Older male punk fans also reported that they keep using some “identification symbols” (A. Bennett, 2006; A. Bennett & Hodkinson, 2012). For these participants, the use of specific clothes as well as remaining tattoos, are a reminder of their (old) rock style, which serves to perform a biographical continuity. These women’s clothing items constitute an aesthetic totality.

Clothing practices also change with age and subsequent modifications in body shape. Adélia stopped wearing skinny jeans because she is self-conscious about her weight gain and she feels she does not look good anymore. Hilda is in her late forties and says she dresses in black for many reasons. Not only does she always dress in black in order to save money for her children, but she also believes black makes her look slender (it “disguises” the body that she considers is not so fit anymore). Body literature highlights surgical practices as a form of bodily modification, and interviewees highlight clothing management as mundane, low-tech “anti-ageing” strategies. However, despite having “the same [in-your-face] attitude” (Isabel Newton), and dressing (almost) the same, there are limits. These are the (embodied, physical) limits of the (aged) body to agency.

### 6.3: Sounding like a woman of rock’n’roll

The participants use rock’s musical properties and discourses (the heaviness, the loudness, the speed/fast pace, the lyrics, rock’s history(ography) of counterculture and rebellion) to articulate gender performances:

Being myself, that’s my rock attitude, not being afraid of expressing what I think, my ideas (Júlia)

Rock is a kind of music that makes me feel self-confident, more affirmative/assertive... that makes me feel I don’t have to be ashamed of who I am! I’m going to like myself! (Joana)

I see myself as a woman who listens to proper music, heavy music (Filipa)

Being a rock fan affords specific gender subjectivities: rock mediates strong, powerful, self-confident, assertive woman. Doing gender with reference to rock music is to position their femininity as different from others’, and as worthier. Every time femininity gets undone, there is an elevation of status of heterosexual women (Halberstam, 2002, p. 371). In this case, rock mediates

this undoing. Interviewees highlight the heaviness of the music they listen to. To listen to hard and heavy music is to be at the top of a music hierarchy, which is also a moral hierarchy – being a rocker is to have a moral status.

Rock'n'roll is at the core (it is the “roots”) of the participants’ musical maps, but expanding their musical taste towards a new repertoire is seen as an expansion of musical knowledge and musical value, which is built upon the diversity/wideness of musical genres one can listen to and be able to enjoy. Musical value is recognised by those who listen to “more music”. Musical value is recognised by those who have been described as omnivorous regarding music and cultural taste<sup>118</sup> (Lizardo & Skiles, 2015; Peterson & Kern, 1996; Warde, Wright, & Gayo-Cal, 2007). Omnivorousness implies the rejection of highbrow snobbishness, an openness to cosmopolitan tastes, the play between high and popular culture.

Most participants do not want to be compartmentalised or pigeonholed in one music genre or subculture – only one interviewee described herself proudly as a “rock Nazi” (Catarina). Being a ‘univore’ is mostly believed to restrict opportunities for action and sociability. Musical migrations to different and/or wider music repertoires are both a pathway into and an outcome of life course trajectories<sup>119</sup> (for some participants embracing other musical genres is even a musical articulation of “growing up”), an outcome of geographical movements<sup>120</sup> and/or the expansion of socio-musical networks<sup>121</sup> (if musical participation derives from (male) networks, musical participation also expands social networks).

Carina Frazão loves a good guitar riff and a great message!”, but her favourite musician is Bjork, and she is proud of being an “eclectic person”: “I

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<sup>118</sup> Jackson understands middle class ‘ladettes’ as ‘cultural omnivores’, in the way proposes it “a middle-class self-formation; a mobile and flexible body that can access, know, participate and feel confident about using a wide variety of cultures (from low to high)” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 143).

<sup>119</sup> Other studies point to the development of musical taste as a life-course trajectory (Harrison & Ryan, 2010). For participants whose musical taste were the basis for relationships with friends or partners, “growing up” meant that mostly their friendships (and only to a lesser extent their romantic relationships) stop being exclusively based on shared musical tastes. Also, older rockers no longer attribute so much importance to their group of friends’ musical tastes and looks.

<sup>120</sup> From attending new venues to moving to a new city with its local musical heritage or to a new country.

<sup>121</sup> Expanding music repertoires is a form of bridging capital (especially for omnivores), reconfiguring socio-musical networks. Migrating to other genres is a pathway to connect to other people, and therefore taking different musical shifts affords (new) sociability. An expansion of the musical self is an expansion of the friendship network.

feel enriched as a human being, listening to different music and being amazed [by it]”. Expanding the personal musical repertoire is seen as a tool for finding personal self-fulfillment, as it allows one to achieve a broader spectrum of emotional states – an eclectic musical repertoire is used as a technology of well-being<sup>122</sup>.

Iolanda is a thirty-year-old heavy metal fan, who wears all black. She complains about being labeled a “metalhead chick”, and gets offended when she is mistaken for a “Goth”. That label is wrongly imposed on her and it is restrictive in terms of personal identity and (musical) worth. She claims she is “more than that”, as she has “diverse music tastes”, which include the Beatles, electronic music, industrial music and rap with the exception of North American hip-hop. Iolanda “still” cannot enjoy jazz or reggae. That is why she admires her partner, who unlike her, “.. can listen to everything, I’m not like that. He can even listen to world music or jazz”.

To avoid “being labelled a rock chick”, Penelope chooses a bricolage to construct a musically omnivorous identity through appearance and style. The tattoos signal her attachment to rock, but she uses clothes to distinguish herself from a rock chick; “even a frilly dress”. Penelope is against musical “fundamentalisms” or other fundamentalisms (“either feminism or machismo”), she wishes to “feel good in every environment where I am”. Being a bricoleur and an omnivore affords her more opportunities for agency (musical and non-musical).

However, to be omnivorous, as pointed out by Peterson and Kern (1996, p. 904), “does not imply an indifference to distinctions”. Carina does not like trance (“it says nothing”) or mainstream hip-hop. Neither does Penelope. Iolanda dislikes “operatic/symphonic metal, usually with female vocalists singing. A lot of mainstream audiences enjoy that”. Iolanda constructs her femininity by distancing herself from specific heavy metal (feminine) femininities (the Goth and the operatic voice).

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<sup>122</sup>Omnivorousness also organises the temporal structure of Carina Frazão’s night leisure. In one night out she can start at a hip-hop gathering, attend a hardcore concert, followed by a nu-metal concert, and end the night in a reggae party.

Women of rock'n'roll distance themselves from mainstream music (pop, pimba and hip-hop). This phenomenon is one of “symbolic exclusion”, as studied by Bryson: educated respondents were more likely to display cultural tolerance, but also more likely to dislike specific music genres and styles (“anything but heavy metal”), drawing symbolic boundaries in relation to less-privileged groups (Bryson, 1996, pp. 892–893). In the case of women of rock'n'roll: “anything but mainstream pop, hip-hop and pimba”. The participants’ musical disaffiliations construct ‘the others’ of rock'n'roll (hegemonic masculinities of working-class and black men, emphasised femininities of girly girls). The attachment to rock mediates a gendered, but also a classed presentation of the self and its significant others – partners and children, as we will see in chapter 16.

#### Summary

Identity work of girls and women rockers is not merely “emulating masculinity”, but is a process through which selves are performed through the attachments and detachments between individuals’ bodies, music and other materials (DeNora, 2000; Hennion 2007).

Claims to respect(ability) that enable access to rock worlds (and often to musicianship) were made through embodied self-regulation and monitored performances by reflexively mobilising material culture (clothing), embodied behaviour (e.g. posture, voice tone) and the music itself (hard'n'heavy and omnivorous).

Participants’ gender performances can be described as (heterosexual) female masculinity, often underpinned by an aesthetics of “dissonant juxtaposition”. Participants describe more or less explicitly how they achieve a delicate balance of not being too masculine and not being too feminine. It grants girls and women access to male networks in rock worlds. Female masculinity has different expressions throughout their lives (from tomboys to women with balls or tough women).

Interviewing participants of different ages allowed me to understand that these women are committed to disaffiliating from traditional femininity and ‘the mainstream’ throughout their lives. All of them, from the shy ones to the rebels

to the tough, negotiate in situated contexts through rock music the performance of their identities for themselves and for others.

Gender performances are intricately bound up with historically produced and culturally situated imaginations of rock femininities (that are gendered, but also classed and raced). Gender performances are reflexively achieved through styles of bodily appearance that allow female rockers to circulate in rock worlds safely and successfully.

Specific freedoms associated with masculinity are granted to these girls and women on the condition that they achieve high levels of education and later on that they succeed at work. The good student discourse that regulates girlhood is updated in later life in the responsibility (and duty) discourse. Participants claim they can “have fun”, and still be responsible.

This can be seen as part of what McRobbie has termed the “new gender regime”, in the post-feminist and post-girl-power era, based on an “ethic of freedom” (Nikolas Rose), whereby young women can choose to do what they want if they act as self-responsible subjects (McRobbie, 2009, p. 21).

Disruptive gender identities – either in girlhood or adulthood – because they are potentially threatening (to the heteronormative matrix), are counteracted by exhibiting heteronormative bodies (“I’m feminine”) and/or behaviour (being in long-term heterosexual relationships; respectable heterosexual monogamous lives). Alternative, but respectable femininities are musically mediated by rock’n’roll music and aesthetics. Interviewees play out socially acceptable forms of gender transgression that can be translated into white, middle-class heteronormativity, which regulate access to rock worlds and to musicianship.

## II – Staging the band

The women in this study have participated in different bands throughout their lives, from adolescence to adulthood.

The bands these women participated in were quite different concerning their professional ambitions and musical styles (in the continuum between music-making as a business or a hobby; and eclectic/experimental or a more genre-oriented style), but also in terms of the bands' group dynamic. However, what they have in common is that they all associate playing together in a band with a great deal of enjoyment and fun.

Participation in male-centred original rock bands<sup>123</sup> is the most common experience of band membership for these rockers. Participation in female-bands is infrequent<sup>124</sup>. Despite all the similarities of the rock band as a music-making group, belonging to a male or female band shapes women's musical pathways in specific ways, as I detail in chapter 8 and 9, respectively.

### 7: “The girl in the band”: musical and non-musical (gendered) spaces

Band membership in male-centred bands is characterised by instrument segregation and male skill ascription, as found in other studies (Carson et al., 2004; Clawson, 1993, 1999a). Adding to this body of literature, I detail the interactional context in which segregation takes place. I also explore the gendered socio-musical performances the participants engaged in as they became “the girl in the band”.

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<sup>123</sup> Although the repertoire of beginners' original bands might include covers, which have a developmental value in terms of musicianship (Green, 2001). The few who took part in cover bands were professional (or semi-professional) musicians, and they refer to the “split worlds” of originals and covers – the former seen by original musicians as authentic rock bands, and the latter seen as commercial sell-outs as they are profitable and get booked easily. Christina Quest, who crosses these split worlds, says that she felt a strong disdain from her fellow (original band) musicians. In the case of all-female (covers and originals) bands, the “stigma” – of a commercial sell-out aimed at “duped” male audiences or lesbians – is greater, as we will see.

<sup>124</sup> The absence of a “riot grrrl scene” in Portugal plays a role here. Not just the riot grrrl scene as described in the Anglo-Saxon literature, but also as experienced by the only participant that had been part of another riot grrrl scene in another country. However, the riot grrrl movement in Portugal has its own configurations, which I will detail in chapter 9.

## 7.1: Instrument segregation, skill ascription and exclusion from decision-making

The process of instrument segregation takes place at different stages in the life of a band. Interviewees reported becoming vocalists by being invited to be singers or replying to advertisements recruiting specifically female singers (Patrícia, Beatriz Rodrigues, Carina Frazão, Aurora). The same was reported by bass players (Joana Longobardi, Liliana). Sílvia was the lead guitarist and singer of an all-female band in her teenage years. Later on, she was invited to join a locally well-known all-male band. Despite Sílvia's reputation as a guitarist and singer, she was invited to be a singer only. Sílvia was very happy to be invited, and successfully auditioned to be part of that band she admired. She did not mind putting the guitar aside (although she never stopped playing at home).

Segregation also takes place in the early stages of the band formation. Teresa, who had already had clarinet lessons in a Music Academy and learned acoustic guitar with her father wanted to play rock and she assembled the band:

I decided at the age of 16 to put an ad up looking/searching for a band. Because I thought I could develop musically as I had no choice [in terms of rock music learning] and I wanted to have a band. So, when I set up my first garage band, we started splitting the [instrumental] roles: you do this, you do that. Ok. This needs to be done [bass], I don't mind doing it!

In this band, every participant was at the same level of musical expertise, and they all had rudimentary (acoustic) guitar skills. Despite that, Teresa took the instrument that no one wanted to play (the bass). In cross-sex group music making, Green found that girls were regarded as shy (as lacking confidence) and cooperative (more cooperative and open-minded, more mature, hard-working and reliable than boys) (Green, 2009, p. 149). Teresa, a teenager at the time she set up the band, also described herself this way. Taking the bass meant allegiance to the group in an exercise of selflessness, responding to the band's (just made) demands. Carolina, who started as an electric guitarist in a band, moved to the bass for the same reasons.

Sara is thirty-two years old and she has played the acoustic and electric guitar since her teens although she never had a band. She composes songs on her guitar. At her workplace, she met a colleague who by chance was also

“interested in music” and “used to be in a band”. They started a band, and Sara was assigned by her bandmates to be the band’s vocalist:

I didn’t want to be a vocalist. I didn’t even know if I sang well or if I sang badly, because I sang alone at home. But my colleagues noticed immediately that I could sing in tune, when I showed them my home song recordings. And when we had to record the song [to participate in the band contest] I was told: ‘you’ll be the one recording the voice! We don’t know how to sing! You have to sing!’.

Sara was not consulted on this issue. However, this musical role assignment was based on an apparently neutral musical judgement (she sang in tune) and proposed as the best solution to the band’s demand. Before joining the band, singing was not a musical activity in itself, but a complementary musical task to guitar playing and song-writing. When Sara joins the band, singing (and song-writing) comes to the foreground and becomes her main musical role in the band.

Despite Sara’s recording being an unwanted and difficult process, at no point has she contested that musical role. If in order to be in a band (as she wished) , she had to sing, she would do it. Fitting in also meant adding a new musical skill for Sara – if she was said to sing in tune, she could be the vocalist. If the band constrained her opportunities for action as a guitarist, the band also represented an opportunity for musical action as a singer-vocalist.

Exclusion from decision-making processes in male-centred bands was also voiced by Christina Quest: “When you’re the girl [in the band] you don’t have an opinion! You’re playing there, oh so cool, but ‘shut up/be quiet’. Your own creative material... you might as well forget it!”.

Male figures are usually the experts who judge women’s skills, the ones who attribute qualities (as we have seen with male mentors). As found in other studies on women rockers, men are perceived to have the cultural authority to judge, and women seek male approval and musical validation (Carson et al., 2004, p. 7). Women themselves delegate the “musical expert” status to their male bandmates, developing their musical trajectories in accordance with ascribed musical skills. This ascription of differences in talent then tends to become a ‘self-fulfilling’ prophecy (Sloboda, 2005, p. 300). At the same time, ‘fitting in’ shows how musical skill is not a thing in itself – something that you either have or do not have. It is created as collective music action develops

(e.g. for a band, for a moment, from a musical judgment made from a significant other), and worked upon by its members (through practice and hard work).

## 7.2: Musical agile selves

Most participants had early musical beginnings in formal settings (music academies, church, school choirs, and philharmonic bands<sup>125</sup>) and only later engaged in bands (informal learning). Some participants started playing in bands and later engaged in formal learning settings. Fewer participants had simultaneously formal and informal music education.

Playing several instruments and singing with different levels of proficiency is common to rock musicians in this study<sup>126</sup>. Bi-musical trajectories in combination with membership in different bands and instrument segregation<sup>127</sup> leads to participants' ability to play several instruments. The participants' musical pathways are undertaken by a musical "agile self" (DeNora, 2013).

### *Experimental self and 'performative boldness'*

A type of musical agile self is the *experimental music self*, here illustrated by Shelley Barradas. She started playing the acoustic guitar in her teens, having private guitar tuition. It was during her university years that she started playing the bass as she described:

I went to a [female] friend's rehearsal and their bassist had quit. I had never played a bass before, but I was dying to! But I didn't want to ask, I was acting cool. But then my friend asked me: "Don't you play the

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<sup>125</sup> For a detailed ethnographic discussion on the importance of Philharmonic Bands to musical identities and as a socio-learning space in Portugal, especially outside big cities, see Mota, 2009.

<sup>126</sup> To be clear, this is not an exclusively gendered phenomenon. Nor is it exclusive to the rock world. The ability to play several instruments seems to be part of other popular music worlds, as it has also been found among traditional Irish musicians (O'Flynn, 2011; Waldron, 2006). Rock music ideology is indebted to punk's amateurish and DIY ethos of musicianship (Bannister, 2010; Bayton, 1998; Reddington, 2012). Multi-tasking (versatility and polyvalence) is also common in small and marginal music scenes – due to practical necessity (scarcity of people) the same people perform multiple roles (Guerra & Silva, 2018; Rosen, 1997). However, Crossley (2015) did not find many musicians playing multiple instruments in punk, with the exception of singers who also played the guitar. However, those were recorded as "singers" for the purpose of Crossley's research (Crossley, 2015, p. 485), leaving unexplored an important dimension of musicianship.

<sup>127</sup> Different band membership enacts different aspects of one's musicianship from changing one's style of playing to learning a new instrument.

guitar?” and I said yes. Then she said: “then take the bass and do it like this” – she explained to me how to do it, I was able to do what she told me and she said: “you’re hired!”.

It was an opportunity to meet a need in a friend’s band. But more importantly, it was her previous guitar knowledge/know-how that was considered relevant by her female friend (and not dismissed as in the case of Teresa).

Shelley also started playing the drums in another band. If in her first band she had waited to be invited, in the second band she “pushed it”. When attending a concert by chance, she bumped into two friends, who were looking for a drummer. Although she had never played the drums before, she volunteered:

I knew they were looking for someone, and I pushed it a bit, like “I can play the drums”, like, “C’mon! I can manage, it can’t be that hard” I thought to myself. Then I went to the rehearsal, and Ricardo showed me what I had to do, and it all worked out! It was really easy! And he goes, ‘you’re hired’ (laughs) and that’s how I became a drummer.

Shelley’s attitude (confidence; positive self-perception) towards playing became important in her musical pathway<sup>128</sup>. This is not claiming that playing an instrument is a matter of self-belief or self-attributed musical characteristics – “I am musical” (Ruddock & Leong, 2005). Shelley over time actively takes more and more action and makes more effort in order to promote and maintain a musical self (practising, rehearsing, and investing in music tuition). This experimental ethos enables her to expand the socio-musical spaces she moves into. It is also about non-musical characteristics – developing a confident self that allows for a “performative boldness<sup>129</sup>” in the face of broader limiting musical opportunities for women. This attitude that encompasses persistence,

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<sup>128</sup> Studies have shown how self-perceptions influence musical behaviour throughout someone’s life (D.J. Hargreaves, Purves, Welch, & Marshall, 2007; MacDonald et al., 2002; Ruddock & Leong, 2005). Unlike the perceived notion that “I am unmusical”, when music competence beliefs are strong, it positively influences instrumental learning (Lowe, 2012).

<sup>129</sup> I use the term “performative boldness” inspired by the concept of “performative shamelessness”, developed by Amy Shields Dobson referring to young women’s “laddish” postures online in the post-feminist context (Dobson, 2014). For instance, they post photos in Social Network Sites in laddish postures, as a parody of heterosexuality, reframing women as subjects, and not objects of pleasure. Performative boldness as I use it also resembles (one of) the positions that Walkerdine (2006) found among girls who played video games. The position of “authoritative knower”: claiming to be the expert, even when one is wrong or does not know.

high levels of motivation, resilience and self-belief was mentioned by other musicians as important in pursuing their musical careers, especially for those outside (supportive) male networks. Performative boldness is about “just doing it” or doing it “the punk way” (Beatriz Rodrigues), or rebelling against the teacher’s authority (Suspiria Franklyn refused to learn and play covers as her guitar teacher wanted her to do, because she wanted to play her own songs).

Trying new instruments or different ways of doing things is taking risks. These risks are only taken when the band feels like a safe environment. Risks are taken when there is support (from incitement to acceptance) from a partner (Beatriz Rodrigues), supportive friends (Shelley Barradas) or siblings (Carina Frazão, Suspiria Franklyn).

### 7.3: From “proving oneself” to “male protection”

The definition of rock music, and especially of instrument playing, as inherently masculine continues to be experienced by women through their sense/feeling – either more or less articulated – that they are not taken seriously, and that they must constantly prove themselves as musicians not only to audiences, but also to their bandmates.

Katari (Anarchicks) compares her participation in a male and female band: in the former she felt she had to demonstrate/prove that she was good at playing the drums; in the latter, she felt much more at ease.

Even when participants said they are invited into a band, they always mentioned that they did auditions. Although this is a regular procedure in band membership, girls/women always mention it in their discourses<sup>130</sup>. The sequence of events “invitation/reply to ads – auditions – success/get the place” reassures them that their musical competence was (successfully) assessed/tested (by their bandmates/male peers). Being worthy of band membership means achieving musical recognition.

This is best illustrated in the words of Liliana, a drummer who played both in male and female bands: “If you’re playing among the boys, it’s because you’re good at it. If you’re a girl, you have to prove you’re good at it”.

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<sup>130</sup> Or they mention that they did not have an audition, as in the case of Clara.

Phi was invited by a friend to replace the rhythm guitarist in the male-centred band he was part of. Phi was warned that the drummer of that band did not regard girls as appropriate candidates for the position. She was warned if she wanted to join the band, she would have to prove she could play really well. Therefore, she practised a lot for the audition<sup>131</sup>:

I went to the rehearsal, the drummer looks at me and says: 'But... you're a girl! Do you know we play hard and heavy?' and I said: 'yes, I have listened to the bands' songs before, I have prepared myself'. And then he said "ok". We did a mini-audition with the band, and in the end the drummer goes: 'ok. You can stay, we will try you out. It was not that bad'. And then I stayed till the band split.

Once Phi "passed the test" by proving that she could play "hard and heavy", she became "the girl in the band":

When I played with my band, and other bands would play too, I used to be the only girl there. But that's nice. Girls are well taken care of when they're among boys. If it's all girls, we're like an indistinct mass, but because it was just me... I don't know... I used to have a chair just for me, a room just for me, the best food would be for me... we would arrive at a place, and it was like "you can sit here, you're the girl!" and I was like: ok! So... it's not just bad things.

This differentiated treatment is felt as a "privilege". On the one hand, these "privileges" include good working conditions, for example, having an adequate dressing room and facilities (Bayton, 1998, pp. 133-134). On the other hand, this "special status" based on sex difference also implies that girls are more vulnerable and in need of special treatment.

Membership in a male-centred band enables recognition (a sense of musical legitimation/validation) and status. But also a sense of physical protection and security:

Rita: Have you ever heard unpleasant comments at the concerts?

Phi: Oh no. because I always had my protectors/guardians around, always

Bandmates' protection was also mentioned by other girls/women. Rita Barreto told me that she had suffered onstage with sexual innuendos in a time when there were virtually no other girls onstage (the 1990s). But she felt

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<sup>131</sup>Here we see how 'social capital' is important for women in rock worlds (her friend not only scheduled the audition, but also instructed her, giving her some tips).

protected by her bandmates: “I was always a tomboy, and everything they [bandmates] would do, I would do too. We hang out all together, we enjoyed the same stuff, I was like their “protégée” little girl”.

Women who had had the experience of playing with both female and male bands all asserted that while they felt musically recognised and protected among the boys, they felt vulnerable among other girls/women. Phi played in both a male and an all-female band. After I asked her if she would hear unpleasant comments, she added: “Maybe when I played with Bellenden Ker, we would hear some bad things from the audience, especially if they were drunk”. Phi voices what other participants described: audiences tend to be abusive to all-female bands.

Although most interviewees avoided participating in stage diving and/or the mosh pit because they were “touched”<sup>132</sup>, Diana Peste claimed “I get more touched up on public transport than when I participate in mosh pits”. Except for the recognition of sexual (verbal) harassment of musicians perpetrated by audience members (strangers/outside), the participants felt safe in rock worlds<sup>133</sup>.

Strategies to avoid harassment were incorporated into these women’s routines and it was not framed as a problem. One of the most common (preventive/deterrent) strategies was to “dress down” (ignoring sexist comments is materially achieved through the management of bodily display and the use of clothes – either on or offstage).

Another interviewee believed she avoided harassment by displaying extreme musical competence as illustrated by this excerpt:

Rita: Have you ever heard... nasty comments? [while playing]  
Christina Quest: Well... I’m used to that. It doesn’t bother me. That’s normal – “you’re hot”, “take off your clothes”, *pft*, that’s normal.  
Rita: Everywhere you play? I mean, not just in motorcycle rallies?

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<sup>132</sup> I have watched an outdoor concert (“Noites Ritual”), where the two female backing singers did stage diving. When they were getting ready to “dive”, a warning from the male lead-singer to the audience was heard: “Watch your hands!”

<sup>133</sup> This was also reported in ethnographies of women and rock: the going in or out of a pub and being on the street was more threatening than being in the club/pub itself, surrounded by friends or familiar faces (Krenke & McKay, 2000; Schippers, 2002). The participants agree that sexism, gender discrimination and women’s sexual harassment are problematic, but “in society”, not in rock worlds. Verbal harassment of women musicians was mostly reported when I asked, and assumed to be normal.

Christina Quest: Well... because we play really well, technically speaking, that creates a wall. I mean... they have to be drunk to have the guts to make those comments.

Displaying high standards of musicianship is also a form of “immunity work” (Hagen, 2012).

Other (reactive) strategies range from “ignoring” and “just keeping on playing” to “answering back”. The former was a more individual strategy, and carried out by “shy” girls. “Answering back” was reported by the more assertive members, and especially in the context of all-female bands<sup>134</sup>.

Finally, another effective strategy to deal with potential sexual innuendos or threats from the audience was to “bring friends” to the concerts (who would immerse/blur within the audience and mitigate potential threats)<sup>135</sup>.

#### 7.4: Performing “the girl in the band” onstage

After proving themselves, girls/women are welcome because their presence on stage is perceived to enhance the band's appeal to the audience:

Rita: What was it like to be a girl playing? How did the audience react?

Phi: The audience would love it. The thing about bands with girls is that it brings in people. Audiences love a band with a girl. So... That was actually the whole marketing idea about the guitarist: a girl in the band! Cool! At the gigs I noticed people liked it.... It was something different. There are a lot of bands with guys, all the same, but then you watch a person [women] onstage with the hair dyed red, with a guitar... so people like it.

The heterosexual female body (signifying seductiveness and attractiveness) is mobilised as a (para) musical asset in the market within a gendered politics of novelty value. This is part of the broader trend to lookism (Witz et al., 2003) and the sexualisation of women's labour (Adkins, 2000; Adkins & Dever, 2014). Women who join male bands are (by default) expected or asked to play upon their sexuality onstage (commodifying their bodies to “sell sex”).

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<sup>134</sup> A telling example of female bands “answering back” was a concert where the (male) audience was screaming “This band is GOOD”, and one of the all-female band members answered back “This audience is GOOD”, leaving the audience surprised and speechless. Translation note: in Portuguese “good” means both good (quality) and hot/sexy.

<sup>135</sup>The same was reported by DJs. A DJ says that she never had any problems concerning abuse, because “in the end, everyone knows me and I know most of the people”.

Phi not only dyed her hair red, she “used to wear dresses, to flash out that I was a girl, to show that I was the girl in the band”. Women are expected to perform onstage their role as “the girl in the band”, by wearing feminine markers, producing and reinforcing sexual difference.

To be clear, part of all musicians’ “aesthetic labour” is the craft of appearance, aimed at presenting a proper rock body type (which will be consumed by the audience). Fitting in is done musically<sup>136</sup>, but also aesthetically.

The alignment of one’s image with the band’s genre is an essential element of musicians’ embodied know-how (Pettinger, 2015). Musicians have to know the moments to smile at the audience or avoid laughing and aligning with a “bad ass” rock posture; but also to hide performance anxiety and to display the “right emotion” for each song. Emotional control like body control is also part of a skilled on stage performance.

Through an artful management of clothes, make-up and hairstyles, but also through instruments<sup>137</sup>, the participants managed styles that worked in tandem with the band’s genre, as well as in accordance with their gendered musical performance as ‘the girl in the band’. Not just their gender and the band’s genre, but also membership in a specific band, as well as age (and body shape) and personal aesthetics play a role in doing gender as the girl in the band.

Onstage clothing aesthetic rationales varied in a continuum from “dress up” to “anything that is comfortable”. There is a careful management of bodily display onstage.

Either when dressing up or wearing comfortable clothes, participants often “mimic” femininity (Irigaray), but a rock femininity (e.g. red hair not blonde hair). Having the know-how to *do* ‘the girl in the band’ demands skill although it goes unrecognised (or is taken for granted) as such by the participants and by

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<sup>136</sup> Participants often described themselves as an instrumentalist of a specific band (not just an instrumentalist).

<sup>137</sup> Sara explains how she uses two different guitars depending on the band she is playing for. She has a (“shocking”) pink guitar and a wood-coloured one. In her new band she uses the wood-colored guitar because “that one fits better not just in terms of sound, but also how it looks. It looks more basic/simpler, and the songs are more basic/simpler too. It fits better”.

bandmates<sup>138</sup>. Also, whether women onstage use an aesthetics of ordinary, or a more sexual persona, it is important to wear clothes that are “you”, that fit your (authentic) musical persona. Onstage (gender) dress rationales incorporate a sense of authenticity<sup>139</sup>.

Comfortable clothing is closer to an “aesthetics of the ordinary”. Comfortable clothing not just incorporates a physical sensation of comfort, but also means that clothes cannot impede the bodily movements required by playing, clothes that favour ease of movement (the aesthetics of functionality).

To be comfortable was often equated with “dressing down” – a sartorial decision not to display an overtly sexualised style and not to use revealing clothes that uncover their bodies (not “sex up”). Dress down stands in opposition to “dress up”, often equated with “sex up”, although one can “dress up” without “sex up”<sup>140</sup>.

It is implied that when women “sex up”, they will be more vulnerable to abuse<sup>141</sup>. Sexiness is an aesthetics of (individual) risk although to a lesser extent in the context of a male band, which is seen as offering credibility and protection.

The women’s performing body has been mostly analysed as an objectified sexualised passive body, consumed by “the male gaze” (Mulvey, 1975); but other scholars claim that this “to-be-looked-at-ness” constitutes, rather than erodes, female subjectivity (Gottlieb & Wald, 1994, p. 268). The sexualised body is also a sexual, active, feeling body, that is to say, a (self) reflexive embodied self (S. Jackson & Scott, 2007, pp. 98–100).

Rute Fevereiro tells me she likes to wear décolletages and “feel sexy” onstage, embodying an onstage sexual persona. However, she does not wear décolletages at the school where she teaches. Rute is framing the stage as a

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<sup>138</sup>It is not discussed within the band (unlike in female bands, where gender dress is a collective process).

<sup>139</sup>Fitting in aesthetically in the band is also reintegrated in participants’ everyday life and personal aesthetics (as I detail in the drummers’ chapter).

<sup>140</sup>There is an understanding that being on-stage is a special and specific (extraordinary) event. Therefore, “dressing up” is both moved by a perceived “respect” for the audience (Hatzipetrou-Andronikou as cited in Buscatto, 2014, p. 50), but also for women rockers who rarely dress up, being on-stage gives them a reason to “dress up”, to prettify themselves without sexing up (Skeggs, 1997, p. 106).

<sup>141</sup>To “sex up” is more often used to criticise female musicians who do it (the sexualised female body on-stage is criticised), rather than to describe oneself as such (and those who sex up on stage are a minority).

proper public space to display female sexuality<sup>142</sup>, where her erotic self (not an objectified one) can be displayed (even if temporarily). The stage is a site for embodied erotic and sexual performances musically mediated.

Because Rute Fevereiro has this “soft skill” (the “know-how” to “use my image”), but also because she is an excellent musician, stage becomes a (safe) place to be sexy and perform an erotic self without jeopardising her respectability. She is able to move in and out of the stage as a (good) musician and as a respectable woman – she is performing sexuality and respectability through musicianship.

### 7.5: Performing “the girl in the band” offstage

In male-centred bands, women reported being assigned or taking on non-musical tasks that relate to typical female nurturing roles. Girls/women are expected to take care of boys/men, they are responsible for their bandmates’ (potentially irresponsible) behaviours. Different examples illustrate what girls/women in bands do as “care work” – from being responsible for the unattractive, invisible but time-consuming routine tasks in the band to “keeping an eye” on “wild” (sexual, drunken/bohemian, immature) boys. Women are not expected to “engage in the excesses of rock ‘n’ roll” – and its hedonistic practices (Leonard, 2007, p. 59).

Rute Fevereiro is in her early forties and plays with other musicians in her age range. She says that to be able to be in that band, she also has to keep on good terms with her bandmates’ wives. One of her tasks is to make sure that her bandmates do not betray their wives with another woman after the gigs or when on tour.

Alexandra, a drummer in a punk band, explained to me that her bandmates expected her to keep an eye on them, controlling what they drink before the concerts so they would not get too drunk and be unable to play at the gig.

Sara started to be the one responsible for scheduling the rehearsals. Her bandmates were younger, so she said she was more “patient”, and therefore

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<sup>142</sup> The stage is also framed by male bands to perform alternative masculinities such as “soft masculinity” (Sara Cohen, 2001, p. 233).

more able to do that “kind of thing”, and that her bandmates were “just kids”. So she took on the mundane responsibilities of scheduling rehearsals and booking the rehearsal room, as well as “those other little things that are boring”.

Women are expected to excuse, tolerate and manage men’s behaviour , which is constructed by men and women alike as potentially unruly and irresponsible. By exerting the right degree of control of men’s behaviour, women derive some power (however, if women control too much, they are labelled bossy or bitchy or “motherly”).

Sofia Silva is one of the oldest female heavy metal vocalists. The following is an excerpt of a group interview with four female growlers (Female Growlers United Front) in a national radio station, for an established heavy metal programme by António Freitas<sup>143</sup>. Sofia Silva is explaining to António Freitas how she joined the band Neoplasma:

Sofia: Basically, Alex [boyfriend] was already playing for Neoplasma. Their vocalist left and Alex said: ‘ you love the band, why don’t I talk to them and we schedule an audition?’ and I was like ‘yea! Let’s go!’. It’s funny because they were a bit sceptical, like, “oh, a chick, she’s gonna spoil the band’s atmosphere”. But it didn’t! They’re still the same. They do everything they used to do. And I have a laugh with them, and I love it! (Laughs)

António: (laughs)

Sofia: I’m not a tomboy at all! It’s a great atmosphere. I used to take them cookies/cakes, so they wouldn’t starve in the gigs.

António: Oh, you’re so sweet!

Sofia: Yeah, I’d take care of them

António: You’re a bit... mammy-like.

Sofia: It’s more like the little sister.

Sofia negotiates the naming of her role in the band. She casts herself in the role of the “little sister” – both a carer/care-giver and an accomplice/complicit. It is this gender performance that allows her participation without disturbing men’s camaraderie and the band’s atmosphere. She becomes one among the boys, without being/becoming a tomboy. But she also refuses the (authoritarian/controlling) role of a mother (or of the big sister).

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<sup>143</sup> The programme is Alta Tensão, broadcasted in Antena 3 on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Available: <http://www.rtp.pt/play/p254/e211735/alta-tensao>

The pervasive metaphor of the band as a family was often used by girls/women who were in male-centred bands<sup>144</sup>. The family gender regime (division of labour) is mobilised by women to explain and maintain (gendered) band dynamics – sorting out women into nurturing roles and/or invisible, mundane, non-musical tasks, which consumed time and energy which would otherwise have been available for other (individual) activities.

Underlying these discourses is the “ideology of maturity”<sup>145</sup> (whereby girls are supposed to become more mature at an earlier stage than boys and be more academically oriented than boys), here used to make sense of gender differences in the life of the band.

This is also why women at any stage prefer to work with older musicians, and avoid younger musicians or “immature band projects” (Phi). Playing with older musicians (advanced players, senior mentors) is a criteria for their musical recognition and status attainment as a musician. They position themselves as a “little girl” (inexperienced or less experienced), which enhances the value of being invited/accepted by older (established, local/underground celebrities) musicians.

In this case, even tomboys can “get shy”, showing that to be a tomboy is not a fixed, given identity and neither is shyness. Shyness varies situationally and over time, and it is mostly an emergent property of the interaction (S. Scott, 2004, p. 127). Beatriz Rodrigues considered herself a tomboy, but in the new band consisting of older, experienced male musicians, she retreats into shyness, often practising/rehearsing her singing in a room apart. Shyness is enacted as a (gendered) individual and band performance of the beginner ‘girl in the [male] band’, imposing a frame of reference of musical power relations in cross-sex bands’ interactions. Shyness is not just a cultural metaphor for inferiority or powerlessness, it is a practice that sustains a specific interaction in

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<sup>144</sup>But also in all-male bands. As one of the bandmates of my main informant told me (in an exercise of mansplaining): “I’ll tell you how this works: the best example of a dysfunctional family is a band!”, and detailed all the roles taken up by each family member (eg: the father, the mother, the male children: *the spoiled kid, the prodigious kid, the rebel kid or the problematic kid*). This also shows that men can take (what are considered) female roles in the specific space of the band (e.g. the mother), but also that men perform different masculinities over time in different bands.

<sup>145</sup> The “ideology of maturity” was found by educational ethnographers in (high) schools (P. Abrantes, 2003; Pereira, 2012; Reay, 2001).

a specific time. Age disparity in girls and women's bands was never mentioned as problematic.

### Summary

Participation in male-centred bands through access to male networks is the most common experience of band membership. However, it is a restrictive form of musical participation characterised by instrument segregation, based on male skill ascription as well as exclusion from decision-making processes. This phenomenon in combination with musical beginnings in formal and informal learning settings (bi-musicality) shapes women's musical pathways – it produces musical agile selves (playing multiple instruments and fitting in). Women musicians are constituted as selfless musical subjects in male-centred bands, fitting in (musically and aesthetically) according to the band's needs, displaying commitment to the group.

Interviewees also reported how they are expected to be “the girl in the band”. Either by taking non-musical female roles within the band's activities and organisation (e.g. nurturing); or onstage, performing sexual difference, and being appealing to the audiences.

Women feel they have to prove themselves to their bandmates to gain access to the bands. Once they pass the test – showing they have what male figures perceive as a musical skill, or fitting in according to the band's needs, they can rely on “male protection” (e.g. from audiences' sexual harassment).

On the one hand, there is an unequal social distribution of musical opportunities and expertise. On the other hand, it is the participation in bands which opens up musical venues for these women – the opportunity to practise, develop musical skills and new aspects of their musical selves are made relevant and acted upon. In some cases, the (male) social recognition/legitimation of a musical skill or the gendered politics of novelty value opens up musical opportunities – also in non-traditional musical roles.

## 8: “Girls can do it too”: Female bands as female (homo)socio-musical workspaces

In this section, I explore the socio-musical configurations of female bands<sup>146</sup>. Routes to band formation, gendered self-representations and female bands’ relation to grunge, the riot grrrl movement and feminism are explored.

### 8.1: Routes into female bands

Beatriz Rodrigues, who assembled Muses Land when she was a teenager, had a dream:

I dreamt I had a band, and we were playing at the S. Mateus Festival! I remember I was wearing light blue Doc Martens, matching my guitar, a light blue guitar, and everyone in the audience was having fun! (...) In that time in Viseu we had a strong music scene, so it was a natural thing, I had this dream, woke up the next day and thought to myself: I wanna do this! And bearing in mind the musical influences of those times, like Babes in Toyland, L7, and many others...Alice in Chains... so I start thinking about setting up a chick’s band. (...) So, it was me, Cláudia and then Xaninha joined us. We were all high school friends and neighbours.

Pickle Puss started as a “photo’s band”:

We would get together, we would take some pictures, at Ana’s flat. That was it. And the dream of being in a band. It was only photos, we didn’t really play any instrument! Only when Sónia bought her first drum kit did it started going somewhere...

Aspirations to band membership become real by mobilizing resources<sup>147</sup>. The conditions for the emergence of a female band are: girls/young women with shared musical interests; available instruments (owned or borrowed), free rehearsal space (usually in the garage of a relative), and a strong local music scene that is sometimes supported by local youth and cultural politics<sup>148</sup>.

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<sup>146</sup> I tracked 15 female rock bands in Portugal that were active (even if for a short period of time) between 1990-2014. The concept of a female band is complex and full of contradictions (Downes, 2012a). I include two bands that have men in their-line up (NoNo and Les Baton Rouge). I also include a male band with a female vocalist who label themselves as riot grrrl. Downes (2012) highlights the participation of men as a feature of British riot grrrl bands. Also because is common for bands to have a men, Leonard, (2007) proposes the term “female-centred bands”.

<sup>147</sup> As Clawson remarks, the information conveyed by the media is abstract - do not instruct young people in how to move from assembling people and instruments to the tricks of the trade as musicians (Clawson, 1993, p. 104).

<sup>148</sup> Portuguese Institute for Youth (IPJ) and Local City Hall were mentioned as important supporters of the 1990s female bands. Support ranged from providing venues/places to gig, inviting local bands to benefit/charity concerts. Other forms of support that were mentioned,

Voodoo Dolls described themselves as a group of friends that got together as a band. Their different age range (from seventeen to twenty-six) and occupations (from university students to factory worker) was not a problem because “girls too” can have a band:

When we decided... to set up the band, one of the main ideas was to be just girls because we thought that would be nice. If a group of boys gets together with their friends and sets up a band, I think it's natural if you do that with girls too.

Black Widows was the outcome of the meeting of two metal fans at university and their wish to start a female metal band. These girls did not know how to play instruments either, but unlike Voodoo Dolls and most beginner's bands, who use the band as a learning space, they went on a preparation journey. Rute Fevereiro took guitar lessons and participated in a male band. One year after, when they felt they have acquired the necessary musical skills to become a “good heavy metal band”, they found a female drummer and set up the first Portuguese heavy metal female band (1995).

Suspiria Franklyn, of Everground, and later Les Baton Rouge, and Christina Quest of Rockalady reported to start their own female bands because they were not accepted into other male bands in the role of guitarists. They were only accepted as singers.

The assemblage of a female band is a response to the absence of women's rock bands. Women rock musicians' status as a minority is reframed as a feature of the Portuguese socio-cultural underdevelopment<sup>149</sup>. Beginning musicians seek to model themselves after the bands they hear, read about and see (Bielby, 2004; Campbell, 1995; Clawson, 1999a; S. G. Davis, 2005). Given the lack of Portuguese role models and an aspirational identity to cosmopolitanism, these bands position themselves in a (cosmopolitan) musical

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such as the city hall photographer that would take pictures and give a free copy to the bands. Local media (local newspapers and local radio) also played a role in giving visibility to these bands.

<sup>149</sup> As Clawson says: “women's participation in the rock music world continues to be noteworthy, defined by their status as numerical minority and symbolic anomaly” (Clawson, 1999a). Women rockers status as a minority is re-framed as a Portuguese phenomenon. The idea that in Portugal there's only “a few” ones, as opposite to “abroad” was expressed in many interviews, in many newspaper articles, online, local and national - Portuguese-ness as lagging behind.

lineage of Anglo-American female bands<sup>150</sup>, such as L7, Hole, Babes in Toyland (Reddington, 2012, pp. 23–25). However, these female bands do not self-identify with feminist bands and the degree to which one considers itself a “riot grrrrl” band varies.

The sentence “girls can do it too” was repeated virtually by all bands, as a claim for girls’ “power to make music”<sup>151</sup>. The main reason to start up a female band was to gain female access to music-making: “the need for women to assert that they can do the same as men. But with a female identity” (Pickle Puss).

## 8.2: Representations of gender

Gender is (re)produced in the context of a female band through band’s naming, lyric writing, backing vocals, instrument use and onstage presentation. The enactment of a “female identity” is done by the pull of music (the lyrical content), but also by the pull of other aesthetic materials, such as clothes and stage decoration and props.

The act of naming is crucial for establishing the band’s collective and symbolic identity (Clawson, 1999a; Finnegan, 2007; Laing, 1985; Pais, 2004; Weinstein, 1993, 2004b). Most of all these female-centred bands play with gender identity in their bands’ collective names<sup>152</sup>, displaying a female identity. It ranged from playfulness and parody around female body and “feminine” traits (Pink Spit, Unpredictable<sup>153</sup>, T.P.M.<sup>154</sup>) to powerful, often sexual, band names: Muses Land,

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<sup>150</sup> Instead of fatalist readings on “cultural imperialism”, an empirical take on the appropriation of global genres is needed.

<sup>151</sup> This expression was used by Clawson to refer to the engagement in a male band as strategy that adolescent boys use to perform masculinities: “The ability to assert this power, or more precisely to gain access to it, is located in the collectively of the band, as the boys acquire masculinity not simply via individual identification with revered figures but by their construction of an institution through which they claim the power to make music” (Clawson, 1999a)

<sup>152</sup> Collective band naming is a rock music convention, indebted to the communal symbolism of the 1960s counterculture (Weinstein, 1991, p. 33). Female bands’ naming practices also share this convention of collective band naming, but usually around parodic self-naming that is gender related: “self-naming here becomes a tactic not only for reclaiming and recirculating masculinist terms (and thereby depleting their potency) but also of outing or enabling women’s uses of vocabularies otherwise forbidden to “good” girls, who are never supposed to swear or speak loudly in public, let alone refer explicitly to their genitals and what they do with them” (Gottlieb & Wald, 1994, p. 255).

<sup>153</sup> Unpredictability and moodiness are included as a ‘feminine’ trait in the Bem Sex Role Inventory (1974), alongside with others (S. Scott, 2006, p. 137).

<sup>154</sup> T.P.M. was originally the abbreviation for The Psychedelic Mushrooms, the band’s original name. However, because they were a female band, and because T.P.M. is also the standard abbreviation for premenstrual tension, everyone (including myself, until I interviewed them)

Les Baton Rouge, Rockalady, Anarchicks, Voodoo Dolls or Black Widows. Those band names that were gender neutral, played with other identities, namely age (Pickle Puss, Pega-Monstro), symbolism (Bellenden Ker), artsy word-play (NoNo).

The bands I interviewed presented diversity in their onstage gender presentations strategies. Regarding clothes, this ranged from an ordinary aesthetic (“normal clothes”) to theatricality (costumes), from sexiness to an “anti-image” look, from androgyny to “feminine” clothing. However, there are female bands’ “performance idioms”, based on a shared rock aesthetics vocabulary (Gottlieb & Wald, 1994) that was much indebted to the media and MTV<sup>155</sup>. Especially in what concerns performance styles and appearance, there is a visual iconography of rock women that has implicitly rejected “girlish femininity” (Whiteley, 2005) while embracing girlhood (Wald, 1998). Regarding female bands’ performance styles, I subscribe to Leonard’s remarks, in as much they “(...) are intended to be challenging and engaging, they may not necessarily be understood as subversive if related to the signifying systems of indie rock music culture” (Leonard, 2007, p. 93).

Portuguese female bands who self-identified as grunge played around with doll and bride imagery. Female bands created ironic pastiches of symbolic stages of traditional heterosexual female life (childhood and marriage). Bellenden Ker dressed in vintage baby-doll dresses, but wore ripped tights and put on smudged make-up and smudged red lipstick, creating, in their words, a “beauty-ugly” aesthetic – a form of “aesthetic of dissonant juxtaposition”. Pickle Puss were inspired by it for stage decoration: “[we] took our Barbies and baby dolls, and we hang them from the ceiling”. Sometimes Pickle Puss dressed as men, painted their teeth black, making themselves ugly to “mock those sexy girls’ bands, like the Spice Girls”. The bride’s imagery in a dissonant juxtaposition was also used by Pickle Puss and Muses Land. The former used a wedding veil combined with “normal clothes” while the latter wore wedding dresses combined with trainers.

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thought that was the original meaning. Therefore their band’s name is included as a play with gender identity.

<sup>155</sup> As in other countries, MTV shaped in specific ways the rise of female musicianship in Portugal (L. Lewis, 1993).

Theatricality and the impersonation of onstage fictional characters, in different ways, constituted an onstage presentational resource for both The Dirty Coal Train (a female-centred garage band) and for Dead By Pregnancy (a riot grrrl band mostly composed of men in drag). Bands who assume a more overtly sexualised image onstage are not adolescents and played musical styles in the spectrum of heavy metal and hard rock (eg: Anarchicks, Black Widows, Les Baton Rouge, Rockalady and Voodoo Dolls).

Band membership in a female band was not the most common experience of musical participation. The sex status of band members as “100% female” (Pickle Puss) was a reason for pride and a criterion of authenticity for most female bands interviewed. Due to the lack of female musicians, assembling and maintaining a female band was a valuable accomplishment<sup>156</sup>. Female bands are more vulnerable than their male counterparts, for the reason that it is far more difficult to find female replacement instrumentalists<sup>157</sup> (Bayton, 1998; Buscatto, 2010).

Two opposite narratives stand out in female band discourses: autonomy and horror stories. Female bands took pride in doing it without any male assistance. Autonomy, self-reliance and independence were values proudly claimed by female bands: “We did everything by ourselves”, both musical and non-musical tasks. These tasks ranged from booking gigs to managing money, from driving to concerts to loading and unloading their instruments without any help.

Another recurrent story in every band pointed to the opposite. There would be one situation where they felt threatened, or potentially threatened, and had to rely on male protection. For example, when Pickle Puss were still adolescents they had to call one of the bandmate’s father, a motorcyclist, for help when they were not paid for a gig. Voodoo Dolls had to call for their friends for help when they were being car chased after a gig. I claim that, due to the emphasis on autonomy stories, these other episodes assume the significance of a “horror story” (Allen, 2001; Dingwall, 1977), showing that girls and women still have to

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<sup>156</sup> Black Widow’s founder, Rute Fevreiro, states her admiration for the mentor of the female band Rockalady: “because she’s been able to keep a female band for a long time, and always with chicks. And they have changed, but they keep coming in and coming out”. In fact, Christina Quest developed a programme of female mentorship for young girls who aspire to be musicians.

<sup>157</sup> Especially drummers, as I was told, and also guitarists.

rely on men to rescue them from peril<sup>158</sup>. Horror stories are told as exciting and not threatening events. They work both in the rhetoric “tradition of rock adventurism” (Reynolds & Press, 1995, p. 272), but also as a reminder that female independence still has its limitations.

### 8.3: The band as a musically mediated female friendship space

To set up a female band, these girls and women either drew upon their own female networks of acquaintances or friends (who they had met at school<sup>159</sup>, university, in the neighbourhood) or they used advertisements in music newspapers, online or word of mouth to pull female musicians. With the exception of the Voodoo Dolls and Muses Land, who clearly stated that they were friends first and then become a band, bands mentioned that they were either acquaintances from school and neighbourhood or strangers and not really friends<sup>160</sup>.

However, the female rock band is constructed as a socio-musical friendship space<sup>161</sup> and female bands are enacted as a whole:<sup>162</sup> “this is worth it because we’re all in it.” (Anarchicks). Constructing the band as a socio-musical friendship space meant there were no asymmetric relationships. It meant that, in the context of a female band, girls and women made sense of their own ties and relationships in a specific manner.

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<sup>158</sup> These “horror stories” also bring the classical theme of the feminine rescued by the masculine, from romantic narratives for women (Radway, 1991) to comics for girls (Walkerdine, 1984).

<sup>159</sup> School is only important for first band formation by providing potential bandmates, age and musical peers, people with shared musical interests and aspirations (Campbell, 1995; Clawson, 1999a; Green, 2001). Also, because “everyone had a band”, it also provided audiences for the gigs (that took place outside school).

<sup>160</sup> Unlike male bands mostly based on pre-existing friendship networks (H. S. Bennett, 1980; Clawson, 1999a). However, this might also be explained with how and to whom girls and women attribute the category of “friend” (see Hey (1997) for a discussion on female friendships).

<sup>161</sup> Studies point to the fact that women value friendship and commitment to the musical group (either female or mixed-sex) more highly (Bayton, 1998, p.195; Buscato, 2014). There is also the belief that there is something unique about playing with other women, either in jazz worlds (Buscato, 2007a; Buscato, 2010) or in other “women-onliness gender regimes”, such as roller derby - constituted by women that come from punk music scenes (Donnelly, 2014). The same was found by studying cross-sex music group collaboration among children. All-girl groups produce the most effective compositions, by building interpersonal friendships, whilst boys are more concerned with improving their individual status (Morgan, Hargreaves, & Joiner, 1997).

<sup>162</sup> Both in face-to-face situations (when I did the interviews), as well as online. As an example, Anarchicks’ Facebook photos display all the band members doing band’s activities or enjoying, together, time-off. Facebook photos construct the idea of closeness, complicity and affection between bandmates.

Friendships in rock bands might also be a strategic discourse rather than a concrete practice, that is part of keeping the good face in self-presentation to resist the stereotype of female rivalry. Gender difference was made either a relevant or irrelevant factor of explanation for a good band atmosphere, according to situated contexts. Gender difference is used strategically. To emphasize band members' "personality" rather than gender as a factor for bands' success or failure might be especially important. It is so because this way female bands' resist against their vulnerability to breakups and discourses that that position women as more competitive and/or more emotional and therefore more complicated to work with. Due to the scarcity of female musicians, a female band was more vulnerable to split-ups, and the continuance of the female band depended on each member staying committed, and assuring stable relationships was seen to be a part of it (Bayton, 1998, p. 185).

In female bands and female-centred bands where self-identified lesbian women participated, they felt it was a safe space. One interviewee who self-identified as lesbian, and who had belonged both to a male and female band, claimed how uncomfortable she felt in the male band. This was not because she was discriminated against, on the contrary, her bandmates were very happy to find out she was a lesbian. But, as she complained, "the moment they knew I was a lesbian, they assumed I was one of them, and assumed that I, like them, liked to rate chicks based on their looks, and assumed I, like them, enjoy objectifying women" (Liliana).

Friendship is musically mediated. Bandmates became friends through musical interactions themselves. Female bands placed importance on the construction of band's musical style as a result of each band member's musical tastes. Participants proudly reported being musically influenced by each other<sup>163</sup> ways of playing (accommodating musical diversity), but also ways of being. Musical and non-musical roles in the band tended to be distributed democratically according to one's individual preferences, self-identified skills and personal

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<sup>163</sup> Many women reported they were musically "isolated" – it was hard to find people that shared their musical taste, especially other girls and women. That is why the space of the female band became particularly important. Bands were referred to as spaces where girls and women shared music with each other, without their tastes being dismissed or ridiculed. For instance, it was only when joining a female band that women would start learning (with each other) about the legacies of female bands and riot grrrl.

convenience. These bands highlight the collective authorship of the compositional process (Clawson, 1993, p. 239). The collective creative process was described as “having little orgasms” (Anarchicks). Female bands describe “musical chemistry” among band members and bands’ musical interactions were often compared to those of lovers.<sup>164</sup> This was unlike participants in male-centred bands who tended to describe the band as a family. The female band can be considered a female homosocial space. Departing from Sedgwick’s notion of homosociality, as a theoretical way to conceptualise men’s same-sex interaction (Sedgwick, 1985), Sanders (2015) analysed a female football team through the lens of “female homosociality”. So too the female rock band (and even the female DJs’ duos and trios) complicates the heteronormativity that has portrayed girls and women’s social dynamics, either through the ‘friendship’ discourse (by default, desexualized relationships) or through ‘the lesbian’ (bi-sexual or queer) sexual discourse (Sanders, 2015, p. 893). As found by Sanders, so too the participants did not live the female band as an exclusively heterosexual or lesbian/queer socio-musical space. In the same vein, Downes (2010, 2012) refers to the “heterosexual queerness” of British riot grrrls bands who did not conform to the normative femininity.

Musical competence was as important as interpersonal skills and commitment to the collective to become a band member. The auditions for a female guitarist for the band Anarchicks were illustrative:

Katari: There was a girl... it’s not that she didn’t play well, but it didn’t work out. Then, there was another girl: she was a guitar “virtuoso” and we were like: “oh my god!”, she played too well! Then, there was other girl, but she was not that available to commit with the band – she missed some rehearsals. Finally, we’ve heard of J.D. and asked her to come to the rehearsal and play, and we were like “she’s really good! She plays really well!” and she was really nice, we had really good vibes, she really liked our songs. We asked her: “do you like it?” and she replied, “I love it”.

JD: yeah, this was really what I was looking for!

Synthetique: Yeah, we really fit perfectly!

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<sup>164</sup> The band was compared to a heterosexual relationship by Baytons’ interviewees too (Bayton, 1998, p. 100, 185-186). Also the breaking up of a band brought comparisons with heterosexual relationships. After a band’s breakup interviewee commented: “it’s hard to manage people! I used to say ‘If a relationship of two is hard, can you imagine a relationship of four or five people!’”.

Female bands accommodate greater diversity regarding musical background. And this heterogeneous ability grouping has proven to be more efficient (Burland & Davidson, 2001). Having a music education or technicality is irrelevant “if it sounds good” when playing for the band. However, female bands are vulnerable to critics. This has led to female bands wishing to be assessed as a whole, rather than based on individual members’ proficiency. In a gig, I watched Teresa arguing with a male guitarist friend. He was criticizing the quality of a female band’s female guitarist. Teresa argued that the band should be assessed as a musical whole, rather than by the technical musical skill of one member. Also, the band protected individual members when people criticized them for their lack of musical quality.

Both the drummer of Voodoo Dolls and the singer of Pickle Puss claim they did not play or sing well. To compensate for what was perceived as a lack musical skill and technical ability<sup>165</sup>, they over-performed by being “not just a singer, but an entertainer” (Pickle Puss), and by “putting on a good show” (Voodoo Dolls). It was passion, feel, expressivity and the uniqueness of their performance rather than technical prowess that they turned into a source of musical legitimation. When criticized or insulted, or even anticipated potential critiques, band members did “remedial work” (Goffman), to save the face of the band as a whole.

Women’s camaraderie and ease with each other built through non-musical issues (women’s issues) was singled out by Bellenden Ker as a distinctive feature in a female band: “there are certain issues [menstruation], that, no matter how long, or how much trust and friendship you feel, there are certain things that you’re not comfortable talking about with men (laughs).”<sup>166</sup>

Talk (complaining, discussing, sharing, even bitching) about work or school and personal issues, “listening to each other and exchange” (Buscatto, 2010, p. 9), was integrated into the band’s interaction<sup>167</sup>. Women’s camaraderie was often

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<sup>165</sup> Which, in turn, is attributed to the lack of (formal) music education.

<sup>166</sup> This “girls’ talk” resembles a “menstrual etiquette” as described by Young, one that fosters solidarity and bonds girls in their efforts to conceal their menstruation, and female bands also become a “space of shared secrets and protect one another from ridicule” (I. M. Young, 2005, p. 112).

<sup>167</sup> Language and Sociolinguistics studies have long shown how talk is central to close friendships between women but also the specificities of talk among women friends (F. L. Johnson & Aries, 1983). Given that the group takes priority over the individual, Coates (1997) even compares it to a jam session.

built in the backstage, in the private spaces of the rehearsal rooms and garages, which resembled bedroom cultures:

Katari: I came from work to rehearsal and I'm a wreck! Really down, face down... And when I get out from the rehearsal it's like... [Whistles, lifts up her chin] all up!

Synthetique: me too!

JD: the same here, really!!

Synthetique: sometimes were assembling the instruments, and we start talking to each other [complaining]. Then we start playing, and all of sudden, everything is all right.

Katari: and then I'm like: "I'm glad I came to the rehearsal!" because sometimes it's hard to get there [to the rehearsal place], but when we leave the rehearsal it feels damn good!

Pleasurable collective music-making linked to non-musical talk became a motivational device to 'move out' of low moods.<sup>168</sup>

Another important activity in the backstage (either in its physical space or imagined) is the collective gendered dress for the gig, which is part of the broad pre-gig ritual found in other studies (Weinstein, 1991, H. S. Bennet, 1980, Bayton, 1998: 6). In the context of a female band, gendered dress and preparation of the body for public display is subject to collective deliberation ("an agreement"), respecting individual personal aesthetics:

Each one had her own personal style. Maybe I wouldn't wear a concert T-shirt, and other girls wouldn't wear décolletages. So we tried to reach an agreement, and we did it. (Black Widows)

Backstage became a collective female-only intimate space to try out the appropriate feminine rock appearance.<sup>169</sup> It resembled the way Skeggs describes how working-class women dressed up all together before going out clubbing, learning to "pass" as feminine: "this collective putting on [of femininity]

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<sup>168</sup> Research has shown this at individual level (DeNora, 2000), but also at the collective (Batt-Rawden & DeNora, 2005).

<sup>169</sup> When I accompanied a female band, they were rehearsing that night's gig. When they finished rehearsing, there were two men (a friend and a boyfriend) that were "kicked out" of the room because girls wanted to get ready (I was allowed to stay because I was a girl, but I had somehow the feeling I was not really welcomed there). One of the girls had bought a black body (shaper) in a well-known and affordable retail shop. Although she was not oversized at all, her body shape was a bit larger than her bandmates. She was struggling to fit in a smaller size, to look slender on-stage. She asked for her bandmates help (who were saying she probably would not be able to fit in). The (physical) efforts to "fit in" that item was a sartorial decision to fit in with image of the slender sexy young woman – being sexy has its own materialities. I could not help asking myself if her torso would not be too tight to perform, and contrasting this struggle with a clothing item to the repeated answers on "being comfortable" (not from her). But once she dressed that item, it all seemed to fit, and she looked for her bandmates approval: "does this look good on me?". Also, they did their make-up together.

is about women being close, safe and self-indulgent. (...) it is a way of belonging and of feeling secure” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 106). This is both a pleasurable activity and a way of coping with female bands’ vulnerability to critique and abuse.

#### 8.4: Female bands’ good practices and bad practices

No more than in a female band is musical ability assessed according to a musician’s sex status as female (Green, 1997, p. 50). Women rock musicians are tokens, a term dubbed by Kanter (1977) to refer to the situation of women of corporation crossing to a non-traditional gender occupation). Kanter’s now classic study and conceptual tools inspired subsequent authors who approach women tokens within the framework of the “(in)visibility paradox” (Simpson & Lewis, 2005; Watts, 2010b), that is “a complex [and often contradictory] dynamic that oscillates between visibility as an advantage and visibility as an obstacle to professional progression [vulnerability]” (Watts, 2010b). That is to say, on the one hand, the advantage of being different and known but, on the other hand facing the loneliness of outsider estrangement from male peers.

Suspensions of women’s real musical skills increased in the context of a female band, who did not prove themselves to male bandmates. Bellenden Ker illustrates this situation, in their account of their participation in a bands’ contest:

A guy [musician] came to us and said he saw us in that contest. He said he just thought: “the jury just selected this band because it’s a chicks’ band”. But then he listened to us, and he was surprised because we had a good rhythm, we were solid. And he even asked us if we spend all day rehearsing or what! He was really surprised because we were really really well-rehearsed

If in a male-centred band femaleness is marketable, in a female band it can be a greater risk. On the other hand, there is also “positive discrimination” towards female bands, as some participants noted. For commercial reasons, venue owners are favourable to book gigs<sup>170</sup> and are encouraged to hire female

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<sup>170</sup> Besides onstage presentation, venues were also sites for authenticity-making. In the case of female bands, those who played at motorcycle rallies were regarded with suspicion of “selling out” (especially as a proper “riot grrrr!” , because stereotypical “biker” behaviour involved objectification of women (Austin, 2009; Hopper & Moore, 1990). This might be similar to the situation found by Bayton regarding female bands who played in the army circuit (Bayton, 1998, p. 132).

bands<sup>171</sup>. There is a clear discourse on good and bad practices by female bands.

The following excerpt conveys the dilemma music *versus* image that female bands have had to face when managing onstage collective appearance:

This raised discussion in the band. There was a time when one of the (female) bandmates suggested that we wouldn't wear any dresses on stage. Almost as if we shouldn't assert our... being a woman! Because we could draw the attention in a negative way, and because the most important thing is the music. (NoNo)

Female bands work to achieve a delicate balance between band's overall image in accordance with the musical style and capitalizations of femaleness (attractiveness).

Individual musicians and female bands cannot "take advantage" of "being a woman". Reaching success based on one's looks (attractiveness) is an illegitimate form of musicianship: "selling out."<sup>172</sup> Women can only capitalize on their physical femaleness, referred to as "use one's image," as long as they do not compromise their musical skill. Female musicians have had to "really play" and to play "really well."<sup>173</sup> Sexual attributes must not overshadow their musical ability. Only in this situation, could women musicians "sell sex" without "selling out".

Instead of "taking advantage", Black Widows claimed to have "known how" to use their image as women: "Off course we wouldn't dress as nuns, all covered up. We're women, we have to know how to use our image." It is this know-how, collectively negotiated and respecting personal aesthetics, combined with Black Widows' musical competence and heavy metal affiliation, which enabled Black Widows to "feel sexy and pass on that to our audience" – without "selling out".

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<sup>171</sup> Especially female covers' band. Often venue owners "they didn't care about the musical style we would be playing or if you played well or bad" (Ana Bento).

<sup>172</sup> Selling sex without selling out is gender-specific. However, Leonard points that gender subversion or rebellion have become a central framing narrative within the music industry, incorporated by major record companies into their promotional strategies (Leonard, 2007, p. 95).

<sup>173</sup> Unless in a female punk or a beginners band.

Anarchicks' media popularity raised<sup>174</sup> while I was conducting fieldwork. I noticed that Anarchicks had “glammed-up” since I first interviewed them, and the more heterosexually attractive a female band looks, the more their musical quality and value (authenticity) is at stake.<sup>175</sup> From praise and support to comment and critique, Anarchicks were used by interviewers as an example of the most desperate things. Ones had pointed them out as an example of where only the image sells (bad practices), claiming to have heard rumours that they did not record in a studio. Some others had praised Anarchicks as icons of “women-rockers” for their attitude. When a female band reaches success, it becomes a basis for an aesthetic-based controversy.

#### 8.5: Riot grrrl and “girl power”: reconfiguring feminism

A female band is not to be conflated with being feminist and/or a riot grrrl band. The bands rejected or made ambiguous links between music and feminism and/or riot grrrl bands, configuring new meanings for each.

The riot grrrl movement was mostly unknown among interviewees.<sup>176</sup> Among those who were familiar with it, there was a consensus that the first Portuguese riot grrrl woman was Suspiria Franklyn, founder of Everground and later of Les Baton Rouge (a band that is still active). However, for all other bands, “riot grrrl” was a controversial label, with no single definition.

The female bands that related themselves to riot grrrl made distinctions between riot grrrl as a musical style, as a feminist movement (through feminist lyrics) and as an “attitude” (regardless of musical style or feminist lyrical content).

Even if some bands self-identified with riot grrrl, they did it in a selective way, pointing to different degrees of “being riot”:

Rita: are you “riot grrrls”?

Bellenden Ker: Hum... I don't think so. Maybe the musical style because it's associated with it... But not the songs [lyrics], we don't talk about... women's liberation... maybe it's just the music style because in what concerns lyrics, we don't have that sort of feminist lyrics. And we didn't

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<sup>174</sup> Anarchicks raised their national profile with their international reach. Among other musical acts, they had musical collaborations with Peaches, they were the opening band for the popular Brazilian band CSS (Cansei de Ser Sexy). Despite Anarchicks always held a sexy image, an image that is similar either on or off stage, they glam-up as their popularity rise.

<sup>175</sup> Kate Bush was underrated because of prettiness of her image (Whiteley, 2005, p. 120).

<sup>176</sup> As with Bayton's (1998) English interviewees.

have riot grrrl goals as the band's goals to start with. Like "to be riot grrrls" that was never the band's goal.

Bellenden Ker, as well as Anarchicks, considered themselves "riot but not grunge," for different reasons. Bellenden Ker might have had a riot grrrl "musical style," but Anarchicks had a riot grrrl attitude that was sonically mediated by the backing vocals:

We're sooo riot! And many people classify us as riot grrrls – like Cláudia Duarte, the girl from [radio] Radar. We think it suits us well! Although it's not grunge. But it's riot. It's more about the attitude, then about how we sound. But our backing vocals are riot! That's another detail, really characteristic of chick's bands: the backing vocals! It's a feature because we're all girls and our voices sound so good all together! It's so... riot! Our riot stuff, it's the attitude, it's "in your face". (Anarchicks)

Only Dead by Pregnancy considered themselves a feminist band, which was expressed in their lyrics and onstage improvised performances (talking about domestic violence, rape, cross-dressing and simulating abortions on-stage). Dead By Pregnancy, along with Les Baton Rouge, participated in trans-local feminist riot grrrl networks through song recorded "splits" with foreigners' riot grrrl bands).

Riot grrrl was a discursively contested category that both Dead By Pregnancy and Anarchicks self-identified with but its legitimacy was not consensual. There were critics to an undeserved use of the label. Some interviewees pointed to the fact that Dead by Pregnancy were a heterosexual male-centred band. Other interviewees criticized Anarchicks for being a commercial version of "riot grrrl": too pretty and too musically soft (no power chords after the second album) to be a riot grrrl.<sup>177</sup>

Often newspaper articles would label bands as "riot grrrls", regardless of whether or not the band itself did (eg: Pega-Monstro).<sup>178</sup> Strong (2011) showed how female bands that were grunge (L7, Hole, Babes in Toyland) were progressively pushed by media into the category of riot grrrl. In this way, the

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<sup>177</sup> One interviewee, a musician, expressed her disappointment with Anarchick's second album: "I used to love them. But they don't do power chords anymore." Power chords symbolize masculinity (Kearney, 2017). Given the sexualised Anarchicks' bodies, the lack of a "masculine" element did not allow the performance of an aesthetic of dissonant juxtaposition.

<sup>178</sup> In some underground newspapers, Dead by Pregnancy were dubbed "Luso riot grrrl", considered its Portuguese representatives. (<http://a-trompa.net/novos-sons/dead-by-pregnancy>). In another much more "faddish" article about "Portuguese riot grrrls", Dead By Pregnancy are not mentioned, only Anarchicks and Pega-Monstro, and the latter does not self-identify with riot grrrl. <http://www.vice.com/pt/read/riot-grrrls-a-portuguesa>

category grunge was for for men, and female grunge was moved into the category of riot. This way as it fitted better in the logic of single-out and exclude<sup>179</sup>.

Being a feminist band was usually conflated with putting out feminist messages in the lyrics. However, there are different degrees and arenas of engagement with feminism in a female band, either as a practice or as an ideology. Unpredictable felt the “need” to compose a song where they talked about their experience of being girls which was a song they considered to be “the most feminist song” of their repertoire: “We wrote the ‘XXX generation’, where we talked about being a girls’ band, our desire of not being excluded, and our willingness to do music.” The band considered that one song represented “being a girl” topic was enough. Otherwise, they would turn out to be a “lame” band. In the same vein, Helena Fagundes, a thirty-four year old Portuguese Brazilian that had always taken part in female (Brazilian and Portuguese) bands: “I consider myself a feminist, but... I also like other things... and... I like to have fun! We don’t have to talk about feminism all the time!”

Anarchicks considered themselves to be feminists with the disclaimer that they were not “phobic to men” nor were they “extremists.” They did not consider their music or lyrics to be feminist, they considered themselves to be an “apolitical band.”<sup>180</sup> Instead, they reconfigured feminism as an onstage musical attitude: “Hum... we don’t think about it [making feminist music]... we make the music we like... the thing is all about our behaviour! We get there [on stage] and that’s already a statement!”

When participating in a band’s contest, Bellenden Ker were asked by the (male) contest presenter if they were feminists<sup>181</sup>:

they asked us if we would like women to rule (over) men, something like that... if we were feminists... and one of us replied: “no, we like man woodcutters” (laughs!). Because there’s a lot of people that see our band like a girl’s band and say: “oh, women’s liberation, they just want to be in charge, and boss men”, blah blah... but...I think we just want equality! Equality is not ruling... that’s stupid... (silence).

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<sup>179</sup> This resembles the way the pseudo-genre “female-fronted metal” was created as a technology of gender to Other women (I. R. Martins, 2012).

<sup>180</sup> Weinstein (2006) discusses the fact that rock in the USA is less and less about the “protest song” with political themes.

<sup>181</sup> Festival Termómetro. Interview available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pQqEg7xEUk>

This episode tells us about the negative representations of feminism that had been circulating in society and portrayed by the media.<sup>182</sup> Feminism has popularly been misunderstood as being the opposite of “machismo”, and feminists have been equated to raging, “man-hating” women; feminism is represented as hostile towards men.

In interviewees’ discourses about feminism, there was an attempt to make clear their understanding of feminism as a struggle for equality and to assert that was not a battle of the sexes. There was also an attempt to separate feminism from the music itself. The goal was to locate and single out/mark out feminism in the lyric’s themes and/or in the on-stage attitude (being there).

As With Tricia Rose (1994) female hip-hoppers, or with Farrugia (2009) EDM DJs, the women rockers in this study tended to self-identify as pro-women<sup>183</sup>, but disavowed the label feminists,<sup>184</sup> despite their feminist practices. The 1990s United States alternative rockers studied by Schippers (men and women musicians, from bands like Pearl Jam, L7 and Babes In Toyland) balked at being labelled “feminists” and they rarely talked about or sung about their feminist politics.

Women avoided identifying themselves as feminists, out of fear that it would alienate audiences and employers. Even when they adopted what be feminist practices, that I call here good practices, as they represent an “etiquette” for female musicians.

Instead, 1990s alternative rockers reframed gender politics as a form of rock authenticity, namely, an “emphasis on being a positive role model and example is the most common way in which alternative hard rockers talk about the relationship between their music and feminism.” (Schippers, 2002, p. 184). Female bands took pride in the positive feedback from audience members:

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<sup>182</sup> This can be an index on the effectiveness of the post-feminism discourse in media and popular culture (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2004), beyond the Anglo-Saxon world. The post-feminist discourse frames feminist as old and unnecessary, given the achievements of women, and framing feminists as raging men-hating women or lesbians.

<sup>183</sup> None of the interviewees, with no exception, talked about feminism unless I brought it up, which meant this was not an operative category they used to think about their musical practices. When discussing these issues, interviewees preferred to talk about “women’s liberation”, “women’s rights”, “equality.” This resembled Schippers (2002, pp. 154–189) findings on the feminist politics of alternative hard rockers: not talking explicitly about their feminism, they talked about sexism and gender inequality, but the words feminist or feminism did not seem to be part of their vocabulary.

<sup>184</sup> Despite its feminist practices, such as promoting other women’s activities and skills, even if only at symbolic level, such as naming and praising.

“they like to see us [female bands] up there [on stage]. They like to see us playing.” (NoNo). Also, Christina Quest (Rockalady) claims: “The audience likes us. Men and lesbian women, all that thing about “girl power”, that thing of... the girls that got together and they’re so cool. It’s a phenomenon of admiration.”

These Portuguese bands did not grow out of feminist activism, nor were they connected to riot grrrl networks. However, they did identify, in a very selective way, with features of riot grrrl, which showed how cultural forms circulated and were appropriated by specific actors in situated contexts.

Most interviewees identify the female band as a site of “girl power.” This was expressed by using the English expression “girl power” or, as we have seen, by the sentence “girls can do it.”

Portuguese female bands resemble a “girl power” discourse as it has been discussed in the Anglo-Saxon feminist literature. The commodified version of girl power crystalized by Spice Girls as opposed to “authentic” riot grrrl version of girl power, had been subjected to much feminist debate and criticism (Gill & Scharff, 2012; Harris, 2004; Kearney, 2006; Taft, 2004). The girl power discourse was associated with the post-feminism sensibility and “commodity feminism” that undercut feminist principles by reducing feminist rhetoric, feminist ideas and icons to individual consumer choices in the capitalist market. However, I agree with Hains (2012, 2014) who claimed that a commodified version of “girl power” is still productive. Hains (2014) shows how fans of Spice Girls – “the commodified version” of grrrl power – experience their love for music. Considering the girls’ and women’s personal chronology of listening, the author shows that girls who encounter Spice Girls in the first place – as it was mainstream music, it was easier to access – became sensitized to feminist issues. Before they meet riot grrrl, they gained a feminist sensibility which they pursue more actively as they become young women.

The female band is a socio-musical “woman-friendly” space. Portuguese female bands assembled women together, not only as bandmates, but also with other onstage roles, such as backing vocals (Pickle Puss, Muses Land); dancers (Black Widows), and off-stage roles, such as manager (Voodoo Dolls), set designer and sound technician (Bellenden Ker).

The female band supports women’s musicianship. Black Widows worked as a “school” for female musicians, in the sense that it accepted and “trained” many

female musicians. Christina Quest started a project of female mentorship, giving advice to novice women musicians and answering their questions. Another example of good practice among female bands was the “borrowing” of female musicians as temporary substitutes, as well as borrowing instruments (when stolen, for instance).

Female bands organized gigs together (Voodoo Dolls and Pickle Puss; Les Baton Rouge and The Dirty Coal Train; United Female Growlers). Sometimes at their own gigs they featured other women musicians they admired (Anarchicks featuring The Chick).

If these partnerships were often ephemeral events they were nonetheless pro-women statements; a minority group’s strategy to raise their profile. Not women’s festivals or “politik” but embodied musical participation and material practices of mutual help is what counts as political action. Female bands have been reframing feminism as an embodied musical performance and the band as an object lesson on gender and rock, highlighting female musical ability, autonomy and identity as creative producers.

#### Summary

Female bands are not the most common form of band membership for Portuguese rockers and there is a weak riot grrrl scene in Portugal.. The female band has specific features such as acting as a (homo)socio-musical space. There is a female gendering of the female band, from bands’ naming practices to lyrical content; from stage presentation to clothing. These materialities did not represent the bands, they constituted the bands as such. Given the lack of female musicians, being a “100% female band” was both a criterion for pride, but also a reason for female bands’ vulnerability.

Becoming a band member in a female band demanded musical ability but also interpersonal skills and commitment to the band. The band became a “protected” context for music-making for girls and women because it was a female homosocial musical space. Female friendship was constructed in the backstage, through talking, sharing and bringing other non-musical elements into the band. Female friendship became musically mediated.

Femaleness as a commodity was used in both male and female bands. While for the former there was no risk to their musical reputation and authenticity, for

the latter, sexiness became an aesthetic of risk. Women could only capitalize on their physical femaleness as long as they did not compromise their musical skill. “Selling sex” without “selling out” was an example of good practices. To avoid risk, female bands’ gender dress was subject to collective scrutiny with respect for individual difference and personal aesthetics.

These Portuguese bands did not grow out of feminist activism, nor were they connected to trans-local riot grrrl networks (except two bands). Female bands’ discourses were closer to a “girl power” discourse, which could still be productive. When these bands used the stage as kinaesthetic cultural workspace to act out women’s musical ability, they were providing important object lessons; they were expanding the available musical and non-musical roles for women. Sharing a trans-local rock aesthetic, new ways of being a Portuguese female or queer rocker were being registered in the public musical sphere.

## 9: Women’s discourses on musicianship

Women rock musicians feel they are not taken serious. There is a lack of recognition and status subordination, within hierarchies of cultural value: “when, in contrast, institutionalized patterns of cultural value constitute women as inferior, excluded, wholly other, or simply invisible, hence as less than full partners in social interaction, then we must speak of sexist misrecognition and status subordination.” (Fraser, 2013, p. 168). Women engage in discourses and practices to be taken seriously, to compensate their “femaleness as otherness” in rock worlds, related to their status as women token (especially in the case of female bands, guitarists and drummers).

### 9.1: High standards of musicianship

Participants situated their musical ability as a process, not innate talent, that demanded commitment to the hard work of musicianship. Participants displayed self-accounts of modesty. Clawson (1999a, p. 111) points to the contrast found between men and women’s accounts of their musical activities: whereas men

have teleological accounts, women's narratives are of devaluation.<sup>185</sup> Atkinson found that opera singers, who were mostly women, deployed various narrative tropes of modesty and chance to account for their careers, interlinked with accounts of hard work and thankless tasks (Atkinson, 2006, pp. 183–185).

These female musicians' goal was to develop excellent musical skills – “overperforming”. By engaging in formal music education and/or intensive practice (just being in a band is not considered enough<sup>186</sup>), women musicians gain self-confidence. This enables them to present themselves as competent (professional) to their male colleagues and audiences<sup>187</sup>. Women expressed a desire to improve their instrumental or singing ability, which they did by engaging in formal music education. Even in rock worlds, there was a recognised and prestigious “career” in classical or formal music learning (also found by Finnegan, 2007, p. 136). Participants relied on family musical sponsorship, and, when they grew older and had financial autonomy through employment, they invested their money in buying instruments or having instrumental tuition, which displayed commitment.

Musical improvement was also achieved through intensive practise. Interviewees in this study revealed they planned and rehearsed their performances extensively, wanting to disguise any potential flaws and ‘pass’ as competent, good musicians. Female bands also undertook more mundane actions to be taken seriously as musicians, such as having a post address as a band (Pickle Puss) or having copyrights on their songs (Voodoo Dolls). Another way of achieving a musical competent performance was to have “responsible

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<sup>185</sup> In line with studies on technology uses, which point to the fact that men and women display different self-representations of their technical ability, which often is contradictory when set against actual practice (Faulkner, 2000; Kleif & Faulkner, 2003).

<sup>186</sup> Those who were DIY musicians were from apologetic to ashamed. It is often considered that being in a band is necessary, but not enough if someone wants to “take it[musicianship] seriously”. DIY musicianship was seen as an impoverished (less committed) way of being a musician - to which trends in the professionalization in rock worlds are not indifferent.

<sup>187</sup> Studies in the field of music education show that among players of gender-atypical instrument it is musical achievement that enables their recognition, decreasing teasing and stigma (Green, 2009; D. M. Taylor, 2009). This strategy of “overperforming” was also found among women tokens - eg: engineers (Watts, 2010a). Buscatto found that jazz singers work to “behave irreproachably in professional terms to avoid being denigrated for their musical technique—a constant threat”. (Buscatto, 2010, p. 8). The idea of women as perfectionists, found in the study of women leaders as an obstacle to their own success (Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010) also emerged in participants' narratives: female bands can end because they feel they were not improving musically as they should (Pickle Puss) or not yet ready to record in studio (Everground).

practices” (such as not playing drunk, not drinking before the concerts). These strategies resembled what Buscatto has called playing “under protected conditions” (Buscatto, 2007b, p. 74).

Achieving high standards of musicianship implies hard work and sacrifice of time and money.<sup>188</sup> In this sense, the “good student” discourse that was mobilized in adolescence, was updated in adulthood through the discourse of responsibility, hard work and commitment. Women’s discourses on musicianship resembled military discourses: effort, sacrifice, goal-oriented, strength, resilience and perseverance. Women often referred to those few resilient women who “kept at it” and to the others who “don’t do it anymore.”

Those who “kept at it” were those who made it into the rock worlds. For those, the perception of the obstacles at work, and their self-perception as a minority, increased their sense of personal achievement. Participants’ rhetoric of accomplishment in rock worlds was often heroic<sup>189</sup> and worked in tandem with the rhetoric of “othering”, which I will detail below.

The other side of hard work is to have fun. “Fun” holds a specific value within rock music cultures: the duty to struggle for fun (Frith, 1983, p. 272). Pleasure and enjoyment are important dimensions of leisure in a consumer society (Bauman, 2007) and of “calculated hedonism” (Featherstone, 1991). “Fun” is part of “play” (Goffman, 1972), and music is entertainment in all cultures (Merriam, 1964). Participants highlighted fun and pleasure as the core emotion enacted with music-making and all its surrounding activities. “Girls having fun” while being responsible need to be taken seriously within the micro-politics of female subjectivity.

It is only acceptable not having high standards of musicianship if one does it as leisure or as another form of sociability (playing with friends). However, even in those cases, there must be commitment. As Patrícia, a bass player, said: “even to have fun, you need to take it seriously. For starters, you need to show up for

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<sup>188</sup> As Pickle Puss claimed, that they did not have a “normal youth” because they gave up on going to the cinema or going on holidays in order to save up money to buy music items they needed (eg: strings) and to perform music gigs (mostly over summer, and other school breaks).

<sup>189</sup> The heroic is very important, even in non-musical worlds. For instance, Oreskes (1996) argues that women in field sciences have had their work obscured or devalued, not because their work does not fit science’s objectivity, but because of the ideology of scientific heroism- to which they not abide to.

the rehearsals, if you schedule a day and a time with someone, you need to show up, you need to be responsible, and respect the others.” It was also acceptable to give up on high standards of musicianship in punk or grunge bands, as well as in beginners’ bands (or both, as Un-predictable).

The participants negotiated the male standards of the “virtuoso”, mocking it, reframing virtuosity as infantile, shallow exhibitionism or “showing off”. Participants often refused the “rock star” label since it was equivalent to an arrogant person. Punk, indie and grunge had undermined the “male-guitar-hero” pose. Complex instrumental solos were dismissed and simplicity was favoured in an anti-elitist vein that also enabled women’s participation in punk, indie and rock music more generally (Bannister, 2013; Bayton, 1998; Reddington, 2003; Schippers, 2002). For the participants, under-valuing technical skill moved beyond being a genre performance idiom towards being a gender resistant discourse. Against this position of “technological incompetence” (Cockburn, 1985, p. 12; Thornham & McFarlane, 2011; Walkerdine, 2006), participants re-worked old gender stereotypes of “men as rational and technical” and “women as emotional” in accounting for musical performance. Participants undervalued technical skill and placed high value on displaying of have feeling, *ter garra*<sup>190</sup>, as a form of “sincere emotionality”; as a mature, authentic performance.

## 9.2: Othering fans

Two common explanations were mobilized to account for the under-representation of women musicians in Portugal: an individual female disinterest and self-exclusion; and a societal phenomenon, symptomatic of the Portuguese musical and societal underdevelopment that translated into the lack of material opportunities and female role models for women.

The interviewees that were musicians criticized other girls who “do nothing,” who did not pick an instrument and play. “If it was football, I could understand”, adds Dina Peste. Music was compared to other spheres of leisure activity that were perceived as masculine, namely sports, and more specifically, football. There was the expectation that music was not, unlike sports, a masculine pursuit. The assertion that girls are disinterested and excluded themselves

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<sup>190</sup> Participants used the combined expression have feeling and *ter garra*, which means playing passionately, but also strongly.

evoke a post-feminist discourse of individual choice. These assertions reproduce gendered ideologies in rock, namely, the passive fan.

The radicalization of passivity is encapsulated in the figure of a specific fan: the “groupie”. The word groupie in English was often used by both musicians and fans. Fans would often claim “I’m not a groupie.” When I asked musicians if they were inspired by any specific musicians, female or non-female, most participants answered firmly they were not the “having-idols-type” or were dismissive. They did not just verbally step back from that label, but they also revealed to avoid groupie behaviour towards male bands/musicians. For instance, they avoid looking like groupies by not asking for autographs and not being around male musicians all the time. This indicated that “groupie” is a stigma, and, as found by Schippers, it circulated as a discourse of regulation (Schippers, 2002, p. 65, p. 91). However, to be a groupie in Portugal referred not so much to engaging in prolific sexual activity with musicians, as it was framed in the USA, rather groupie refers to be immature and mindless.<sup>191</sup>

Rute Fevereiro described that once she set up a band and became a musician, her identity as a musician was established. Then, she would not run the risk of being placed in the groupie category (also found by Bayton, 1998, p. 97). In fact, every time women’s identity as a musician was not recognized they ran the risk of being mistaken as a groupie. Shelley Barradas’ story makes this explicit. Shelley went to a music workshop, and she was invited by the foreign musicians to have dinner with them. However, according to Shelley, the event promoters did not allow her in, which she attributed to being mistaken for a groupie.

If the participants refused groupie behaviour towards men, women would often label themselves as groupies of their (female) bandmates or groupies of peers (female friends’ musicians)<sup>192</sup>.

### 9.3: Inspiring women

Because women rockers are “rare”, interviewees claimed that watching a woman on stage was “inspiring”. It is especially inspiring if she was “a good

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<sup>191</sup> Somehow stupid (to be dazzled and seduced by boys and men in bands). In this sense groupie is closer to a working-class woman.

<sup>192</sup> On the other hand, groupie is not used for men (as found by Schippers, 2002). When a man acts as a “groupie”, he is called a “stalker” (both terms are used in English).

musician”<sup>193</sup> (musical competence) with “attitude” (with a charismatic, strong on-stage presence).

The inspiring women musicians with whom interviewees identified with, who could act as role models, were mostly the well-known Anglo-Saxon rockers like Patty Smith, Kim Gordon, Joan Jett, d’Arcy, Kathleen Hannah, Cat Power, but also Nina Simone. Regarding Portuguese women rockers, Xana was often mentioned as an icon. The importance of “the attitude” in the making of a rocker (and not necessarily the music itself) led to some interesting blurring of genre boundaries. For instance, Anarchicks claimed that Amália (Portuguese fado singer) could be thought of as the mother of Portuguese rock. Diana Peste also claimed that Zeca Afonso (a protest singer songwriter) could be hailed the father of Portuguese punk.

Interviewees that were musicians often mentioned their peers, other “local” women musicians, as being inspiring women they admired. There was also a generational issue at stake: the older participants were, the fewer female role models they had growing up. In the group interview with the four female “growlers,” the younger three (in their early twenties) regarded the German Angela Gossow (Arch Enemy) as a role model. But for Sofia Silva (in her early thirties) it was Rute Fevereiro (in her early forties) that was an inspiration, after she watched her performing:

She [Rute Fevereiro] had a different attitude! And she’s like... she’s like an iron lady to me! Because she would stand up, and she could take all that pressure in those times, and in a chick’s band... I don’t know how she did it. But she made it. And with all those guys making comments, shouting, catcalling, even throwing things at them... And she was standing up there [on-stage].

Naming and praising women peers (their female bandmates, their female friends’ musicians) worked as a performative account of admiration. The “inspiring female peers” discourse (which translates into cooperative practices as seen in previous chapters) is a micro-political feminist act, as it provided discursive spaces for recognition of women’s musicianship.

Female role models, peers or popular female rock musicians, were important to the participants. Also, the under-representation of women in male delineated

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<sup>193</sup> Musical quality was important not just to re-configure new roles for women, but to create positive stereotypes.

instruments and music worlds did not derive, in a straightforward manner, from the lack of female role models (Clawson, 1999a; O'Neill & Harrison, 2000).<sup>194</sup> In fact, most participants were inspired by male musicians to take up instruments, and even rejected other women as role models. Christina Quest took male performers (Aerosmith, Steve Vai) as her models. She found Joan Jett's performance, who was considered to be a paragon of a "hard rocker" for other interviewees, as being "too cheesy, too soft, and not aggressive enough."<sup>195</sup>

Anarchicks also warned: "it's not just because we see a chick playing that we're gonna like her and support her! She has to be good!" On one hand, by privileging music itself as a criterion, and not the sex status of its player, women were refusing male standards and journalistic exclusionary discourses that worked to peculiarize women performers by lumping women altogether, no matter their musical style or ability (N. Coates, 1997; Leonard, 2007, p. 32; I. R. Martins, 2012). On the other hand, in the masculinist field of rock, this could also be seen as following male standards of judging women more harshly.<sup>196</sup> This was also reported in Cohen's work (Sara Cohen, 1991) and among female punk fans who "colluded with the males in making sure that all subsequent girls would be subjected to the same tests" (Leblanc, 1999, p. 122). A major difference must be pointed out here: while male musicians approached women musicians as bad musicians by default, women musicians approached other musicians as potentially good, despite still having to prove themselves.

Inês Clemente changed her musical taste. Inês was not fond of female musicians, on the contrary. "Before I didn't even identify with those [female] musicians... and probably I wouldn't care for those [riot grrrrl] bands. I would listen to a chick's voice and suddenly, it didn't sound that good!". By re-valuing her taste hierarchy, re-gendering it, she also reframed her previous dislike of

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<sup>194</sup> It happens in the complex intersection of representations, social opportunities and cultural resources for action. We can also learn from game studies here: there is not a straightforward relationship between increasing female avatars (making video games "girl friendly") to get more female gamers, as the picture is much more complex. There are socialised patterns of play - gaming is subject to situation and context (Carr, 2006; Kerr, Aphra, 2003). Gender is not the only variable intersecting with patterns of play, and the analysis should avoid essentialist notions of gender (Cassell & Jenkins, 2000). Games demand specific gender performances, and it can be difficult for girls managing femininity, while playing (Walkerdine, 2006, p.522).

<sup>195</sup> Auslander (2004) found that Suzie Quatro was not a fan of Grace Slick (Jefferson Airplane) for the same reason (the same was found by Clawson).

<sup>196</sup> The participants, especially in female bands, privileged collaboration over competition. Negative discourses on women musicians, however, circulated (female rivalry and female competitiveness), although to a lesser extent.

female voices as prejudiced (sexism). Becoming a feminist was articulated through gendering her musical taste and she started paying attention to women singers and their lyrics; she started “hearing” female voices.

### Summary

Rock musicianship enacts a specific version of femininity: committed and hard worker, but also having fun. Women musicians claimed they were not being “taken seriously.” Achieving high standards of musicianship and displaying commitment were strategies to back up their claims of worthiness. This avoided jeopardizing their musical value and enabled recognition in their rock worlds. Part of this strategy implies othering women (non-musicians, fans); and naming and praising female musicians as “inspiring,” but not without subjecting them to musical scrutiny first.

### III – Instruments in the hands of rock(h)ers

In this section, I will detail how gender identities are constructed as mediated through each of the four common instruments in the rock band: the voice, the electric guitar, the bass and the drum kit. As instruments are appropriated they become an active ingredient in participants' socio-musical gendered identities.

Musical and non-musical roles in the rock band are underpinned by an instrumental ecology. In the rock band, the electric guitar performs solos and it is the melody instrument. On the other hand, the drums are the rhythm instrument, the timekeeper, in charge of structuring the songs – “it’s the song’s skeleton” (Teresa). Interviewees referred to the electric guitar and the drums in terms of their technically demanding skills; they were considered to be the two most difficult instrument to play (Christina Quest). Situated between the guitar and the drums, the bass has been described by the participants as an accompanying instrument that was easier to play.

Outside of the performing band, instruments have different roles too. Guitars were closely connected to singing and songwriting, but with the bass and drums “it’s harder to compose songs” (Rita Barreto). That is also why guitar and bass playing, as well as singing, are activities mentioned as pleasurable on their own –many mention to practice/rehearsal, alone at home; and guitars and bass playing can be a pleasurable solitary, domestic, musicking activity (Killick, 2006).

Instruments, including the voice,<sup>197</sup> also configure musicians' bodily actions and conduct. The shape, weight, size, playing conventions and gender stereotypes of each instrument configures bodily action, gestures, corporeal action, and the range of body movement (eg: standing up, sitting down, hitting, running, jumping, opening the mouth, closing your eyes). For instance, while one can quietly pluck the strings of a guitar, “you can’t play the drums in a quiet/steady manner/quietly” (Zélia).

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<sup>197</sup> I will use the word instrument to include the voice, and the verb “play” to include not just instrumental playing, but singing as well, in order to avoid cumbersome sentences.

In this sense, different instruments enable ‘multiple body’ enactments (Mol, 2002) and bodies are musically composed (DeNora, 2000; Frith, 1996) and instruments are sensually experienced.

On-stage rock music performance implies an ideal or authentic body type for the musicians: the moving, flamboyant, interactive, body. As with popular musicians interviewed by Green (2001), these interviewees value feel, expression and passion over technique. Musicians’ on-stage feel and expressiveness is accomplished through emotional labour (Hochschild, 1979), that is embodied, referred to as embodied emotional labour by Pettinger (2015). Musicians’ embodied emotional labour is also related to their instrumental role. Successful narratives of musicianship are about achieving “corporeal mastery” (Sanders, Clinton, 2006, p. 207) and embodied competences (Driver & Bennett, 2015; Pettinger, 2015), by controlling specific parts of the body (the voice, the fingers, the hands) according to each instrumental role – and achieving bodily coordination. This is especially true for drummers.

Narratives of musicianship are both about bodily pleasure (the embodied, physical pleasure of just playing) and bodily pain (bleeding fingers, back pain). In fact, the same bodily state, such as bleeding fingers, can be framed as musical failure (Luisa) or as a sign of musical improvement (Teresa) and musical competence: “It was a hardcore band, and I would just use the fingers, not the pick. I finished the rehearsals with my fingers bleeding. It was brutal, but felt good.” (Shelley Barradas). Different body signs, such as calluses, are representative of skill or incompetence, depending on the instruments:

If you have a bad technique in the drums, you get calluses and blisters. If you play the drums and have calluses it’s not a good sign, drummers are not supposed to have those. But if you’re a bassist it’s ok, in fact, you need calluses. (Shelley Barradas)

Musicians’ bodies are enacted within an instrumental ecology. Methods of learning, playing conventions and body techniques, are appropriated by women users of voice, guitars, strings and drum kits. As with the ballet dancers studied by Wainwright (as cited in DeNora, 2014, p. 54), beyond the individual embodied habitus, there is an embodied musical-instrumental habitus (being able to play a specific instrument or singing) and a band habitus (being a member of a specific rock band).

I consider how and in what specific occasions *playing* and *gender* mutually shape each other, how and when the use of each specific instrument is a musical material against which gender is constructed and acted upon.

## 10: The rock voice pathways

The voice is a (biologically embodied) instrument (Frith, 2008; Oakland, MacDonald, & Flowers, 2013). I consider the voice's parameters, such as pitch, register, intensity (loudness) and timbre. These are not musicological givens, but are considered in their performativity (Eidsheim, 2009), as they are learned and performed, experienced differently across genres and bands. These vocalists' voice pathways are, at the same time, pathways to the performance of gender identity.

Rock music scholarship has primarily been concerned with lyric writing rather than the voice itself, with some notable exceptions (A. Bennett, 2012). Walser argues that "before any lyrics can be comprehended, before harmonic or rhythmic patterns are established, timbre instantly signals genre and affect" (Walser, 1993). Shepherd (1991, p. 171) has compared vocal timbres of "cock rock" (rasping timbres) with those of "soft rock". Timbre is a fundamental voice parameter when analysing singing, as rock vocal style is conventionally heard by its "harsh, abrasive timbres" (Leonard, 2007, p. 96). When rock's female voices are described as "rasping female rock vocals", it imply that either women became one of the boys (as for Shepherd), or that it is an expression of female anger (Leonard, 2007, p. 97).

Following empirically the participants' voices' pathways, I consider the implications this has for the performance of vocalists' and their singing voices, in terms of gender and genre. Vocal identity plays an important role in the sense of self, including a gendered sense of self (Monks, 2003; Rolvsjord & Halstead, 2013; Stras, 2010). Singers assessed their voices critically and saw themselves as active agents in shaping it; their voices were acted upon, reflexively. Voice pathways are built by mobilizing musical genres and specific vocal techniques of each genre, role model voices, and gender identities and expectations –

vocalists use their voices to do and undo genre-specific femininities and masculinities.

### *Voices' across genres*

Alice was eighteen years old and already a long history in music making. At the age of seven, she started singing in a children's choir, singing classical and religious music. At the age of ten, she took piano lessons (a classical music repertoire and Disney songs). At the age of twelve, she joined her friends' punk rock band, as a vocalist. This was the moment when Alice gave up on piano and started learning electric guitar. One year after she joined the band, she decided to take voice lessons at a music academy and at a jazz school, to improve her vocal performance and to push further band's capabilities. As Alice became involved in formal voice lessons, her voice was reevaluated and experienced again:

Alice: My first singing teacher told me: "you have a nightingale's voice" – because my voice can reach really high notes – and she said I should go classical, because at the Music Academy/Conservatory they lacked female singers above soprano. And that's where my voice fits. She convinced me: "you will stand out!" [...] so I went to the Music Academy/Conservatory, and I really liked to sing classical, I felt good, because... it's a vocal range that I feel comfortable with. But... it's boring! It demands a lot of technical training, and to be honest, rehearsing so many hours for something that I won't be needing in my future, as I don't want to become an opera or a classical singer! (laughs)... So, I got sick of it... Then I went to the Jazz School, and my teacher convinced me that my voice was perfect for jazz, so I kept trying singing jazz. My voice is soft, is not aggressive. And she told me: "you can't sing that loud! You can't sing rock!" So I started convincing myself that I wouldn't sing rock. But what I love the most is to sing rock. (laughs) that's why I feel frustrated. Because what keeps me going is to sing rock – it's where I can reach those low-pitched, gritty notes! But many people told me: "you don't have a rock voice!"

Rita: but when you were in the band, how was the feedback [towards your voice]?

Alice: that's why I liked it! Before I start having classes, my bandmates used to say I was doing well.

Alice's voice *emerged* over time, in different ways (soft, high, grit). Alice's voice emerged according to where (music genre) her voice was performed, and for whom it was performed (rock band mates, classical voice teacher, jazz teacher). Having a soft or high voice is not incompatible with singing rock. She

kept singing in the punk band. This is instead a specific form of enacting a kind of voice, it is a specific *mode of knowing* a voice. These experts' opinions actively constructed her voice as proper for jazz and classical, and, as a side-effect, they simultaneously construct it as an unsuitable rock voice. This classificatory activity enabled and constrained Alice's opportunities for action across different musical genres. There is a voice classified as in/proper for some musical genres and not others. The voice is multiple. There is no coherent voice, but a voice made from a set of tensions. These classificatory operations impact her voice and her life: she does not want to be a classical singer, nor a jazz singer. As her voice was externally acted upon, she used this set of tensions (that were derived from expert opinions, bandmates' opinions and her own feelings), to reassess her voice in her own terms:

Alice: The diversity [of musical genres] sometimes is negative, because I can never find my ground, so I'm always a bit lost between one style and another, and I can't settle down seriously in one style.

R: but do you see that as negative?

M: yes, maybe... It's something I like, and it gives me security, but at the same time... well, maybe it's laziness, but I don't want to find that musical style to which I could really connect to.

Alice finds sticking to only one musical genre limiting, and therefore, she feels "secure" by passing through different musical genres. Instead of selecting one genre, she chooses to register her voice as fleeting, and develops a vocal identity that is made of these heterogeneous perspectives. Alice opts to embrace her voice multiplicity, her nomadic voice. Detachment from an exclusive musical genre or repertoire afforded her (socio)musical mobility.

Teresa Bento (Terroreza) is in her early forties. She has a low voice. People usually expect her to have "another type of voice, a more feminine voice (laughs)". Teresa does not see herself as unfeminine. She is very happy with her voice because she does not "sound like a Barbie", Teresa Bento sounds like the woman she wants to be: "a rocker has to '*ter feeling*' and has to be tough". Also, Terroreza's voice is extremely valued in her band and its musical style:

What describes my voice? The "cognac" voice!<sup>198</sup> [Laughs] yeah baby! It fits the band, and it fits the musical style we play, my voice is dirty, deep

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<sup>198</sup> The Portuguese expression is "voz de bagaço", meaning it sounds like a rough raspy voice, that would be the consequence of drinking too much bagaço, a type of homemade cognac (associated with a men's drink, although many women drink bagaço).

and un-tuned. (...) Of course, I'll never hit those high-pitch notes like they do with heavy metal! But I'm not worried about that.

The “dirty, deep and un-tuned” voice has vocal authenticity in her “Necro Metal Punk” band, and is valued within heavy metal: Teresa Bento is listed in the “Encyclopaedia Metallum”<sup>199</sup>. This is an example of a female musician using her “vocality and the role of singer as part of an active challenging and disruption of gender “ (Rolvjord & Halstead, 2013, p. 424).

#### *Aligning the voice with the self*

Christina Quest is a professional musician (singer and guitarist) in her early forties. Christina described her personal vocal development as starting with classical music and a church choir, and moved towards rock and jazz. Christina explained to me her “quest” for aligning her voice to her personality:

Rita: how would you describe now your voice, your style...

Christina Quest: my voice used to be an attempt to meet my personality. And nowadays, my voice equals my personality.

Rita: when you sing

Christina Quest: It's me. Before it was... my personality was of someone really strong, strong, and my voice and my body were of someone fragile. I was a “wanna be”! (Laughs)

The voice is part of an identity, and the voice is usually taken to be the actual person as an index of vocal authenticity. Unlike Teresa Bento, Christina Quest sensed the mismatch of her thin, fragile and high-pitched voice with her “strong personality”. Her voice was not “herself”. Her (high pitched) voice was incongruent with her rockness. This is an example of “how the voice is implicated in the ‘production of the body’, the person and their identity” (Rolvjord & Halstead, 2013, p. 422).

This mismatch was overcome by deepening her voice and increasing the raspiness. Timbre was the tool for reconstructing her vocal identity.

Rita: was there any female voice that inspired you, or that you use for rehearsal?

Christina Quest: Many! In the beginning, it was Tina Turner, then Janis Joplin, then my voice was gone! I had surgery. I had to start

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<sup>199</sup> The Encyclopedia Metallum is one of the biggest online metal music archives, international in its scope. Berkers and colleagues draw on its data (n = 350,769) and confirmed the male dominance within metal music production (Berkers, Schaap, & Weij, 2016). Teresa Bento entry: [https://www.metal-archives.com/artists/Teresa\\_Bento/231435](https://www.metal-archives.com/artists/Teresa_Bento/231435).

from scratch. Because, as you can see, I used as references voices that were really hard! It's like you do it on purpose so that your vocal cords get in a bad position and your voice immediately gets deep/hoarse. And I knew the technique, I knew I shouldn't do that, but I wanted my voice to sound like that. So I pushed it. (...)

The deepening process was made by emulating two female rock voices: Tina Turner and Joplin (who idolized Bessie Smith). Not just Christina, but other participants imitated black women's vocal styles, considered authentic powerful voices (racial mimicry), but not always acknowledged (neither its racial origins) in their contributes to rock culture and history (Fast, 2011; Mahon, 2011).

Throughout the process, she used a bad vocal technique. She developed a voice problem (papillomatosis) and had to have surgery. It was thanks to the voice rehabilitation classes with a specific teacher that a musical "awakening" was produced, which she compared to a spiritual one. The final outcome of her voice pathway was to achieve an alignment of her voice to her strong personality. Christina Quest's female masculinity and rock persona was musically mediated by her voice, that she "made it sound like" Tina Turner or Janis Joplin's.

#### *A unique vocal identity*

A non-musical element that alters women's voices are media discourses on female singers. Rute Fevereiro complained that her voices were often described in terms of comparisons with other female voices/women artists:

The vocalist [of Nightwish] started singing opera within the heavy metal genre. All the poor ones that came after her, the unfortunates that, like me, have one or two songs where you will use your operatic voice, you're doomed: you're imitating her! It's a bit stupid. Can't we do something because someone else already did it? We're not imitating/copying, we're using several of the techniques at hand. I also like to sing opera! But people tend to catalogue/classify women in what concerns their voice. But not for men! Men can sing like Bruce Dickinson<sup>200</sup>, and that will be all right. (...) We, women, in what concerns voice, when we're the lead-singer, we have to come up with such an exceptional product, such a different thing, that when they compare you [to other women] they must say: "this one has a personal style". And for men, I don't see that happening. For instance... the falsetto... how many men do you know singing falsetto?

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<sup>200</sup> Iron Maiden's vocalist.

This is a trend in rock music journalism that has been widely studied and criticized (H. Davies, 2001; Feigenbaum, 2005; Leonard, 2007, pp. 65–88). Because singers have no control of these external classificatory operations, they work on their own voices, struggling to create a unique vocal and musical identity. Rute Fevereiro developed a new vocal technique, as I will describe below.

### *Growling in heavy metal*

Rute Fevereiro explained her innovative technique: she performed a quick switch between the lyrical and operatic voice and the growls. It is such an innovative technique that the press reviews of the band sometimes had made the mistake of assuming that the band had two vocalists: one female that performs the lyrical and operatic voice, and a male vocalist that would perform the growls. As she explains me, the difficulty lies not in delivering both voices, but in managing both voices. For instance: she must warm up her voice before singing to get prepared to use her operatic voice, but she must not warm up too much, as her growling will not work if the voice gets too warmed up. She also has to manage the use of the microphone and the mixer. This is why the sound technician has to prepare the check sound for both voices, the operatic and the growling. Due to her innovative technique, she cannot rely so easily on the muffled microphone technique, that is how usually one improves growling:

When you growl, you can equalize the microphone to perform distortion. It's not to add distortion! But the equalization itself reinforces the voice distortion [upon which growls are based]. (...) Equalization it's like make-up: it will reinforce your strengths and disguises your weakness. The equalization of the mixer can reinforce and make your voice look much more powerful.

Carina Domingues is a twenty-year old heavy metal vocalist. She started to sing “clean” and in order to learn how to growl, she watched a DVD tutorial from Melissa Cross, who taught Angela Gossow (Arch Enemy). She explains how she can “sing clean” (a cappella, melodic) and “sing dirty” (screaming, growling), and how she feels a “different person” according to each different vocal style. In order to “sing dirty” or “clean”, she needs to focus. Before she sings, she has to “summon that little demon inside me”, to switch between singing modes. Her vocal ability/skills are not in her throat, but in her head.

Growling is an embodied performance, and it involves experiential change through ritualized play (“summoning” a demon). Carina is able to articulate two different singing voices by tuning-in to two different states of affect and emotion: “clean” and “dirty”.

Carina alters her voice capacity by turning her voice into an object of reflexive awareness (“warm consciousness”, as DeNora (2013) puts it). Carina is harnessing her mind for extending embodied capacity, producing a dramaturgical growling body, thus performing growling embodied work.

#### *To scream or not to scream*

Screaming is a particular rock vocal style. Gottlieb and Wald describe the “strategic use” of the scream by female performers within different musical traditions, from punk to R&B, which is “a radical polysemous nonverbal articulation which can simultaneously and ambiguously evoke rage, terror, pleasure and/or primal self-assertion” (Gottlieb & Wald, 1994, pp. 261–262).

In the Anglo-Saxon context, female screaming vocals have been equated with feminist resistance or an expression of personal female anger, or, on the contrary, as becoming one of the boys. As Leonard (2007, p. 97) points, such a perspective ignores genre conventions, denies the agency of vocalists and marginalizes women as musicians: “Their [vocal] delivery is understood as a channelling of internal rage rather than as the adoption of a rock convention”.

Considering themselves the Portuguese representatives of the riot grrrl movement, the (male-centred) band Dead By Pregnancy points out that the band is distinctive insofar as they are always fronted by a female vocalist. As Dead By Pregnancy state, this vocalist is “a girl who screams. Whatever she feels like. That’s what we want to pass on. That’s rock’s toughness”. They musically label themselves “Angry Grrrl”. However, what the band frames as female empowerment, might be dismissed by audiences, as Dead By Pregnancy have overheard: “oh, a chick screaming, even I could do that!”.

Carina Frazão, vocalist for eight years in a hardcore/nu metal band, explains that one of her characteristics as a hardcore vocalist, is that she sang “in a melodic way”. Her band was composed of three vocalists and it was the male vocalist that performed the screams. She explained that she had no formal

musical training, and she used to practice her voice, at home, by listening to Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston. She equates screaming with a (vocal) masculine trait, therefore, she claims that women can have a “powerful voice” with no need to scream.

Rita: Is there a proper “hardcore voice”? What makes a voice hardcore-appropriate?

Carina: it has to be a powerful voice! It can be... I don't like hardcore female vocalists that scream like boys do. Because I think that's not part of the feminine thing/stuff/way of being.

Rita: ok...

Carina: I think a woman can be powerful on stage and be powerful when you listen to her on the radio, whatever, when you're listening to her without seeing her, or when you're watching and listening to a concert... a woman can get there [powerfulness] with no screaming. I don't like to watch women acting as men.

Rita: ok

Carina: because I think screaming is a masculine trait/feature/property. Screaming is not part of the feminine vocal device/equipment. It's not, I'm sorry. Unless that, naturally, you have a husky voice. There you go: hoarseness.

Despite screaming being part of the vocal repertoire of this genre, is framed by Carina Frazão as un-feminine, as “women acting out as men”. Hence, she chooses not to scream. Instead, she sings melodic. Carina Frazão *affirms* femininity (Green, 1997) through her (melodic) singing voice. We have previously seen how Carina Frazão described herself as both “tough” and “soft” (female masculinity): she balances acting tough (masculine), with her (feminine) voice. For Carina, femininity is musically mediated and her singing voice becomes a template for gender-appropriate behaviour.

#### *Backing vocals to the front*

Andreia Ferreira, a drummer, expanded her musical role and became a backing vocalist as well. She framed her new musical role as “helping out” the male singer and the band. As a woman, she claims, her voice sounded different from the male vocalist's, thereby contributing to the band's sonority in a unique manner:

It's something I could do [backing vocals] and it makes easier the vocalist's job/work/task. Because I, as a girl, I can reach higher pitch notes than he does – and he can reach high notes already! But me, as a girl – there you go, the advantage of being a girl – my voice is the more

high-pitched voice than his, so I can reach the notes we have to reach, and I can sing in tune.

What is usually considered a supportive role in relation to the lead singer (Fast, 2009; Frith, 1996, p. 187) was now appreciated as a detail that makes the difference, hence, as an important musical role, improving the song as a whole.

#### 10.1: Vocalists' embodied and emotional work

Interviewees claim that a vocalist is much “more than a voice”. The vocalist has two musical roles: as a singer and as a front person. The vocalist is expected to be personally expressive, to convey emotion and is required to show attitude, as well as interacting with the audience and have a leadership role. Vocalists might become “the face of the band”, which might, to some extent, threaten the band's egalitarian ideology (Weinstein, 2004a, 2004b). Therefore, many women vocalists reassured the egalitarian character of their participation:

We're really a band in that sense: the voice is not the main band's feature. And if a song can stand without voice, it does. So voice is more of an instrument, more of a melodic line, a small add-on (Clara)

I don't agree that the band is the singer, the band is the whole! When I look at the band, I look at the whole! (Carina Frazão)

Only vocalists did this kind of “remedial work” (Goffman, 1971, pp. 108–118) by stating the vocalists' allegiance to the band; the vocalist can be praised by its singing, but not standing out, avoiding the potential disruption of the band's egalitarian ethos. The act of step on the stage is not an everyday experience, but a necessary moment in the musicians' career. It can be frightening, as musicians will be exposed and scrutinized<sup>201</sup>. Stepping onstage often goes against the grain of people who self-identify as shy or introvert. The historical and gendered specificity of shyness (S. Scott, 2006) also integrates the repertoire of rock music subjectivities and performance conventions by distancing from it, as in heavy metal, or by embracing it, as in indie (Bannister, 2006). Shyness can be a threat to the dynamics of stage interaction. It disrupts

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<sup>201</sup> Especially criticism from other fellow musicians (this is not an exclusive gendered phenomenon). As Zélia described it: “if you're shy, there's no worst experience than being on stage with everyone looking at you. And when there are guys from other bands, they're just there scrutinizing you, catching all your little mistakes”.

the expectation that musicians will display a certain level of interactional competence. After all, musicians do interactive service work (Pettinger, 2015). Being on stage can be a harsh experience, especially for vocalists, the front-person, who are expected to assume the leadership role. The shy vocalists interviewed found strategies to cope with shyness, such as not looking directly at the audience or delegating the inter-song chat to other bandmates. Others developed, little by little, onstage confidence. Sara is an interesting case of how the incorporation of the microphone and amplification worked to help her develop this confidence:

When I'm in my daily life, I'm really shy and retracted. But when I'm on stage, people don't recognize me, I feel differently, I have the microphone in front of me, and it's like if the microphone would give us power! The power to speak up, it gives us vocal power. (Laughs) If you tell me to sing without a microphone, like *a capella*, I would probably be a bit shy and I couldn't sing. If you give me a microphone, I can sing. (...) The microphone gives me security, I don't know why (laughs), It's just my voice amplified, but it would immediately give me security.

The microphone afforded Sara to detach her voice from her self, by amplifying that same voice. Sara's voice became loud and ubiquitous. At the same time, Sara conceals the rest of her (female) body. She does not like to draw the attentions, so she tones down her appearance. Sara's body is enacted in multiple ways: she goes loud and unnoticed. She is made visible through amplification and made invisible through clothing.

Other ways of dealing with shyness are negative for women's rock careers. Patrícia refused to gig with the band. Instead, she just recorded the voice that would be played at the gigs. And the band soon broke-up, without a performing vocalist. Sofia Silva quit singing for a period in her life:

I put it all behind now. But back then I was really criticized. And I end up quitting because of that. Back then I was really shy. And I had almost no female role models, except Rute Fevereiro, which was my role model, but she sang and held a guitar!

Criticism, as part of rock music organisational culture, has been reframed as the individual problem of shyness. Shyness is lived as an undesirable personal feature, associated with vulnerability, which puts shy in disadvantage (especially in rock worlds). When shyness is not overcome is seen as a personal failing. What Scott found, does apply here. A tacit moral order is being

breached by the shy , for they appear to others not to be capable of taking criticism (S. Scott, 2004, p. 128), in this case, not being able to deal with audience and fellow musicians' scrutiny. This reassures that the stage is a space where assertiveness, toughness and self-confidence are rewarded as "emotional capital" (S. Scott, 2004, p. 123).

Overcoming shyness is accomplished by keeping on-stage, being exposed to criticism and resisting it. Shyness can be overcome by individual resilience, self-determination and by building a "shield" (Zélia). This can also have non-musical consequences offstage:

I'm not so afraid of... stepping into a confrontational situation. It's not that I'm aggressive or violent. But now, in those everyday situations... maybe before I would shy away from conflicts.

When musicians overcome shyness, the stage is reconfigured as a route out of shyness, as a practice of the assertiveness of the self. The stage becomes a "regime of self-improvement" (Lupton as cited in Scott, 2004, p. 123). The stage becomes a technology of the assertive self.

Singers are usually responsible for writing the lyrics (Green, 2001, p. 80; Weinstein, 2004a), but lyric writing can also be a pathway for becoming a vocalist. For the lead vocalists I interviewed, lyric writing is seen not just as part of the job, but mostly as a way of achieving an authentic and emotional singing performance. As Rute Fevereiro claims: "to feel what I sing, I have to write my own lyrics". Therefore, singing is not an expression of emotions. Singing involves pre-stage activities such as writing the lyrics, and is a resource in the construction of the "emotionality of singing" (Clawson, 1993, p. 245).

The most common creative process regarding lyric writing was to put the lyrics on top of the song, a process timely separated from the rest of the music-making process. Therefore, the vocalists' bandmates do not know the lyrics, and they usually "don't give a damn!", as vocalists complain. Rute Fevereiro regards this attitude as lack of recognition, but on the other hand, she feels the freedom to write whatever she likes without any scrutiny.

Clara, on the other hand, gets upset when her bandmates make suggestions over her singing choices that do not resemble her lyric intentionality, showing their ignorance of the lyrical content:

For me, it's the music that suggests the lyrics. And if I'm singing, I know what I'm singing! I know how I made the link [between the song and the words]. And sometimes they go: "oh, you could do this here", and I'm like: "no!" For instance, there's a song whose lyrics are about love. It's kind of light, but in the end, it kills. The song has a crescendo, and they [bandmates] say: "you should sing with more intensity here!", but it makes no sense! I'm being sweet in that part of the song. And I go "if you'd read the lyrics you wouldn't suggest that!" And I don't do it as they say.

By refusing to sing songs the way her bandmates wanted her to, Clara was able to assert her power over the authorship of the lyrics, and sing her own way.

It was previously noted how Christina Quest was refused the role of lead guitarist and encapsulated as a singer. However, as a singer, she gained some power in the male band: "I was the vocalist, and I had a saying... but only when it comes to singing! Because when it came to playing, we would do it their way...".

Women string players that became solely vocalists, such as Carolina, Sílvia and Carla, also described their different instrumental roles as a different bodily experience:

I could walk around on stage, having fun, dancing, I love to dance, I've always done. (...) Despite it took me some time to get used to sing without the guitar, which was like a crutch... but then it was really rewarding, to be able to sing without the guitar, having another kind of freedom... (...) I would dance, I would try to impersonate what I was singing .... I would feel everything on each part of myself.... (Sílvia)

Being pushed out from the strings to singing means losing a musical opportunity of engaging with the guitar, but it means gaining a new body, the performing singing and dancing body.

### Summary

The answer to "what is a rock voice" is not in the voice's ontology, but in the voice's performativity. There is no pure, unmediated voice. Voice is mediated by gender, media and its classificatory schemes and other social discourses, situated contexts (a good voice for this band); vocal techniques and genre conventions (deepening, growling, screaming), female role model's voices (black women), technologies (the microphone). Vocalists are active agents in the construction of their voices' pathways.

## 11: Gendering the strings

Electric guitar and bass are two different instruments with different features<sup>202</sup> and gendered socio-musical discourses around them: the iconic electric guitar in its male leadership role of the guitar hero and guitar God *versus* the feminised bass as a “resort of failed guitarists” (Clawson, 1999b). How do women navigate these discourses as they engage with these string instruments?

### 11.1: Latching on to the power of the electric guitar

The great divide between the soft acoustic and the loud electric guitar has marked the history of the instrument (Waksman, 1999), and is re-enacted in interviewees’ discourses. Turning electric is an important embodied experience for female guitarists. Getting an electric guitar and playing it is seen as an empowering, physical experience. The transition from acoustic to electric guitar, almost twenty years ago, is described by Carolina very vividly:

I was eleven when I bought my first electric guitar, in Continente, it costed me thirty *contos*<sup>203</sup>. I was saving up my pocket money. All I wanted was rock’n’roll! And I quit the acoustic guitar. That’s when I joined a small band. (...) Bruce Springsteen was a guitarist, that was rock!, And I wanted to play rock.

Doing rock’n’roll is to play the guitar and join a band; the electric guitar conveys rock itself. Even interviewees who did not own or play the electric guitar described how they played air guitar, usually at home, alone, to feel empowered and/or to vent. For one of the oldest interviewees, a fan, to be a rocker is to enjoy herself at the concerts, to the point of playing air guitar alone, but in the crowd (refusing femininity ideals of dancing with a partner).

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<sup>202</sup> However, they have material resemblances as electric string instruments. The guitar has usually six strings, the bass has four, but they are both constituted by a body, a fingerboard and a neck. Also, string players share the importance of acoustic guitar in their early musical beginnings. Only one interviewee start playing electric guitar directly: Alice proudly explains that she could convince the jazz school she attended to teach her electric guitar – and not start acoustic, as they wanted her to do.

<sup>203</sup> Continente is a Portuguese supermarket chain [like Sainsbury], and the price is mentioned in the Portuguese currency of the time, escudos (the guitar costed approximately one hundred and fifty pounds).

When the interview with Christina Quest commenced, Christina said “I’m going to fetch my [electric] guitar now, I never give interviews or talk without my guitar”. Christina Quest wants her (visual) identity attached to the electric guitar. Despite she started to learn and play acoustic guitar<sup>204</sup>, she currently refuses to show in public with her acoustic guitar, in order to differentiate herself from women who play “soft” instruments. This is part of her branded self as a rock musician, and also a preventive strategy against some strands of music journalism who focus on women’s appearance instead of musical skill.

Rute Fevereiro also claims distinctiveness as a woman musician. Rute Fevereiro distinctive musical identity consists in merging the roles of lead singer and lead guitarist also performing solos.

Guitarists that were interviewed were concerned with developing their own instrumental identity. That meant working hard, practising and developing technical ability.

Guitarists pointed to a gender distinctiveness regarding guitar playing. Rute Fevereiro claimed that men tend to play faster to prove themselves as “badasses”. She felt the pressure to play faster, with complex musical passages, in order to be recognized as a good guitarist. Christina Quest also claimed that although every guitarist is concerned about technical issues, men tend to be “obsessed” with technique, speed and competition over technique. Christina Quest also explained that in the “quest” for her sound, she had to achieve the balance between technical issues and expression.

Despite Christina sings and plays other instruments, it is the guitar with which she identifies the most. Christina claims that she finds the “aggressiveness” of her “personality” mirrored in the guitar’s flamboyant playing performances and distortion possibilities. Different from her phenomenological relation with her voice, the electric guitar *affirms* Christina Quest *female masculinity*. Rock “is attitude” and guitar playing is the “rock thing”:

Rita: But what is that “rock thing”?

Christina: the thing about rock, it’s an attitude. It’s to use a controlled aggressiveness. Technically, for example: the palm mutes. (...) In the guitar, it’s all about the right hand and the distortions you use. You almost can imagine the distortion. If I play this [plays] you can tell is

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<sup>204</sup> Christina Quest was the only interviewee reporting to have a female mentor, that lent her an acoustic guitar and gave her some tips, inspiring her not only because she “played well”, but also because she composed songs.

aggressive. And I'm not even using the foot pedal distortion. Look: the hand is always moving, all your body, and if I do this [stands up] even more

We can see how rock and guitar's "aggressiveness" is musically mediated by techniques such as palm mutes and distortion. In the electric world of rock, the development of a personal sound is not separated neither from technique, nor from the music technology guitarists' use. The latter is illustrated by Beatriz Rodrigues:

I have the combo [amp] and my guitar... I would never swap them! (...) I love the way valves sound. My amp is a blues fender junior, red, it's a valve amp, it has a warm sound, very peculiar, and I get the distortion by saturation. I play [around] with the master and the volume, and I get different kinds of saturation. Also, it has reverb. Awesome! (...) From the moment I found this "valve sound" I never wanted to work with anything else. It's really my sound!

The valve amp is the Beatriz's particular way of shaping "her sound"<sup>205</sup>. The "warm", "organic" sound from the valve amp is what perfectly balances the "too [much] electric" sound of her beloved twelve-year old guitar.

#### 11.2: Claiming value for the bass

Women are relegated to the role of bassists when joining bands. However, this is not experienced as downgrading in any way. Rita Barreto illustrated how the change from the electric guitar to the bass can be framed as a vocation:

I volunteered to play the bass [in the band] as long as it was necessary. But then I fell in love with it! And I never quit playing. I was really made for it!

Playing the bass is experienced not only as musical participation in a band, but as a vocation, a passion. We have seen how Teresa was relegated to the bass, and here is how she appropriated the instrument:

I already had in mind [playing] the bass, because I really love the deep tones. The sound's pitch ... for me, the deep tones are the prettiest notes of all, the ones I love to listen to the most.

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<sup>205</sup> The valve amp as part of developing her own sound is an outcome of the history of the electric guitar that transformed the control of noise elements, such as feedback and distortion, as a core element of mastering the modern electric guitar (Ostberg & Hartmann, 2015; Théberge, 1997, p. 191). As Waksman comments "guitarists have viewed the electric guitar not simply as a way of making music, but as a means of shaping sound" (Waksman, 1999, p. 9).

The “deep tones” are the most valuable bass’ feature among all the bass players interviewed. It is by foregrounding timbre – its low range – at the expenses of other musical parameters that these women circulate counter-discourses of the bass as the easy-to-play and unattractive instrument.

Female masculinity is musically mediated by bass timbre (deep tones) and its size (bigger than the guitar). The feminization of the bass works to relegate the instruments’ musical value. Resisting the bass’ depreciation, women employ value parameters that are gender delineated with masculinity: “The bass can be read here as a “masculine” instrument in terms of its production of noise in the lower registers” (Halberstam, 2006, p.14). As Clawson also noted “if placed within the cultural sphere of orchestra and band instruments, the bass would be defined as masculine” (Clawson, 1999b, p. 203).

Another valued characteristic is the bass’ musical role within the band and its supportive role.

I like to accompany. I like to set up the ground. It’s part of my personality. Because you carry a bit of yourself into the instrument you play. I like to set up the ground, so that other people can explore and be at ease. I like to go along, accompany people. I never wanted to be the singer of a band. I don’t have the voice, but even if I did, it’s not part of the role that I like to play, that I want to play, in music. (Teresa)

This musical supportive role is also enhanced when the bass connects with the drums – achieving the song’s structure. By highlighting the structural role of timekeeping, the star status of the guitar in the band becomes relativised: “The guitar is at the top everything, like an accessory, while the bass and the drums are building up all the rhythmic structure and the most basic melodic structure” (Patrícia).

Bass’ rhythmic and melodic features combined, make it the best of both worlds, a complete instrument, also in composition:

Because the bass marks/keeps the time, and it also has a melody, I can imagine the drum’s contra-tempo, and also the melody and the solo of the guitar... to play the bass has that magic! (Rita Barreto)

What is valued here is not the leadership role of the guitar with its individual character and solos features, but the relational, intermediary and supportive character of the bass.

In their joint interview, the bassist Teresa, and the drummer Zélia, highlight how the cooperation between the two timekeeping instruments allow for band's creativity to flourish, allows for the "musical flow" that is the song structure, "setting up the ground" for the band. The fit between the drums and the bass affords musical and ontological security for the other band members, providing the conditions for group creativity. It is bass' relational role that is valued for being able to connect with the drums and keep the time, structuring the songs. The dominant discourse suggests that the bass is as an easy-to-play instrument with a faster learning curve (Clawson, 1999b, p. 199). Despite some women claiming that they moved from guitar to bass because they felt it was easier to play<sup>206</sup>, women have also made musical claims for the complexity of bass playing. For instance, Joana Longobardi, bass player of the popular band Mão Morta, and a classically trained musician, claimed that every instrument is demanding if one wants to play it well.

Ana Mateus, who briefly played in the female band Les Baton Rouge, explained that their bass lines "were some of the most elaborate musical elements". This is especially important for bass players who were relegated to an unwanted instrument that required less skill, and were not encouraged to develop proficiency. This reproduced the role of the bass in the band as the low-skill instrument for low skilled instrumentalists. It is mostly all-female bands that were reported to push the envelope of what a bass can do, enabling new roles for the bass itself and new identities for bassists.

### 11.3: The strings that enact the body

Playing guitar or bass enact the body in different ways, but also the gendered playing conventions pose a challenge to string players.

In the case of the bass, the player's body is constructed in relation to the instrument size. When talking about bass playing, it is the size of the player's body that is measured against the size of the instrument. Sofia Cruz claims that she was "born for the bass", because she is tall and has big hands, so "the bass perfectly fits me". As she adds, "of course, there are small women and men

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<sup>206</sup> And this is one of the popular bass stereotypes that helped in its feminization (Clawson, 1999b, p. 201).

playing the bass”. JD, guitarist, is praising a female bass player that she admires:

She’s very petite, she wears glasses/speckles, but she holds a giant bass! And she plays like hell!!! The gig ended up with her playing almost laying down on the floor!

When referring to the bassist’s instrumental abilities, JD also sets the big sized-bass against the small-sized player’s body<sup>207</sup>. This incongruence is a parameter for value claiming (the aesthetic of dissonant juxtaposition).

The way one chooses to hold the guitar is important for guitarists, and this is especially true for female guitarists. Rock’s masculinist discourses established holding the guitar low down, in front of genitals, at the pelvic level, as a convention (Bayton, 1997, p. 43). Playing conventions and techniques are shaped by rock’s masculinist discourse, but also by instrument design (H. S. Bennett, 1980; Halstead & Rolvsjord, 2017; Waksman, 1999).

If guitar solos feature in virtually every heavy metal song (Walser, 1993, p. 50), three-chord songs prevail in punk. If one does solos, “they have to have the guitar a bit upper. The ones who just play chords they can lower it down”, explains Christina Quest. Beatriz Rodrigues describes how her guitar performance changes according to the different bands which play different musical styles – rock and punk:

With my own band I use a lot fingering techniques. So it’s harder. But in the other band, it’s a garage punk band, I use more attack chords, so it’s easier – I don’t have to look [to the fingerboard] so often

Being able to take physical movement for granted allows for the “flow” of playing and performance (Pettinger, 2015, pp. 287–288). To achieve an effortless left-hand reaching the fingerboard is easier when playing punk: “every musical style as the creation of human bodies entails correspondingly constituted tactile facilities for its performers” (Sudnow, 1978, p. 13).

Compared to the guitar, the bass is heavier, its strings are thicker and less flexible, demanding greater strength, but less dexterity (Clawson, 1999b, p. 204). The bass enacts a specific body part – the hand – as skilled. Unlike the

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<sup>207</sup> If interviewees highlight female musicians’ playing skills, men seem to highlight only the appearance. I have overheard a man at a gig, also a bassist: “a girl holding a big bass is so sexy!”.

guitar, that is experience as affording unskilled hands. Different instruments, construct different body parts: “my hand is dumb when I play the guitar”, says Clara. Failed fingers on the guitar, become agile fingers in the bass. The bass is seen as an opportunity for developing a sense of embodied musical accomplishment.

Also instrument design<sup>208</sup> affords different capabilities for the playing body. I asked Sara to show me and describe each of her guitars. Sara explained that the length and size of the fretboard can make it easier or harder to play. Sara bought her guitar as a “learning guitar”. It is a “guitar with a smaller scale” and she can play many notes.

Another important element of guitar and bass designs are the frets and the marker dots on the face of the fretboard. Shelley Barradas explained that she started playing a fretless bass, “like a violin”, so she would play by “sensing the strings” – which makes it harder to play. Sara explains that not only the fretted fingerboard, but the “white squares” allow her to “guide” her “hands” –visual embodied knowledge. However, to look at the fingerboard is also about “feeling more secure” (Sara). For instance, even Shelley Barradas, who learned to play on a fretless bass, likes to look at the fingerboard to avoid contact with audiences. Here, again, we see how shyness gets musically mediated onstage.

I like the audience, but sometimes I like to look at what I’m doing and not looking for what’s going on in front of me, and I rather focus on what I’m doing. But I can play with and without looking [at the fingerboard], it’s really just a personal choice... because I can be really shy...

Rock’s masculinist convention of playing the guitar down can be framed as “playing with style.”As Anarchicks discussed it:

Rita: I’ve heard critiques about women who play the guitars hunched forward...

Katari: well, it’s really rare to see a girl playing with style

Synthetique: But Ana plays with style!

JD: (laughs) Thank you...

Katari: it’s true! Ana plays in a really cool way

By the time of this interview, I did not really understand what it meant to “play with style”. But it became clear in due course. Christina Quest told me: “if they

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<sup>208</sup> For instance, the Fender Esquire, in 1950, reduced the importance of controlling each string’s resonance, allowing a player to cover fingering mistakes (Shuker, 2008, p. 53).

play punk, they'll lower the guitar. Do you know Anarchicks? Their guitarist, Ana Moreira [JD], plays with the guitar really down low". Participants talk about the dilemma referred by other women guitarists (Bayton, 1998, pp. 115–122; Carson et al., 2004, p. 4) either following the convention of the low, and look cool, or play it higher up and not stylishly. However, what some string players referred to as "playing with style", others, mostly the ones who defined themselves as shy, reframed it as "showing off". Some interviewees even mocked the "guy's way of playing": "as if they're masturbating" (Patrícia). Or the sexually suggestive posture, with legs spread wide apart can be ridiculed to "as if they're pooping", said Sara, commenting that such way of playing was a un-womanly position. Most women favour reaching a playing position not according to style or aesthetics, but according to comfort ("handiness"), as Teresa and Zélia discuss it:

Teresa: Rock folks tend to play it really down low. But that's terrible! Because you're curving your hand, you're harming yourself. I play it a bit upper, and that's how I avoid it [tendinitis, RSI].

Zélia: it's about finding what's more comfortable, like Teresa said. And it's like... her way of holding the bass might not be "rock'n'roll", but it was the position that she felt comfortable with. And I think that's the most important: to be comfortable.

Choosing "an instrument that is ergonomically comfortable for the proportions of the individual player, is an issue for all guitarists, regardless of their gender" (Halstead & Rolvsjord, 2017, p. 12). However, playing guitar conventions are narrativised in a gendered way: style versus comfort. Comfort is advised over style, because is the best way to avoiding Repetitive Strain Injury. Comfort can be framed within the discourse of girls having fun while still being responsible (in this case, for their health status).

#### 11.4: Gendering the strings

In this study, women string players described their instruments using gender references. Guitars or basses with big bodies are considered "masculine", and the ones that are smaller or with curves are considered "feminine".

These classifications are made based on "assumed polarities of masculine and feminine bodies-large versus small, low pitched versus high, strong versus weak" (Clawson, 1999b, p. 204). Guitar makers, advertisers and players have

always compared the guitar's body to a woman's (A. Bennett & Dawe, 2001, p. 76; Doubleday, 2008, p. 10).

Sara prefers curvy guitars and dislikes very "pointy" guitars, like the Stratocaster, her first guitar, which she finds "aggressive". However, the choice of the guitar is also related to the musical style she is playing – because she plays soft rock she can use a "Kay", but if she was to play heavy metal or hard rock, then she would play another guitar.

Alice owns a black SG guitar, which she claims to be a "macho guitar" based on their shape, colour and brand.

However, what interviewees considered a "feminine" guitar, more than the shape of the guitar or bass' body, was the colour. Black is "masculine" as opposed to the "feminine" pink, red, light blue and white or pearl – "not that men cannot play blue guitars!", as Alice added. As Christina Quest complained, she is said to play a "male guitar", just because is black and has seven strings.

Moreover, the concern with the guitar's aesthetic (which in this context meant colour) was considered feminine in itself, either by women who claimed to pay attention to aesthetics, as Beatriz Rodrigues, or by women who distance themselves from femininity. That was the case with Patrícia who bought a bass that was "black and white, that's what they had in the shop. It was the most sober. I never liked those fag-ish things (laughs)". Pascoe's (2007) findings in her high school ethnography apply here, too: the label of "fag" has less to do with sexuality than to the performance of masculinity, and a distance from effeminacy. Part of Patrícia's dis-identification with an emphasized femininity strategy also includes marking out her bass choice as functional, as opposed to 'fashionable'. Patrícia is undoing emphasized femininity by sacrificing (feminine) aesthetic concerns for masculine technical performance (Keightley, 1996, p. 159).

## Summary

The electric guitar is discursively constructed synonym for rock music by repeating the association of acoustic guitar to "soft" music and associating the electric guitar with "hard" music, authentic rock'n'roll. Also the bass has been *delineated* feminine, due to women's overrepresentation in bass playing. Women bass players use different parameters to claim bass' value. On one

hand, they use a parameter delineated as masculine: bass' deep tones. On the other hand, bassists un-feminise bass' supportive role, by claiming that its relational role is structuring the songs. By using both these parameters to value bass, they are enabling the circulation of counter-discourses. Sharing the same early acoustic musical origins, and due to the resemblances of the instruments, string players share concerns on appropriating playing conventions. Also, string instruments are gendered based mostly on their colour and size, (re)producing gender binaries.

## 12: The sight of rhythm: women playing the drum kit

Drummers interviewed displayed "drummer pride" for playing one of the most "masculine" instruments.

The drums are related to a great sense of physicality, and the drum kit also configures a specific female body. The idea that the "body is less on show", when is "behind a drum kit" (Bayton, 1998, p. 117) – as opposed to the foregrounded body of the vocalist – should be revised. Female drummers' bodies are not hidden nor absent, they are just as much on display.

The existing studies on drums in popular music point to a very complex, sometimes paradoxical, relationship between the drummer's body and presence and the drum's sound in the context of the musical performance. The sonic dimension and the performance dimension are both in the foreground and in the background, generally speaking. The drum's musical role as a timekeeper allows for those simultaneous musical movements. On the one hand, drumming goes unnoticed, unless something goes wrong "drumming is the backdrop, or part of the accompaniment, to the "figure" of the vocalist/soloist"(Curran, 1996, p. 39). On the other hand, in live performances, "even if the drummer is not the acknowledged "leader" of the group, he or she is often the "field general" on stage" (Curran, 1996, p. 40).

Studies emphasize the role of drummers as timekeepers of the band or ensemble in different musical genres, from jazz (Dempsey, 2008) to rock and heavy metal (Berger, 1997; Curran, 1996; G. D. Smith, 2013), and so do these interviewees. A drummer, in cooperation with the bassist, should keep the time and structure the song.

As Zélia became more experienced playing the drums, she started playing faster (from 100 to 150 bpm), which changed the entire band's performance and it affected the audience:

Teresa: our drummer -- this one here – played faster and faster over the time. But that was great because it afforded an incredible energy at the concerts

Q: why did you speed up?

Zélia: well, if when I started playing I would play at 150 bpm I think I would have collapsed!

“Energy” in a concert, as an emotional collective state, is materially afforded by speeding up (velocity) and it gave Zélia a strong sense of musical agency.<sup>209</sup>

Beatriz Rodrigues started playing the drums at her thirties, when setting up a band with her partner. Playing the drums was an opportunity to happily find oneself to be a “good timekeeper”, adding a new dimension to one’s musical agile self, expanding one’s skills as a musician with the ability to play several instruments.

Rhythm can also be a way of experiencing the passage of time and one’s body. Andreia Ferreira tells me she is always banging on her body and around it as if she was actually playing the drums. This bodily movement and air drumming changes the ways she experiences time. Andreia does it when she is at the doctor’s waiting room, watching TV, and all sorts of mundane activities. Instead of being bored, by air drumming, she feels time flies. Her bodily and time experience become musically entrained with the drums. When the body is realigned with music (rhythm and the imaginary drums), there is a synchronous connection between the two. This mundane rhythmic (glossing Small’s musicking) is part of drummers’ experience and skills<sup>210</sup>.

### 12.1: Strong(er) and loud(er): bodies musically composed

Being a “good” drummer is more than rhythmic skills and technique. Inês Clemente explains she plays “with the whole body”:

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<sup>209</sup> In the rock band she had control over tempo, whereas in electronic music projects her sense of musical agency was confined: she had to align her musical performance with the metronome. Zélia’s experience also reflects the fact that the drummers I interviewed are not so musically confined to styles or genres, unlike Curran’s drummers (rock vs. jazz) (Curran, 1996).

<sup>210</sup> Drummers who did not own a drum kit at home play air drums to practice.

[a well-known musician] used to say that I played “com raça” [very well, and in a distinctive way]. But I never felt that I had another option. This means that to do this [she plays air drums very steady/standing straight] it’s not just doing this; doing this is to do this [plays by moving her body more, and not just the arms]: with the whole body. Less than this it is not enough”

To play “with the whole body” is to perform embodied emotional work. Bending the body during the concert is not part of the “right posture” for playing the drums. However, the drummers’ “bendiness” becomes part of the musical performance: the drummer’s body is being “bent” by the songs, is being affected by the music, as several drummers explained.

Different drum kits afford different bodily postures. The Anarchick’s concert in the underground station required the use of an electronic drum kit. When Katari watched the after-concert videos, she commented she disliked seeing herself playing that drum kit, because she performed with a very “rigid” bodily posture. This bodily posture contrasts with her personal performing style, where she presents a musical feeling body, a drummer’s “suffering” body (see figure 5). The body becomes a site for enacting rock music authenticity. As opposed to ideas of “body as mechanical machine”, the body has to be aligned with ideas of (rock) music as (strong) emotion, as power.



Figure 5 - Katari "suffering the most" (photo from Anarchick's Facebook, commented by Katari herself)

Playing the drums “with whole body” can lead to fatigue/exhaustion after a concert. Katari is improving the management of her bodily state during the concerts: “I feel I’m managing my energy much better. I think I’m getting less fatigued. Before, when I got to the end of the concert, it was like dying!”. Managing fatigue is achieved with the help of a simple material device: the set list. Anarchicks explain they alternate between faster and slower songs during the concert. This line-up is built so the drummer (and the audience) can “take a break” (slower songs do not require so much effort from the drummer).

Discourses on drums construct them as physical instruments, demanding hyperactivity and physical strain (G. D. Smith, 2013) that is associated with masculinity. The interviewees, too, describe the drums as a “physically demanding” instrument.

When interviewees highlight drum’s physicality they contrast it with their (unphysical) body. They highlight their body size (being short) and/or body volume (being thin) when talking about their accomplished identities as female drummers. These bodies are “musically composed” by the drum kit as strong(er) bodies.

The discourses around thin and short bodies position them as fragile. These interviewees, however, present their bodies as agile, coordinated, capable and skilled, musically competent bodies by playing the drums. For instance, Zélia is thin, but by playing the drums, she gained physical strength. Helena Fagundes is another example of co-construction between the body and the drums. Because the drums are physically demanding (makes you “breathless”), Helena gave up smoking to improve her musical performance. Also, during a period when she was depressed to the point she developed a “pre-anorexia”, she forced herself to eat, in order to have bodily strength to play the drums: “the drums saved me. But I only thought about it much later”.

Thus, specific biologic bodily features are reformulated in and through the use of the drums, which become a “prosthetic technology of the body”, heightening and extending bodily capacities” (DeNora, 2000), expanding the material and discursive possibilities of “what bodies can do” (Stacey & Suchman, 2012, p. 2). Drumming narratives are also about physical pleasure. Many interviewees point to the embodied pleasure and enjoyment of playing the drums, which they consider “liberating”, “fun” “therapeutic”, “distressful”.

Then it's just fun! It's a feeling of freedom. And it's great to de-stress. You arrive home, you sit there, and... men, it's great to release all your energy! (Zélia)

It's good so you can feel the music, and, at the same time, you release your energy and adrenaline (Diana Peste)

It's a good way of relaxing, I must tell you, it's a good therapy to play the drums. If I'm stressed, and I play the drums, even if I play it really badly, I feel very relaxed afterwards! (Penélope)

The affordances of playing the drums resemble the findings from the use of drums in music therapy with patients of psychiatric hospitals (D. J. Hargreaves, Miell, & MacDonald, 2012, p. 5). Drummers derive pleasure from the physical vibrations.

#### *Playing with the legs spread out*

In the social history of the drum kit, what are considered the most important technological developments were the development of the modern bass drum pedal in around 1910 and the hit-hat during the 1920s. These developments transformed the drum kit into an instrument that could be played with both the feet and hands (G. D. Smith, 2013, p. 3). These technologies afforded, both then and nowadays, a specific way of playing the drum kit: playing with the legs spread out.

This body position required to play the drums is not compatible with certain displays of femininity, as many interviewees experienced. The physical effort of playing an instrument – not just the drums – is incompatible with a quiet, effortless body. For instance, Sofia Cruz, a bass player, tells me about an “embarrassing” situation: “I don't wear miniskirts [in concerts], because sometimes I also play the drums, just those basic beats, but the only time I wore a miniskirt my underwear was in everyone's sight ... I had to put a jacket on my lap!”.

If this is just a “practical issue”, as Sofia Cruz adds, it also says much about all the bodily arrangements and disclosure management implied in drummer's performance – the female drummer's body must be disciplined to be accountable for the audience. Because “a display of competence is at the same

time a refutation of their own femininity” (Green, 1997, p. 186), drummers have to maintain notions of “feminine bodily decorum”<sup>211</sup>.

Bodily decorum is materially achieved by not wearing miniskirts. Katari tells me proudly that she invented a strategy to be able to play with a skirt without her underwear being seen: she cut tights so they can be worn as shorts under the skirt. With the legs open only the shorts will be seen, not the underwear.

The high body temperature is another bodily feature at stake when playing the drums. Because of the physical effort required, playing makes drummers sweat and therefore ruins the make-up. Katari bought waterproof mascara in order to mix “beauty and the practicalities of things”.

## 12.2: The visual-sonic performing female body

Smith (2013, p. 7) refers to an “optical conspicuousness of drumming”, that I argue is heightened in what concerns women’s experiences in the context of live performances.

The following excerpt from Filipa voiced a common experience regarding being a female drummer:

Q: what do you like the most about the drums?

A: to be completely honest, the status. A chick on the drums it’s a totally different thing. It has its pros and cons. The pros are the status, the “hey, you play the drums? Really? That’s awesome!” (laughs). It feels good. Especially for someone like me that has been invisible for so long. On the other hand, it has cons: I was so used to be invisible that drawing people’s attention to myself it’s not very handy (laughs). And to know that when the band plays live much of the audience’s attention will be on me, because: hey, a chick drummer? Let’s see that!” so it was really stressful!

There is a “female drummer pride” which crosscuts the discourses of the drummers interviewed. Being a female drummer affords a “status”, in and outside the music realm. Filipa becomes visible, she becomes “different”. Also, Katari claims “I like to be a female drummer! I feel privileged! Because there are very few, and I won’t be a hypocrite and saying that I don’t”.

The “cons” are related to the audience assessment of the musical value of the gender differences; the visibility of gender becomes a sonic feature. Although

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<sup>211</sup> Some “problems” regarding the exclusion/inclusion of some users in playing the drums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has similarities with piano and cello performance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (DeNora, 2002). However, the main difference between these two centuries apart, might be in the greater flexibility in clothes’ usage.

playing the drums is a sonic activity, gender is visible before it is audible. Concerts are the “performing of performance” (DeNora, 2002), where “the sight of sound” matters –in rock music as in other genres (Leppert, 1993; McCormick, 2009).

When concerts take place, gender is the “visual filter”, as Inês Clemente says, that makes people stop listening to the drums and start listening to (and looking at) the female drummer:

People notice ‘This drummer is a chick’. And then we can take advantage of that because it works as a good and as a bad stuff. Things like: “she’s a really good drummer, and she’s a chick!” as if she was impaired from the beginning and as if she had... this is unfair too, I don’t like it. I get annoyed when I think that I’m worse or better than I am, just because I’m a chick. When people say: wow, you’re incredible! And I’m like: no, I’m not that good, there are many guys that do exactly the same as I do, and they don’t get this

Inês Clemente, as well as the other interviewees, dislikes being assessed and classified as “female drummer”: she does not want her musical skills to be assessed based on a gender difference<sup>212</sup>.

“Who’s the drummer?” is what Helena Fagundes is frequently asked when she arrives to a venue where she is will have a gig.

It’s not on purpose, but people always think that a drummer is a male drummer. And then I have a laugh because I start playing and I look at people’s faces, and only then, they believe that I do play! I have a laugh because I don’t need to prove anything to no one. Playing the drums it’s what I want to do, and I have fun with people’s reaction. Once this happened: I played in a small village and there were some heavy metal guys that were kind of ignoring me, and in the end, they end up paying me a beer”.

Gender renders these women both visible and invisible. The initial experience of invisibility of being a female drummer (absence) turns into a hyper-presence.

These drummers get comments all the time, from venue owners, audience, other bands’ members and other drummers. Zélia tells me that after a gig she overheard other male musicians mocking with their own male drummer, by comparing his musical performance to hers: “even she plays better than you!”.

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<sup>212</sup> This phenomena of being praised for standard (not exceptional) drumming skills resembles the “talking platypus phenomena” that women experience when entering blue-collar jobs, that is being overpraised by tasks (Swerdlow, 1989, p. 382). And was also found by Berkers and colleagues (2016) regarding heavy metal female vocalists (eg: “God bless metal chicks”).

The “maleness” of the drums is enacted by these comments, which might be “not on purpose”, but has bodily and musical effects. When people deploy these interpretive strategies they are shrinking a discursive space for women as drummers with material consequences. When people engage in this classificatory activity when people express ideas about what seems musically “correct” or “normal” they are simultaneously reinforcing particular social relations and establishing hierarchies (DeNora, 2003b, p. 174).

The strategies used to cope with these comments that undervalue or are suspicious of their musical performances is to ignore them and keep playing. Zélia frames these comments as men feeling threatened and she ignores: “I don’t give a damn!”.

Smith’s interviewees express a willingness to develop “a female way of drumming”, although they could not specify the ways this would take shape. The drummers in this study express some ideas about playing the drums in a gender-specific way.

Shelley describes her personal drumming playing style in a gendered way: “I always try to play with a lot of strength. I think it’s sort of a statement, especially for girls...” (Shelley Barradas). However, in order to achieve a hard strike, one does not need to “have strength,” which is considered to be a masculine trait. As Shelley explains, strength comes from technique: using the wrists, not the arms, when hitting the drum kit (see figures 6 and 7, shots taken from the video recorded interview with Shelley Barradas, at her home).



*Figure 6 - Playing with the wrists*



*Figure 7 - Not arms*

Musical practice takes shape in relation to gender. Playing the drums takes shape in relation to being a female drummer. This, in turn, shapes the perception of musical value. Being a female drummer has to be being a good female drummer<sup>213</sup>. In the interview with Anarchicks, they all agree that Katari plays well, she is a “really good drummer”. Inês Clemente wishes to become “the best Portuguese female drummer”. Female drummers, in their condition of tokens, are pushing the standards for how well women are seen to play the drums.

### 12.3: Drum kits articulating gender performances

The drum kit is composed of different pieces. It is a highly flexible instrument since the player can add as many parts as she likes. These are two examples of different drum kits, which articulate not just different rock sub-genres, different musical performances, but also different gender performances.

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<sup>213</sup> Only punk and beginner drummers did not made claims about their musical skill.

*Sara: re-constructing appearance and feeling well*



*Figure 8 - Sara's drum kit onstage, after a concert*

Sara is thirty-three years old. During the first stage of my summer fieldwork, I interviewed Sara as the lead guitarist and singer in a rock-pop band. Two months after the interview, she wrote me saying: “There are so few women drummers, that I was invited to play the drums in a band”.<sup>214</sup>

A male lead-guitarist was looking specifically for a female drummer to join his surf rock band. Sara was auditioned and chosen among other girls because she had a “good sense of timing”.

Sara learned how to play a specific drum kit: floor tom, snare drum and the hit-hats, in a specific way: “primitive beats”, basic beats, with strength, using a maraca instead of a drumstick. She also changed aspects of her self-presentation to emphasize her femininity within the band’s genre, surf rock, responding to the lead-guitarist’s request<sup>215</sup>. Before she did not wear makeup, skirts, neither on or offstage. Sara enjoyed this change in appearance that got into other musical realms and she also changed her image as a guitar player in

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<sup>214</sup> Sara continued playing as lead-guitarist at her band and, simultaneously, joined this new band as a drummer. I interviewed and shadowed her in the second stage of my fieldwork, a year after she started playing the drums.

<sup>215</sup> The male lead-guitarist of this new band asked not only her, but also to the other member, a male keyboard player, to adapt their personal style and appearance to surf rock while performing.

her other band. This has affected non-musical realms as well since she now dresses up when going out, and she has her nails polished.

The two different musical roles attributed to the two different instruments she plays afford her different musical experiences. She describes herself, mainly, as a proper guitarist, and the guitar as the “melody instrument”, that allows her to compose music, and enjoy the creativity afforded by the guitar. She “warned” me that she might not be a proper representative of drummers because her drum kit “it’s an incomplete set. But it gets the job done”. Despite the drum kit she uses is appropriate for the band’s musical sub-genre, she does not feel a proper drummer. The drums are the “rhythm” instrument, she cannot compose songs, but she participates in the creation of the beats of the songs.

On stage, she enjoys playing both instruments and has fun with both bands, but she feels much less pressure, she feels more relaxed when drumming and doing back vocals more than when she plays as a lead guitarist and singer. The drum’s “primitive beats” make her feel liberated and energized.

Her new embodied self takes shape into things outside herself: using the drum kit she trained her body to “be affected” (Latour, 2004). Her body is affected by drum parts, by a new musical role (the beat), by a new musical sub-genre and its aesthetics (surf rock), by her bandmates, by the rock industry (that makes conventional “femininity” an asset).

When I attended her concert, I hung around with her afterwards. She was alone, while her bandmates were chatting with their friends that came to see them playing. Her two friends could not attend this gig. We were sitting and chatting while the instruments were still set up on stage. She explained to me that she was sad because it was the band’s last concert, the other band was not going that well, and her out-of-work benefit was about to end. Then, she looked at the drums on stage and said: “I feel really good when I’m over there”.

For Sara, making music, playing music (whether the drums or the guitar), and performing music, helps her to suspend some life spheres where she does not feel integrated. Becoming musically engaged affords her a temporal structure to latch on and feel well.

*Andreia Ferreira: self-esteem and musical skills*

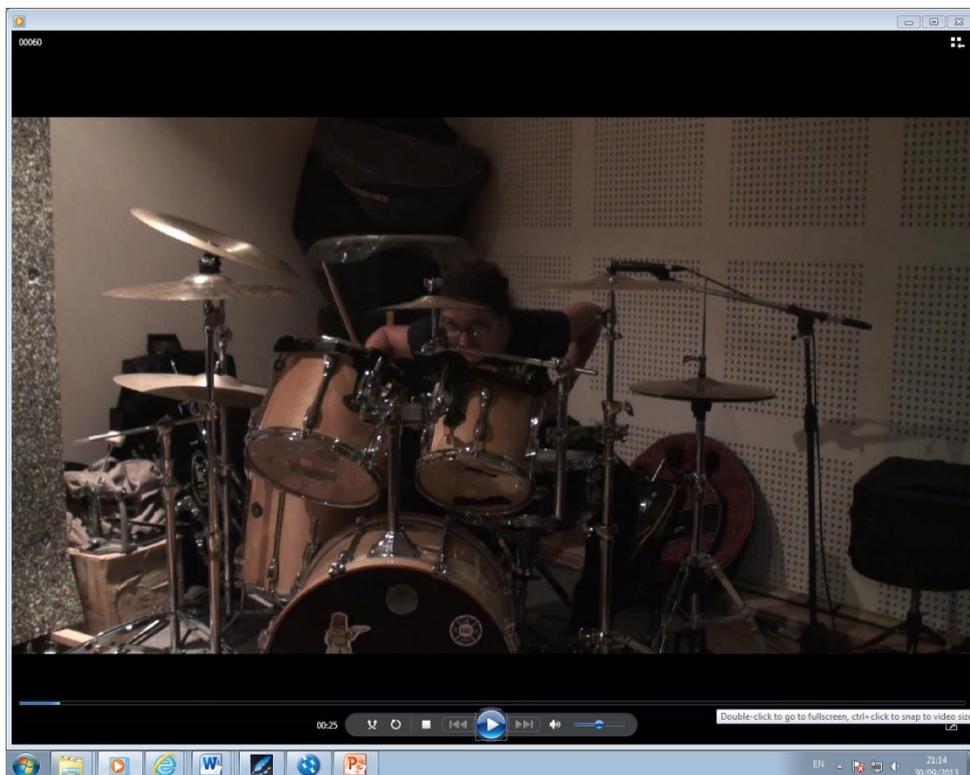
Andreia Ferreira is twenty-five years old. She started playing percussion at the age of fifteen in a local philharmonic band and, simultaneously, set up a hardcore band with her school friends.

As she improved as a drummer, her self-confidence and self-esteem improved, too: “Before I was just a little girl, I was the girl with a lazy-eye that no one would care for. Then I become a drummer”.

She tells me proudly how she learned to use the “double kick”, a technique used especially in heavy metal and hard rock. The first times she almost fell, but with practice, she learned to get her balance.

Because she uses the pedal, she leans forward with her torso – to reach the pedal more effectively (see figure 9). This technique affords her to perform embodied emotional work required in musical performance:

It brings expression to the music I play. I think it gives more intensity to what I’m playing, and I feel I can enjoy it, I can head bang, I can feel what I’m playing. If you sit very straight, you restrain yourself: “oh no, I have to sit straight otherwise I’ll get back pain” you’re restraining yourself and you’re blocking something that might be good [the leaning] because it’s your posture, it’s your way of playing, it’s your way of being on stage, and it’s your way of exploring the drum kit. (Andreia Ferreira)



*Figure 9 - interview with Andreia Ferreira at her rehearsal studio, she's explaining how she leans her body forward to reach the pedal*

Andreia tells me that there is not a masculine nor a feminine way of playing, it is a matter of personal style:

I was always a tomboy, and people think I started playing the drums because of that, but it has nothing to do with that. I was always a tomboy because the other girls didn't play the way I liked to play: running, playing with the ball, playing Legos, PlayMobile... they liked to play with Barbies I didn't. So I was considered a tomboy because I didn't like to play with dolls, (...). Meanwhile, I started to get along with people that thought like me, that were like me, and the stigma of being a tomboy disappeared... I don't need to be called a tomboy just because I have an attitude that it's not that feminine! I don't need to be wearing a lot of make-up to be a girl! So I don't understand it... now I just don't care, people can call me whatever they want to... but I don't think that my way of being and my way of playing the drums it's a masculine thing, or that I'm doing it because I'm a tomboy.

The normative femininity that frames Andreia as a tomboy is resisted against, as Andreia becomes a drummer and constructs alternative ways of presenting herself as a girl.

When she started playing in an all-female band, Andreia changed her hairstyle: she dyes her hair red and wears two pigtail braids when playing the drums. Scholars have shown the importance of hairstyle management for gender displays (S. Holland, 2004; Weitz, 2004) and this is no exception. This hair change is especially important for Andreia who describes her "natural" hair as a site of non-alignment with white heterosexual femininity standards: she has a "wild", "afro" hair (Weitz, 2004, p. 29). With the hairstyle change, she is presenting herself onstage "as a girl drummer", she is affirming white femininity, but an alternative white femininity.

#### Summary

Musical practice (playing the drums) takes shape in relation to non-musical things: gender. Which, on the other hand, is constructed through the pull of the sound itself (loudness), through the "sight of sound" (revealed in the appearance and body image) and through the use of aesthetic value (being a good female drummer).

To become a drummer is to become a skilled, coordinated, strength, musical body, which, especially for women, might be a new bodily experience, with non-musical impacts (uncontrolled, natural body vs. Self-mastery of the body).

The use of a drum kit is an active ingredient in the remaking of embodied gendered identities, as well as a source of well-being and musical pleasure.

## IV – Amateurs’ musical transmissions

Amateurs’ attachments to rock can take many pathways. Following the feminist techno-science tradition, these chapters intend to reappraise what music instruments or technologies are<sup>216</sup>. A mixer, fabrics and other materials, as well as mothers’ record collections and tastes become “instruments in the hands of rock(h)ers” too. Djing, crafting and rock music mothering are the three case studies of rock musicking practices – the three case studies of musical transmissions that have been overlooked.

This section expands debates on fandom, looking at these other forms of musical engagement and at other practices of rock musicking. The way amateurs craft rock worlds in unusual “channels of distribution” and through artefacts, services and social relations blurs traditional dichotomies between public and private, individual and collective.

I take the work of DJs and crafters as both a form of music love and an odd job. It can also be seen as a form of moonlighting. This reinforces Hennion's (1999) claim that music lovers do not exist outside the markets – whether it is the night-time leisure economy or fashion (A. Bennett, 2005b; McRobbie, 1999).

A lot of activities are part of the (underground) musical life, marked by a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethos that diminishes the distance between producers and consumers. Some imply an exchange of money, which has not always been recognised by academics (Hebdige, 1979) and which has been distrusted by rock culture’s anti-commercial ideology (Frith, 2001). However, activities within the informal rock “creative and cultural economy” are of growing importance. Many not strictly musical activities related to setting up a music scene have proven to constitute fields of micro-economic and entrepreneurial production, which impact youngsters’ transitions to adulthood (Peters & Bloustien, 2011; K. Robson, 2009; R. Smith & Maughan, 1997; Thornton, 1995).

The entrepreneurial (often informal) dynamic of subcultures also follows a gender division of labour, as McRobbie argued in the 1980s and this still holds

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<sup>216</sup>As documented by technofeminist scholars, the activities, their materials, as well as their spatial arrangements, which are associated with femininity (e.g. cooking and domestic appliances in the kitchen) are obscured as technologies, whereas those associated with masculinity are perceived as being ‘real’ technology (Faulkner, 2001, p. 83; MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999).

true today (McRobbie, 2013). In her landmark study on the ragmarkets and second-hand dresses developed by young women, she writes: “It is still much easier for girls to develop skills in those fields which are less contested by men than it is in those already occupied by them. Selling clothes, stage-managing at concerts, handing out publicity leaflets, or simply looking the part, are spheres in which a female presence somehow seems natural” (McRobbie, 1989a, p. 37).

In documenting Djing and crafting practices, I hope to retrieve the specificities of musically-derived activities from their dispersal into the general idea of ‘creative work’ – how artefacts and “services” are inspired by rock music aesthetics and what the affordances of rock music are for crafting and Djing. Other activities that have been neglected by rock music scholars do not imply an exchange of money, but take place in the private spaces (e.g. bedroom cultures). Rock music can be a technology of mothering, affording different musical mothering styles. Children are reframed as musical peers and fans with whom adults share music, but also to whom adults pass on (class) values. Rock music and its socio-material practices also engender more empowering ways of being a mother.

All these socio-material activities undertaken by amateurs distribute rock music in a way that holds them together in the times and spaces of everyday life.

### 13: “I just play the song”: women DJs rockin’ the house

There is now a growing literature on DJs<sup>217</sup> in Electronic Dance Music (EDM) and ‘mix cultures’ (Attias, Gavanoas, & Rietveld, 2013). Hip-hop DJs have also been studied in terms of their links to the materiality of turntables and ethnicity (Fouché, 2012; Katz, 2012; Miyakawa, 2007).

In these male-dominated DJ techno-worlds, female DJs have specific career pathways, as the scarce literature on female DJs has shown, with studies on EDM (Bloustien, 2016; Farrugia, 2012; Gadir, 2016; Reitsamer & Gavanoas, 2013; Rodgers, 2010) and hip-hop DJs (Katz, 2007; T. Rose, 1994). Academic literature on women’s participation in club cultures has followed club-

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<sup>217</sup> DJ is the abbreviation of disc jockey, also written deejay or dee-jay.

goers more often than DJs (Bradby, 1993; McRobbie, 1993; Pini, 2001; Thornton, 1995).

Rock music DJs -- mostly radio DJs but also club DJs – are best known for their role in the legitimisation of rock as an artistic form, as cultural intermediaries and gatekeepers (Frith, 2001; Regev, 1994; Straw, 2001). However, DJs' practices themselves remain an understudied topic across DJ cultures (Elafros, 2013, p. 2), with a few exceptions (Bakker & Bakker, 2006; Elafros, 2013; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; Gadir, 2016; Katz, 2007; Stirling, 2016). As a result little is known about specific rock music DJ practices and the genre affordances of rock music in a set, which I detail here.

Little attention has been paid to women rock music DJs, beyond the acknowledgement of DJing and skill-sharing workshops covering DJing as an important practice for queer feminists and riot grrrl (for an exception and a more detailed account, see Downes, 2010, pp. 220–222; Halberstam, 2007). To address that gap, I follow the pathways of twelve participants into DJing (see Appendix 7). Through their voices and participation, I enter the rock DJ set, a privileged observational site for rock music meaning-making in action, shaped by a DJ's gender identity and genre-based gendered representations.

### 13.1: Rock technocultures' affordances in the set

The genre, rock music, affords specific ways of DJing in terms of identity, roles and practices.

A DJ set is a real-time performance, where recorded music is played live. The musical material artefacts that are used in this performance are the mixer<sup>218</sup> (see Figure 10), the headphones and DJ's audio libraries (see Figure 11).

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<sup>218</sup> For a short overview of the history of technologies in the set cf. Théberge (2001, pp. 15–17).



Figure 10 - Rockin' the DJ mixer by DJ's ' way of the hands'

Figure 11 - A music selector: personal discography annotated for the set

Most of these rock DJs do not own a mixer<sup>219</sup>. The different places where these DJs play music – clubs, pubs, bars, restaurants, outdoors – provide DJ equipment.

In contrast, record collections on the set are the DJ's personal audio=library<sup>220</sup>, mostly consisting of CDs, although some have vinyl and others have MP3 files.

The headphones are also an instrument of DJing<sup>221</sup>, an object between aesthetics (colour, shape), technique (isolating the noise) and affect (a gift from partners or friends).

DJs explained how they learnt gradually from male figures – friends, boyfriends, brothers – by hanging out with them and watching them using the mixer<sup>222</sup>. As with Portuguese musicians and Berliner EDM DJs (Reitsamer, 2011, p. 34), membership in a male network is of the utmost importance.

<sup>219</sup> Luisa is the only DJ that practises at home with her brother's mixer.

<sup>220</sup> Despite the easiness and cheapness of downloading mp3 files and/or burning CDs on their home computer (Bakker & Bakker, 2006, p. 76), DJs still have to buy original CDs as they can be inspected by government authorities. Some participants commented that the financial investment required to become a (licenced) DJ was a constraining factor to DJing. Running risks when not having the originals was mentioned in interviews as a concern for participants who did not have the originals (DJing illegally).

<sup>221</sup> I understood how important headphones were when in one of my observations in a set, the DJ had left her headphones in another bar (where she used to DJ). Even though the bar owner had headphones to lend her, she would not DJ without her own headphones.

<sup>222</sup> These rock DJs did not attend a DJ academy/school. The only exception is Ed (an EDM-oriented DJ in this sample), who attended a two-day workshop. The DJs do not use online tutorials or forums – unlike bedroom DJs (Joo, 2008) – nor do they say they belong to or lurk in an alternative female-oriented *listserv* – unlike EDM DJs in the alternative community *Sisterdjs* (Farrugia, 2004).

However, these DJs claim there is not much to learn. Using the mixer is perceived as an easy task<sup>223</sup> because they do not practise “scratch”. As opposed to EDM and hip-hop genres, which focus on “scratch” (accelerating or decelerating a record with one’s hand, to create pitching effects, as explained by (B. Zimmermann, 2007, p. 30), rock music DJs focus instead on the practice of (in their own words), “selecting” and “playing” songs.

This way of appropriating the mixer is an example of how these rock DJs are *deinscripting*<sup>224</sup> mixers. For some rock DJs, rock music should not be “scratchable”, mixed or distorted/changed:

If this was Electronic Music, I would have to do things differently. But this is Rock. In fact, (...) I get annoyed with João [a male DJ friend], because he increases the pitch, he raises/increases the music spin/rotations so they can fit together perfectly. But I know the songs he plays by heart and I think: “this does not sound good!” And I go there [to the DJ cabin] and I complain to him: “how can you mess around with the song? I can’t dance to it! This is not in the right tempo. It doesn’t make sense!” And I get angry with him! I’m listening to The Cramps spinning so fast. I’ve been dancing to this song for so long, and I can’t dance to it now! ‘Are you insane? How can you do that? So they can fit well?’ (laughs). So I don’t do it. But there are people doing it. João is really good, technically really good and he can ‘play around’ with the songs. But I complain to him when he does that because for me it ruins the songs.(Aurora)

The fact that scratching cannot easily be done with rock music becomes a contested site for meaning-making within a politics of value. For Aurora, as for all the participants, the way that rock does not lend itself to scratching is at the heart of its authenticity, and of her identity as a rock DJ.

Some rock DJs feel uneasy at being called a DJ and resist the term, because they do not use a turntable or scratching or (re)mixing techniques. These are highly respected technical skills that differentiate DJs among themselves. Unlike EDM DJs who claim that their practice “is not just pressing the Play button” (V. S. Ferreira, 2017). These rock DJs claim: “I just play the

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<sup>223</sup> It is also a double-edged sword. Many interviewees complained that “Nowadays everyone thinks s/he’s a DJ”, pointing to a devaluation of the DJ’s role (also found by Reitsamer, 2011).

<sup>224</sup> “Subscription” or “deinscription” is used to describe the reactions of human (and nonhuman) actors to “what is prescribed and proscribed to them” and refers respectively to the extent to which they underwrite or reject and renegotiate the prescriptions (Akrich & Latour, 1992, p. 261).

song”<sup>225</sup> or “I don’t like being called a DJ, I see myself as a music selector” (Swinging Sisters). Another reason for resisting the name DJ is the amateur nature of the activity<sup>226</sup> and the fact they “have fun”<sup>227</sup> doing it.

### 13.2: The night’s musical pathways

The set is a musical journey<sup>228</sup>: “I like to trace a path that I want the night to have, or the music [set-list] to have. (...) there is a sequence with a specific logic/rationale” (Trebaruna).

It will usually start with “quiet music” which works as “warm up” music – “not too fast, but with some rhythm, for instance, Nina Simone mixed” (Bitch Set). From there it “develops”, it “grows”, into a *crescendo*, from genre to genre, from track to track, “pulling” the audience, until the DJs “grab” the audience- “using well-known music but not too aggressive” (Bitch Set).

I used to start with reggae then move to rock by using songs that have both reggae and rock or songs that mix both, because they’re both from the same time period. So I usually move from genre to genre, although sometimes I play a song that would radically break with the previous ones, but it is because it makes sense. But usually you make... you try them to make sense of the songs, somehow, one after another. So I could start with reggae and ska, then go to punk and rock, then to soul, then to rock’n’roll... always within these genres. (Aurora)

Rock DJ sets are not about scratching, but about “passages”<sup>229</sup> that build the night’s musical journey. These passages are curated by the DJs: from their audio-library to the set, from song track to song track, from genre/style to genre/style.

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<sup>225</sup> In Portuguese the term for DJing is “passarmúsica” [literally pass on music] and some rock DJs use the word-play “passadores de música” [music players] instead.

<sup>226</sup>The participants are non-professionals. DJing is not their main source of income. It is either an odd job or they are not paid for their gigs; also, while some have regular gigs in bars, others do not.

<sup>227</sup> Combining fun with economic interests is also found among EDM female DJs (Reitsamer, 2011, p. 38).

<sup>228</sup> Which has more in common with an aerobics class (DeNora, 2000) than one could imagine. However, unlike final stretches, the night’s end is not consensual, spanning from ending anyway (usually according to the DJ’s musical will) to ending with a sudden musical “break” – either slowing down or speeding up the song.

<sup>229</sup> The term “passages” is a working metaphor inspired by the work of STS scholars Law and Moser. Passage is the movement/passage between specificities (specific material heterogeneities), and the authors analyse how passages are done or not done, how they become good passages (moving between different specificities and their materialities easily), or bad passages (awkward displacements, movements which are made difficult or impossible (Moser & Law, 1999, pp. 202–205)

It is by mastering their music collection – spending time and money creating it, diversifying it, knowing it/ordering it, annotating it, (pre)selecting it, and managing it on the spot – that DJs construct the night’s musical pathway in the set. At the same time, there is also an improvised and intuitive component of action in a DJ set.

None of these DJs uses a predetermined set-list, although Twisted Sisters initially tried: “(...) found the list we used in our first set. It’s so ridiculous! We wrote the song’s titles and then we had fade in, fade out, and a little-fade out (...)”. That did not work as planned because the night’s musical journey is an unpredictable event, as Twisted Sisters explain: “Even in the exact same bar, each night [and set] is different. We are not prepared for anything! I mean, we have to be prepared for everything!”. This is why these DJs usually carry *all* their records with them.

The set is an event that blurs the boundaries between recorded and live, private and public music: “I love that moment on my own, being there playing my music and realising that it is arousing emotion in those people. Somehow. It’s a really personal moment at the same time (...)” (Miss Bonnie Parker).

DJs’ record collections are *boundary objects*<sup>230</sup> that allow for that blurring. If the personal record collection goes public in the set, the opposite also takes place: Trebaruna listens to the set-lists/compilations she does for her set as a soundtrack on car journeys with her husband (with whom she splits the set). Trebaruna, like others for that matter, also mentioned that when they are buying CDs (or downloading files), they are already thinking of it as material for the next set.

There are specific moments that DJs frame as “personal”. Usually when the night starts, when there are very few or no people on the dance floor or when the audience’s attention is not focused on the music, then DJs feel they are playing music for themselves – the set becomes DJ-oriented. The (public) set becomes a place for (private) constructing mood through the use of music:

When I arrive, and the dance floor is a bit empty, it can go both ways: I might start playing melancholy songs like the Rolling Stones’ *Wild Horses*, or the opposite. I can start playing “garage” stuff, even The

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<sup>230</sup> I borrow the term from Star & Griesemer (1989), mostly to refer to the “interpretative flexibility” that objects can have as they pass across contexts.

Cramps, because there's no one there, so I won't bother anyone. I can play what I feel like. It depends on how I feel, on what I feel like. (Miss Bonnie Parker)

The first two hours, there are not many people there. I love playing music, because no one complains, no one bothers me. They don't like it or dislike it either! They mind their own business, and I'm there dancing, enjoying it! (Aurora)

In the summer, I attended an outdoors DJ set in a street cafe. It was a quiet set, where people were sitting, having their drinks. There was no dance floor. Then I asked the DJ: "don't you ever feel bored here alone?" and she replied: "No, because I'm not alone. I'm with my music" (Ed). This episode shows the agency of non-human actors, and particularly, music. It also shows the blurring of private/public soundscapes.

Often DJs split sets with friends (male or female) and/or boyfriends/partners only, because sets are "a moment of intimacy" (Trebaruna), as music is personal and the person is the music. If alone, the DJ can play whatever she likes, split sets are negotiated in different ways.

Miss Bonnie Parker prefers the "ping-pong rationale"<sup>231</sup>: one song for each DJ alternately. This turns the set into a dynamic sequence of unexpected moments, not just for the audience but for the DJs themselves:

It's a challenge, it's more dynamic, you don't know what's next. It's better, it's like a dialogue, and you're creating something with another person. You don't know what's coming next, and you have to answer. She starts a challenge, and then you can't break the rhythm, you can't let it fade away...

Twisted Sisters split the set into slots, and the musical journey is negotiated between these two friends:

Cherry: I'm always: 'let's play rock, let's play rock'. And she's like 'nooooo'. And that's good, because we make a good match, we complete each other. Because she knows how to adapt very well to the places where we're DJing. I'm very partial...

Bunny: And it's good she's partial because if she wasn't, I would only play shitty music (laughs). So we make a good match. Most of all, we respect each other. That's why we get along. We're totally different even in our musical preferences, and we're DJs, but there's a lot of respect so... sometimes we have to compromise [on what to play]

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<sup>231</sup> Different from the more competitive "turntable battle routine", considered one of the factors that puts women off DJing (Katz, 2007).

Personal differences are expressed and constituted through music, simultaneously co-producing each other. A “good match” in the set is made out of “respect” towards difference by negotiating it between themselves.

As for Swinging Sisters, the three swing between the three genres each represents: soul, punk and electro. They commented that sometimes they were afraid their set was “too schizophrenic” – implying there is a night’s musical journey where passages matter.

### 13.3: Bodies “musically composed” in the set

The literature points to a DJ’s role in creating and sustaining the audience’s mood (Straw, 2001) but it often leaves unexplored the embodied aspect to it. According to the participants, to be a good DJ is to be *able* to create moving bodies in the set, to create bodies “musically composed” via their set-list/songs/music. Also the volume is a sonic dimension that has bodily effects – “energy” is materially afforded by raising the volume.

Different genres and subgenres afford specific modes of embodiment, with consequences for bodily and social interaction.

DJs and other (fans) interviewees highlight the “easiness” of some rock styles to make people dance. Danceability is an affordance of rockabilly and rock’n’roll, as opposed to other rock subgenres, such as heavy metal, considered a “dashing” subgenre, not easy to dance to. A heavy metal fan explained to me that she had to learn and practise headbanging, a type of bodily conduct associated with heavy metal: “It takes a lot of balance, otherwise you get dizzy” (Ana, fan).

Rock, heavy metal, and EDM’s modes of embodiment are compared by some of the interviewees that have musically migrated to EDM: rock is more about jumping, more difficult to dance to, EDM is more about dancing.

How can I dance to this? Because I feel like dancing! But moving your hips while listening to rock doesn’t make sense. That’s why during rock concerts, people jump! Because you really want to dance, but you don’t know how, because it’s too aggressive or strong to be just shaking, then

I'll jump!" (...) when I started to go out [during University], I used to go to a place (...) [where] there were two areas, the bar that had some tables and the dance floor. We used to sit and talk. If a song I really liked was playing, I would say: "I have to go and dance to this one! I walked to the dance floor, I would shake my head [headbanging], and then I would sit down again. When I started to go to electronic music parties, then I started to dance. (Joana, fan)

Messy rock bodies are orientated towards other bodies whereas EDM tends to controlled, individually-oriented bodies. If we have been looking at sound that moves bodies, there is also sound that moves heads and hearts according to the folk categorisation that Cláudia Duarte created for her personal audio-library but also applies to her DJ sets. She has "music for the head"<sup>232</sup> (EDM), "music for the heart" (Chanson Française, music with melody, emotional music) and "music for the body" (punk, rock).

From a DJ's personal/private music collection, there is music that should not go public because it has undesirable, potentially dangerous effects:

There is a lot of music that I love, things like Cat Power or Fiona Apple, which I can't play. It's contemplative music. It has an effect on people... or at least I expect it has, because for me it does have that effect. (...) I don't want to play music that makes people start reflecting about their lives! You can't do that, that's something people can do at home if they want to. It's up to them if they want that. (Bitch Set)

Here we can see how notions of "public music" as opposed to "private music" are constructions based on the (expected/assumed) effects of music on consciousness and embodiment. The wrong music for a set is the music considered to create a depressive mood, a "cold consciousness" (DeNora, 2011c, p. 314), which is translated into a form of bodily conduct: standing, isolated, individually-oriented bodies.

As we have seen with the notions of public/private music, these DJs are creating new meanings for rock music: unknown, noisy, slow, but also aggressive, accelerated, uncontemplative, reflexive, hits/well-known/familiar/cliché/A-side, set the mood song, quiet, quiet and danceable (romantic music), background vs. foreground, danceable vs. unplayable, good

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<sup>232</sup>Thornton (1995, p. 71) explains that dance music distinguishes itself as "cerebral listening", or "head" music, which is part of the genre's bid to be taken seriously by non-clubbers.

music, underground music, Portuguese music, music for the heart vs. music for the head.

These “folk categories” are being constructed in the situated socio-musical spaces of the rock set.

Record collections become a DJ’s “prosthetic devices”, the material stuff that enable DJs to perform the set and to achieve their main goal: to enable others’ public and collective emotional states and bodily conduct.

A DJ set is framed by these DJs as a participatory event, where both the DJ and the audience are having fun, enjoying the music, all in it together as bodies musically composed. DJs perform different forms of embodied emotional work to turn the set into a participatory event.

Trebaruna entitles her heavy metal sets “Headbangers ballroom” saying: “Those people there in my sets, they’re united by a cause. It’s really ‘in metal we trust’. The slogan I write in the flyers is really how I feel”. Trebaruna also does headbanging (see figure 12). And Swinging Sisters take turns to perform a non-stop dance.



*Figure 12 - Headbangers Ballroom V5, Porto © SóniaMonteiro, 2012*

That is why the passages from the DJs’ cabin to the dance floor are good passages, they afford togetherness. And also the other way around when the audience approaches the DJ: “I always leave the door open” (Luisa).

In fact, both the emotional work and the audience-reading skills are afforded by specific spatial and temporal arrangements: no stages, low DJ cabins, small to medium sized bars, having thematic parties, crafting the set

with objects (playing with a ball, having a tambourine, showing mute Tarantino movies on the wall), that afford the feeling of closeness required to perform the attachment to the collective, to perform rock music as a holding form for those moving, joyful bodies, including the DJ's own body.

Space and action are linked, first because "spaces may foster the use of particular cultural repertoires through the materials, atmosphere, objects, scenic features that allow user-occupants to make 'appropriate' behavioural responses within those spaces, and second spaces may afford less rational forms of adaptive action through the ways they appeal to memory, the body and the senses (cf. DeNora, 2003a, p. 129).

Miss Bonnie Parker had just moved to Morocco when I interviewed her in 2012. She was DJing in a French restaurant-bar. She starts her sets earlier than in Portugal (at 6 pm), and she "can't really use the Cramps", so she explained how she chooses and plays the music:

I started with Bossa Nova [Brazilian music], more suitable for people who are having dinner, and then I build from there. My sets are not prepared in advance, I choose the songs on the spot according to how things are going. I played blues and r&b and it developed until I got the chance to play some rock'n'roll more rockabilly-like. (...) the musical style I use in Morocco or in Portugal is the same, but the portions are different.

But even if you never leave the country but you move from city to city, it will make a difference. Even in one's hometown, DJing in different bars is a very different experience. DJs' opportunities for musical action as well as a DJ's identity and social status are embedded in the geographical locations where they play - rock DJs are often local 'celebrities'.

Another way of doing embodied emotional work is by drinking with the audience: "We've never played music sober – which helps. We are like the audience is, we're all the same, so it's easy, it's natural" (Twisted Sisters).

There are other ways of accomplishing a participatory set. Usually, if music stops in a DJ set, that is a "bad passage" ("having a blank"). But in the set I attended, Luisa turns off the volume when a specific Portuguese song [Ornatos Violeta] is reaching the chorus. Instead of the original song, what is heard is the audience's voices singing the chorus. After the chorus, Luisa turns on the volume again and people keep singing along with the song. In this case, the performance of a discontinuity (in the volume, in the song, in the sequence)

might be a “good passage”: the music becomes embodied; the audience’s voices are all together in the foreground, participating, being together in the song.

We can see how rock DJs are different from EDM DJs, who “are taken over by their buttons, and they’re just there, not passing on any emotion”, like a machine/robot (Swinging Sisters). A rock DJ’s performance implies “having fun”, by dancing and interacting with the audience, showing they are also “feeling the music”.

This is a genre-based discourse (rock as opposed to EDM). However, I believe there is a strongly gendered aspect to it. Participants do not use the word DJ in their stage names as often as EDM DJs (which might be considered to be taking the position of *technological incompetence*); as they construct their DJ’s performance through dancing – a typically female activity.

#### 13.4: DJs musical roles and identity

DJs see their music (materialised in the set-list) as a resource for being together with the audience, where they not only always find friends and familiar faces, but also often strangers.

For these DJs their record collection, the source of the music played in a set, is who they are, is a resource for identity work both as DJs – as able musical agents – and as music lovers. As Miss Honey White says: “When you’re playing music, you’re spilling your heart out”. Because they are music lovers they want to share the music they love with other people.

All the good passages afford the ability of these women as DJs, good passages afford these women DJs a strong sense of musical agency and empowerment. From the “freedom to guide the night” (Miss Bonnie Parker) to feeling “the most powerful woman” while “being able to entertain with my music taste” (Luisa). These are the pleasures and powers of Djing.

These DJs see themselves as musical educators<sup>233</sup>, framing the DJ set as a site for (informal) learning. Through a DJ’s record collection and music

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<sup>233</sup> In a study of EDM DJs, Elafros (2013) describes how the strategy of *crowd pleasing* allows DJs to frame themselves as *musical entertainers*, and the strategy of *crowd commanding* allows DJs to frame themselves as *musical artists*.

selection, DJs understand they have the ability to widen an audience's musical repertoire, expanding both their musical knowledge and musical enjoyment. Simultaneously, "selecting" and "playing" their records affords new roles and identities for the DJ – not just an entertainer or a musical connoisseur, but an educator too. DJs have pleasure and power in creating opportunities for the audience's musical agency.

All the DJs, even if they try to be educators by playing unknown music, must at some point allow musical moments for the "familiar music", the "A side", the "cliché". There must be a balance in the set between playing "their music", and pleasing the audience:

When it goes wrong... is when you think: "what an obvious song I'm playing! How boring!" because it's much easier when you're playing for a lot of people to play well-known songs. For instance: the Rolling Stones. 'Oh no! Why am I playing the Rolling Stones? How did I end up here?' but it happens. (...) you're thinking that people will like it, you're giving up on your other choices... and that does not make me feel good (Aurora)

A set is a temporal, contingent journey, where the DJ tries to achieve a balance between well-known music, even hits, "radio music" or mainstream music and risking playing new, unknown, underground music.

A good DJ is not someone who knows (and lists) the album's titles, year of release, recording company – not the male rock connoisseur (Straw, 1997). Instead, a good DJ "adapts" (her record collection) to audiences, in specific places (venues) and times (summer party, after-gig set, and so forth): "It's important [place] but what is determinant is the audience, what kind of people you have in your sets" (Miss Honey White).

A DJ has to know "what works" in each set, "what fits", improvising the night's musical journey according to the audience present at a set: "It can't be something you plan, it's a spontaneous thing! (...) I know what records I have, and I'm playing what I consider fits, depending on people's reactions, and what they ask me" (Trebaruna). DJs develop (non-cognitive) skills such as "reading the audience":

I started noticing that my sets were going well, people liked them, and I could KEEP them there, and I realised when I started to deviate/move away from the style [they wanted], and I started to see that I could be aware of that just by looking at people!" (Miss Honey White)

When I realise I'm not getting any audience reaction, I try to find another musical style. Or I try to play a "sing along" song, one that gets into the ear to see if people react (Miss Bonnie Parker)

Most of these DJs aim to establish a reflexive, dialogic, musical relationship with audiences, which is why it rests on improvisation, immediacy and unpredictability. This is similar to community music therapy, which is based on a client-centered approach, which rests on "specific and unique ways in which musical (as opposed to verbal) sense is made and how the spontaneity of music can flow from 'the ways of the hand' and its patterns of order" (Ansdell, 1995, p. 22).

By pleasing their clients/audiences using music "adaptive" strategies and by being able to affect the audience (which takes not only musical work as we will see), DJs feel a strong sense of accomplishment and recognition. They "feel good":

You feel you're contributing somehow to those little moments of people's happiness (Miss Bonnie Parker)

I like DJing. And I like people liking what I am doing. (...) you have a full room and manage to play music so that people keep having fun... this is what gives me the most pleasure: playing a song and listening to the people 'ooooh', as if saying 'This is really the song I wanted to listen to!' (Miss Honey White)

Despite being a participatory event, in the DJ set the symmetry between the DJ and the audience is not totally achieved. This becomes clear when musical authority over the music being played is considered. The most important task in a set is to achieve a balance between pleasing the audience and keeping the DJ's identity.

Requests for music from the audience become a site for negotiating the DJ's musical identity and authority. These DJs answer to the audience's musical request if the request fits certain conditions: 1) the DJ must have the requested song; 2) the DJ considers it fits at a specific time in the musical path proposed; 3) the DJ considers the request was made politely. The first condition is the most important because if someone from the audience asks for a song that fits the DJ's repertoire and music collection, the DJ feels that her work has

been achieved: the audience understands her musical identity, and this is also a form of the audience's musical participation.

Lady Brighton: I have had pertinent and meaningful requests. Like in Chapito [a venue], I've been asked to play Nancy Sinatra

Twiggy: That makes sense!

Lady Brighton: Yes! We like that, it's like people understand the spirit! It's like they understand what the set is about

Twiggy: But when they ask for Beyonce or Jennifer Lopez...

As we can see, if these conditions are not fulfilled, then the "musical request" becomes a (bad) passage, an imposed "musical order", and the set as a participatory event is disrupted.

The second condition also matters. Even within the genre "heavy metal" the sequence of what is being played matters, as Trebaruna explains:

I cannot play a doom metal song, a totally dragged song, and then play a black metal song. There must be a sequence in the passages, there's a way to go until one gets there. And sometimes people do not understand this very well: they ask for a song and they want it immediately. And I have to say... if it fits, it's ok, if not, they have to wait and hold on until we get there!"

Not accepting an audience request or delaying it is a way of performing continuity in a DJ's musical identity.

### 13.5: The gender in the set

All these DJs present different musical and gender performances, strategies and identities as DJs. A DJ's identity needs self-branding. In the era of EDM DJs' commodification (Farrugia, 2012), these rock DJs also brand themselves (their sex, gender, sexuality). However, the degree to which they do it depends on their musical affiliation and its socio-musical community (from punk to EDM, from Lisbon to smaller towns) and their professional aspirations.

Gender identity is mediated in DJs' personas, which are strongly gendered from the choice of their DJ names to the music selection (set-list) to their image (dressing/clothing styles) as well as visual identity and representations (in posters, flyers, stage decoration) (see Figure 13).

Becoming a DJ might be a gendered event. Two of the interviewees started DJing because of their 'novelty value' as women. Luisa's brother is in a rock band, and after their first concert they wanted to have an after-gig rock

music set with a woman DJ, to “have something different”: “If it hadn’t been me, it would have been some other girl”.

The other two started Djing out of feminist activism – Aurora, in the punk tradition of DIY, and the Bitch Set. The Bitch Set started on a specific occasion: the promoters of a (left wing) blog’s party wanted women DJs for that specific party, because “they were bragging about being inclusive, but they only had male DJs”.

Trebaruna (Sónia Monteiro) set up an all-female set “Rock On”, for which she did advertising leaflets with skulls with headbands and big eyelashes. She decided to perform an all-female set because:

For years I’d been going to bars and I’d watched only men playing music. That annoyed me! I was sure women were also capable, they also know music. So the next step was: do you know any women to play with me? I wouldn’t invite strangers. But I knew two women and I invited them.

DJs’ stage names present an identity gendered female: “Miss” or, when Djing with other women DJs, “Sisters” or Rucquettes – aligning playfully, tacitly with the second-wave motto “sisterhood is powerful”, but also a tribute to black soul music and girl groups (Mahon, 2011; Wald, 2004, 2005; Warwick, 2007). Another DJ has a word-play “Dona de Casa aos Pratos” [Housewife taking the plates] and her set name is “Casa Cláudia” (a women’s magazine title), ironically playing with traditional femininities, aligning with a more postmodern feminist stance (see Figure 14). “Trebaruna” is a female Lusitanian deity about whom Moonspell (a famous Portuguese heavy metal band) sing – presenting her genre-based and female identity as a DJ. Only Ed, the only self-identified lesbian DJ, has a gender neutral stage name and wears street art clothing, which is also often gender neutral<sup>234</sup>.

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<sup>234</sup>Farrugia establishes three gender categories for EDM women DJs: sex kittens, t-shirt DJs, and dykes. Ed is closer to what Farrugia describes as T-shirt DJs, who are gender neutral DJs, dressing casually (Farrugia, 2012, pp. 37–63). However, for Farrugia, “T-shirt DJs” are not “dyke DJs”.

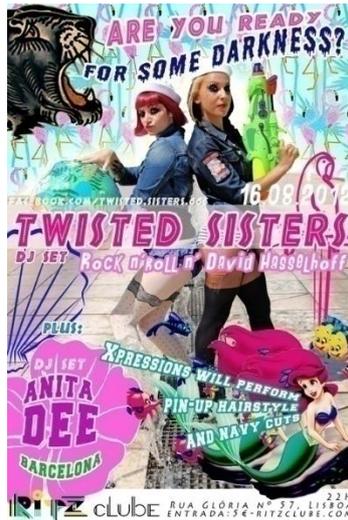


Figure 13 - DJs Twisted Sisters



Figure 14 - Casa Cláudia

Another way of “doing gender” in the set is by playing songs from female, feminist and/or riot grrrl bands, bands with female voices or female instrumentalists. For some of these interviewees, it is only by playing “women’s music”, music created/played by women that they feel like women DJs. Gender is “listenable” in the songs and the gender identity of these DJs is mediated by music: “When I play those women’s music in my set, that’s when I’m proud, when I feel I’m a woman DJ” (Luisa).

The Bitch Set, having in mind “those silly feminist things”, are two women playing “chick’s music” only.

Aurora always chooses female “versions” of well-known 1960s songs (which are rare as she explains to me because when women started singing they mainly did versions (covers), not original songs). This is her tribute to women creators. However, women’s music can afford bad passages. Aurora also reports that female garage music usually “kicks out” the people from the dance floor. And the same happens in the Bitch Set when they play riot grrrl music. For Aurora, these discontinuities afforded by bad passages are also performed as part of her gender identity; playing women’s music even if it does not work is part of who she is, so she keeps playing it.

Unlike a feminist set, Twisted Sisters tell me proudly they have a more “male set” than many male rock DJs. This means the set consists of a lot of rock and heavy metal music, music they call “rock with balls” or “dirty rock”, as opposed to “danceable” music (the rock’n’roll, the rock from the 1950s and 1960s). But they also like this danceable music (when they go to parties) and they also use this music in specific contexts (at weddings, for instance).

Twisted Sisters strategically use their (hetero)sexuality to promote themselves: they use their (“female hot”) bodies for advertising themselves as DJs, as they state<sup>235</sup>. In fact, as opposed to the other DJs who report being uncomfortable with the “male gaze” of some man in the audience, Twisted Sisters reconfigure that male gaze as a musical advantage: “people go there to see our boobs and maybe for the music, but what makes them stay is the music and the atmosphere we create in each set”.

All the other interviewees explain how they manage bodily disclosure through their clothes, accessories, and make-up. They want to feel “feminine” and “pretty”, but most of all “comfortable”. They manage bodily disclosure as a way to put music in the “foreground” and gender in the “background”.

Luisa explains she has to develop self-control in order to manage her bodily conduct so as not to perform “excess”. She explains that she really gets carried away by the music in her sets, and dances wildly on the dance floor too.

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<sup>235</sup> Twisted Sister’s image is sexualised, but in a rock way, also performing “dissonant juxtaposition”, their sexualised hot bodies and their macho set-list – not the EDM female DJs “sex kittens” (Farrigua, 2013, chapter 2).

Because of that, she feels she has to watch her behavior: “I have to repress myself once in a while. People must go to my sets for the music not because of me showing off, although people like to see my energy” (Luisa). Luisa does a lot of bodily and emotional work so as not to perform the uncontrolled/wild body. Twisted Sisters do the opposite bodily work: they develop uncontrolled and sexualised bodies. Which is a risk they say<sup>236</sup>. However, as they hypersexualise their bodies, Twisted Sisters frame their DJ performances as carried out by their alter-egos, who they claim are real, even outside the set:

Sometimes I go shopping for clothes and I think: “Bunny” would wear this. But not me [Inês]. This is scary, but it’s cool, because everything I do wrong, I blame Bunny. And sometimes in the sets, people ask me: ‘who am I talking to? Am I talking to Bunny or to Inês?’

An “apologetic model of resistance” is taking place (Ezzell, 2009; Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009). As with female athletes, Twisted Sisters “apologise” for their gendered transgression by emphasising other conventional aspects of gender presentation. Here the apologetic gender transgression has a dissonant juxtaposition aesthetics: the “rock-with-balls-set” is combined with sexualised bodies. This also shows that a post-feminist sensibility whereby women sexualise their bodies by choice and towards empowerment is much more nuanced in practice.

The empirical fieldwork also confirms how (global/mainstream) music meaning is appropriated locally and differently by different audiences. When Robin Thicke’s song came out in 2013, it was accused of being misogynistic <sup>237</sup>. I was attending Ed’s set in a gay-friendly small venue. To my surprise, Ed played it. I asked Ed if she did not find the song sexist. She answered “I don’t care about the lyrics, I like the music, and look, they love it.” In fact, the audience was dancing and even singing along (and to each other in a sexually inviting manner). This resembles Farrugia’s (2013, pp. 58–59) findings: DJ “dykes” and their fan base like mainstream (hip hop) music despite its overt misogyny, because they did not see themselves as implicated in heterosexism as they are gay.

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<sup>236</sup>For instance, they tell me they were once hired as strippers without being aware of that – a miscommunication around the verb “entertain”.

<sup>237</sup>The song was *Blurred Lines*.

## Summary

A DJ set is a real-time performance that emerges from “the pull of music” (Hennion & Gomart, 1999), but also from the pull of other things and people, which emerge from a network of heterogeneous human and non-human elements (the DJ, the audience, mixers, headphones, clothes, moods, alcohol, bodies, and so forth) in a specific context.

A Rock DJ set affords specific socio-musical practices and DJ’s identity. Instead of “scratching”, rock sets are about good “passages” over the night’s musical pathway: from the DJ’s personal audio-library to the public set, from song track to song track, from genre/style to genre/style, from high to low volume, from the DJs’ cabin to the dance floor.

Although the participants often refer to their activity of DJing as “I just play the song”, the music in itself does not cause any action in a set. It is through the negotiation of a temporal, contingent, improvised musical sequence between the DJ – her “personal” recorded music and her “personal” taste becoming public, her moods, her tacit skills – and (different) audiences in a specific time and place (specific bars, night clubs, outdoors, specific cities, countries, that night, the Summer, a party) that rock music affords collective action, sociability, bodily conduct, states of feeling: moving bodies (arms, legs, jumps, mosh pit, screams), dancing bodies, moments of happiness, fun, euphoria, adrenaline.

Pathways into DJing are gendered. As with musicians, there is homogeneity and novelty value as well as a feminist sensibility and a sense of tokenism. At the same time, the rock set becomes a site for doing gender – afforded by the set list (music itself), the DJ’s visual cultures and by the embodied presentation of the gendered self, a sexual/ised self.

## 14: A label of her own: the crafting of rock

Participants produce and sell artefacts (clothes, accessories and food) that are inspired by rock music aesthetics and DIY ethos.

What are traditionally considered women's activities in the private domestic space<sup>238</sup> (baking, sewing and decoration) become public and invested with a new (economic) value. Those activities are recontextualised within a discourse of talent and creativity, where artefacts are "handmade" by authentic craftswomen rockers. These discourses are informed by what Angela McRobbie calls a neo-artisanal frame, an ethical, grass-roots 'subcultural entrepreneurialism' (McRobbie, 1989b, 1998, 1999, 2011). (Sub)cultural production is mostly an odd job, done in conjunction with other (inter-sectorial) activities that provide different sources of income/wage for participants<sup>239</sup>. These rock artefacts are produced and branded with profit in mind<sup>240</sup>. These subcultural producers actively construct a (niche) market and consumers for their artefacts. In this process, producers, consumers and goods become gendered.

These micro-scale labels rely on subcultural channels of distribution and informal economies. Online platforms (mostly Facebook<sup>241</sup>) enable the development of product branding<sup>242</sup>. The online presentation of the products is

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<sup>238</sup> The production of rock artefacts is home-based work, which in the informal economy is usually associated with unqualified workers; however, not in the context of the new cultural economy.

<sup>239</sup> Multiple job holding (moonlighting) is a characteristic of the artistic labour market, and creative workers/artists have various strategies which comprise additional part-time jobs (Alper & Wassall, 2000; Throsby & Hollister, 2003).

However, part-time (like under-employment) and self-employment should be considered precarious forms of employment, especially when they have a non-voluntary character (Pais, 2001).

<sup>240</sup> And not with feminist goals. Cultural production outside the commercial sphere has focused on post-Riot Grrrl DIY cottage industries that produce goods such as music, zines, soap and alternative menstrual products (Piano, 2002, 2003). There are fewer examples of the links between subcultural markets and mainstream markets with the exception of McRobbie's work or the way punk attire crossed over to the commercial fashion markets (Breward, Ehrman, & Evans, 2004).

<sup>241</sup> The use of Facebook for these subcultural entrepreneurs resembles the importance of mobile phones for Portuguese women's jobs in the informal economy, from cleaning to baking (M. J. Simões, Las Heras, & Augusto, 2011).

<sup>242</sup> In their Facebook label, these craftswomen reveal parts of the production process, staging authenticity not just in pictures showing the backstage of production, but also sharing what they are working on at the moment, explaining interruptions in the production, celebrating finished artefacts.

framed by a polished image, part of a narrative of an alternative, sustainable, youthful, cultural production. Online platforms make online sales easier, which, in addition to artefacts' sales in seasonal markets, flea markets, at special events and in some local shops, enables the construction of extensive semi-entrepreneurial networks.

#### 14.1: 'My name is Muerte'

Twisted Sisters combine their DJ activities with their labels. Twisted Sisters are Inês and Cátia, two friends in their late twenties who created their own labels 'Psicose' and 'My Name is Muerte'. In terms of previous experiences and background, one of the "sisters" co-owned a record shop dedicated to underground Portuguese music where she also sold hers and other's DIY 'stuff', as she puts it.

'Psicose' is mostly related to the promo shoots for their DJ sets, but they also offered the services of image consulting and fashion styling. Later on, this label was put aside, but the spirit was kept and widened as the new label 'My Name Is Muerte' was born. They quit their day jobs and started their own business, opening a shop in an abandoned shopping mall as part of a collective attempt at creating an underground/subcultural business to revitalise a part of Lisbon. 'My name is Muerte' produces and sells new and second-hand clothes, accessories (jewellery, head ornaments) and decorative items which were mostly produced and/or customised by them, using low-cost materials, which they usually pick up in the garbage or which are unwanted by friends. Inês and Cátia explain<sup>243</sup> that 'My name is Muerte' is inspired by the idea of death and skeletons in Mexican culture but is not to be taken too seriously<sup>244</sup>. 'My Name Is Muerte' intends to explore the idea of giving a new life to death, metaphorically, a new life to dead clothes and to dead materials by treating, reusing, painting and recombining/remixing them.

They established partnerships and used to sell (distribute) other local labels of handcrafted products. Less than a year later, Twisted Sisters closed down the shop but not the label. They work from their shared flat (home-based work), which they call their studio, where they produce the artefacts and they

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<sup>243</sup>Interview excerpt in a Portuguese newspaper (C. Silva, 2013).

<sup>244</sup>That is why they use the sentence 'My name is Muerte', repeated by the character of the film 'Undercover Blues'.

now sell online and in other local shops. They also expanded the services provided by the label, such as styling, doing interior design, offering needlecraft/stitchery workshops. They became more visible to the media when they dressed a woman TV presenter, Ana Markl, and after appearing as guests in an alternative TV talk show. The second-hand clothes they sell are “cheap and corny”, as they advertise. They also have a menswear line, mostly shirts and t-shirts, whose motto is “second-hand for manly men”. The decorative items for sale are varied, such as small statues<sup>245</sup> (see figure 15), candle holders that are skulls with Barbie heads (see Figure 16), glittery swallows, embroidery kitchen gloves, to name a few.



Figure 15 - “Heretic” and “profane” wall-statues “Oh Deer God!” © My Name is Muerte



Figure 16 - Rock artefact © My Name is Muerte

The artefacts produced by ‘My Name is Muerte’ are irreverent and playful, using kitsch, humour and the bizarre. Inês warns that some of the artefacts may be a bit shocking. Subverting the romantic and masculinist notions of “muse”, they claim their muse to be Cicciolina, an iconic porn star and politician, and it is Cicciolina’s picture in the background of their website.

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<sup>245</sup> Twisted Sisters listened to music while crafting. The small statue “cat with crazy” was created while listening to psychedelic rock.

They reclaim the attitude of Cicciolina, when she publicly showed her breasts in the Portuguese Parliament in the late 1980s, as their own attitude to the “crisis”, exposing the performativity of crisis discourses. The production ideology in ‘My Name is Muerte’ is highly political from its production to the targeted audience. Not just the materials used, but also the prices “accessible to people like us”, and the politics of distributing other labels, “helping each other out because the State/Government won’t support young creatives”. They can count on family and friends to support the business (mostly informally, but also financially, as they are potential clients too). But they are active in creating “cooperation”, appealing to potential clients to buy something “original, customised, and to contribute to small business”. They appeal to the active participation of potential clients by asking volunteers to model for their clothes as well as to promote contests among their followers, with their artefacts as the prizes. With current clients, they also foster closeness by naming-showing-thanking interactions. On ‘My Name is Muerte’ Facebook, the clients who have placed orders are named (and tagged), they show the final artefact produced/service accomplished and thank their clients. Then the clients (either individual clients or small, young companies) thank their producers/providers in return, complimenting the production (either artwork or service) and posting pictures of the artefact they bought in its new ‘home’ or themselves posting pictures of the service delivered.

#### 14.2: ‘Tupelo shirts’

Beatriz Rodrigues, guitarist and drummer, highlighted several non-musical DIY practices related to her musical life. Since she was a teenager, she has had a passion for on-stage clothing and decorating. She painted T-shirts which she sold at a local record shop. She did her band’s artwork. Beatriz has professional training in tattooing. She does not just tattoo herself, she also tattoos friends and acquaintances as an odd job.

Beatriz holds a degree in the field of visual arts and education<sup>246</sup>. When I first interviewed her in the summer of 2012 in the middle of the austerity crisis, she was afraid of losing her job as a visual arts teacher in a state school. She told me she would have to be prepared for coming life changes: “I think I get it

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<sup>246</sup> Beatriz’s trajectory is not so uncommon. According to Vitor Sérgio Ferreira’s research on the world of Portuguese tattooing, the second generation of Portuguese tattooists tends to hold Arts related degrees (V. S. Ferreira, 2013, p. 56)..

from rock, it gives me a lot of strength”. This scenario became real<sup>247</sup>. In her new unemployed condition, Beatriz keeps playing in bands and making tattoos as well as other odd jobs (e.g. wardrobe for a theatre play). But Beatriz also decided to create her own label: Tupelo Shirts, which as we can read on its Facebook page, produces handmade “men and women’s clothing inspired by Rock and Roll, Art and Nature. Tupelo is a town in the United States, but from now on, it is also a starting point: music, clothing and self-expression.” Tupelo shirts also accept orders for custom-made shirts or dresses. The fabrics used are 100% made of cotton or recyclable materials. Beatriz is herself responsible for the entire production process. She manages the label’s Facebook page, posting photos of the backstage and of her products – photos that she takes and edits, photos where she and her partner pose as models (see Figures 17 and 18), usually with a bright natural landscape or natural elements as a background. Uniqueness and being handmade, naturalness/simplicity and sustainability are the core of this label.



*Figure 17 - Fabrics: serge and cambric with David Bowie print © Beatriz Rodrigues*



*Figure 18 - David Bowie Shirt © Beatriz Rodrigues*

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<sup>247</sup>In September 2012, many teachers lost their jobs as a result of public spending cuts.

Underlying this project is a commitment to social issues, such as environmental justice in regard to the use of fabrics and sustainable/green practices such as recycling and reusing.

#### 14.3: 'Blue bullet'

Isabel Newton is in her early fifties. Her professional life has been varied but close to music and fashion. Her most cherished job was as a bar manager<sup>248</sup> – where she decorated the bar passionately.

Her partner is a musician in a well-known, established punk band and she is the band manager and roadie. Despite her life being coordinated with her partner's (cohabitation, lifestyle), she makes an important disclaimer:

I'm not the kind of woman that likes to live in the shadow of a great/famous man. I have my own stuff, and I try to do different stuff, so I won't become... you know, the little woman behind the great man! Like: "hey, look, so cool, it is Miguel Newton over there!! And who's that one? Oh, it's just his little wife" (laughs)

Isabel Newton claims an identity of her own by distancing herself from being a musician<sup>249</sup>. Instead, she describes enthusiastically the other range of activities she enjoys doing (in a self-taught way as Isabel highlights), which are related to decoration, jewellery making, fashion, and photography. These apparently non-musical activities are driven by rock and punk music aesthetics. She created her own label, 'Blue Bullet' to sell her handmade "women's and home accessories":

In my productions I don't use my name. I use the label. My productions... it's not a big deal! I don't have any make-up training or any training, but I do it: I make-up the girls, I do their hair, get the clothes, and all the jewellery is made by me. Then I go to unexpected places, I craft/arrange the scenario, and I do the shooting sessions with those pretty chicks. I love to do these things related to decorations, productions... to get that rock'n'roll image!

Blue Bullet pieces are inspired by rock'n'roll – some jewellery pieces have song names, such as *Broken Bones* (see Figure 19). Blue Bullet is also

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<sup>248</sup> Important in the 1980s Portuguese rock scene, a venue for many gigs.

<sup>249</sup> Despite doing back vocals in her husband's band, she does not consider herself a singer. She refuses invitations to play in bands. Regarding the label artist, she finds the concept pretentious, and she considers herself a self-taught person.

inspired by the mod scene, the pin-up aesthetics, the kitsch, the bizarre, the pop, the low-brow art. In the production of these artefacts, the aesthetic is also changed: actualised, reconfigured, and expanded. The material used is varied: plastic, gum/resin, pearls, fabrics, small toys, flowers, kitchen ornaments. Glamour and the bizarre are at the core of this label. Blue Bullet as a brand, also has a signature: “Kiss Kiss Pow Pow”. Reminiscent of the trope *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, this word-play can also be seen to encapsulate the aesthetics of dissonant juxtaposition.

The artefacts are targeted at women only, more specifically as we can read in the label Facebook, at “impish girls” and the “glammed up rocker chick”<sup>250</sup>.



Figure 19 - Footage of the video tour through one of the Blue Bullet catalogues. The piece is “Broken bones”

#### 14.4: ‘Trufa trufa’

Two old friends, one a musician, the other an ex-musician, are in their early forties. They get together at each other’s homes to bake sophisticated chocolate bonbons and other luxury food items. This small-scale business is seasonal (depending on the availability of the special chocolate they use) and it is a secondary activity, a peripheral source of income, as they never quit their full-time jobs.

The cooks bake “with love”, and they decorate, and advertise and sell their products online, on a blog named “Trufa-Trufa”<sup>251</sup>. The bloggers’ nicknames leave readers a clue about their female identity: RR and cristinasousa and they call themselves Trufettes.

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<sup>250</sup> Blue Bullet accessories were also used by the contestants of the Pin-Up Contest (in the 7<sup>th</sup> Tattoo & Rock Festival Lisbon Tattoo Convention).

<sup>251</sup> The blog name is also a “word play”, as it plays with the Portuguese slang expression for sexual intercourse (truca-truca) – and it helps to frame the discourse on food with lust.

The content of the blog is made up of posts with texts and pictures. The bloggers update the blog with posts on their baking plans – “what we’re doing/preparing” and “what’s next”. They use the first-person plural (we) to narrate their activities in a colloquial and playful language that speaks directly to the imagined audience of readers who are equated with potential customers. The photos are high-quality and very artistic, and sometimes they are signed by an author.

The products are targeted not at any specific consumer, but at special, social occasions of consuming (e.g. weddings, anniversaries, social events, etc.). These cakes are not designed for ordinary, everyday life eating, but for the extraordinary (special) eating; not just because of the quality of the ingredients and the decorations, but also the size of the cakes. These cakes are not designed to “pig out” on , but to eat in small portions: “cake size doesn’t matter”, they post.

French cuisine is used as a historical and contemporary reference to the authentic, luxurious and even lusty chocolate cakes, and that authenticity is staged in the blog – the bloggers’ apprenticeship journeys to France to learn from the authentic chocolatier masters are shared on the blog<sup>252</sup>.

The blog aesthetics is inspired by rockabilly aesthetics, and also the items are inspired by rock. For example, this birthday cake:



Figure 20 - Punk Anniversary Cake © Trufa-Trufa

<sup>252</sup>Portuguese cuisine has been historically influenced by French cuisine (Sobral, 2008), and in this case that influence is updated and specified.

But there are other aesthetics, according to different occasions and demands (such as a wedding cake for a gay wedding:



Figure 21 - Gay Wedding Cake © Trufa-Trufa

The pictures show only the final products, the glamorous cakes, decorated mostly in red, black and white. In the discursive space of the blog, the space of the kitchen is absent: no reference to where, how or when they cook it. The cakes are handmade, but there is never any (visual, textual) reference to the ‘real’ hands that make it. The invisibility of the messiness associated with baking foregrounds cooking as a clean activity, and therefore, an enjoyable, pleasurable experience – it is not just about the pleasure of baking, but also about the skills. The authorial voice is not revealed in the (dirty, long, messy) process of baking, but by the self-evident presentation of the glamorous, perfect final product, usually accompanied by a text describing the product and an authorial, positive comment – “we are proud of our cake”.

When I attended a gig, where one of these women was featuring as an invited musician, the band’s leader (and her friend), when presenting her to the audience, complimented her not only on her attributes as a musician, but he also thanked her publicly for the great dinner she had prepared for them that night before the gig. Given the pre-gig dinner importance for Portuguese musicians, this can be understood within a gift economy. The stage becomes a site where private and public blur, as the otherwise domestic task of cooking becomes publicly acknowledged and valued in a non-domestic, non-traditional site: the rock music stage.

## Summary

Amateurs co-produce subcultural markets, articulating and deriving (socioeconomic) value from their love for music<sup>253</sup> and from their status as ‘authentic’ women rockers.

Amateurs draw together rock music aesthetics and ethos, gender representations (specific types of femininities), personal networks, skills, to produce rock crafts, including clothing items, accessories and even food items and create channels of distribution (online, small markets). Amateurs find innovative ways to accommodate the circumstances of (economic) uncertainty/risk but to keep leading a meaningful life. Crossing the (artificial) lines between musical and non-musical, formal and informal, domestic/private and public, women move into the (subcultural) music-driven precarious labour market and take part in a gendered, subcultural economy.

Women’s engagement in the production of crafts within (gendered) narratives of production is not just artistic, but highly political, creating new meanings for rock music, furnishing rock’s material culture and reconfiguring gender representations and traditional female roles.

## 15: Rockin’ the cradle: the rock chick guide to mothering

In this chapter<sup>254</sup> I show how rock music is used as a childrearing technique and part of musical mothering styles and practices<sup>255</sup>. I describe how mothers reconfigure maternal subjectivity – from a “sacrificial” ethos to a more empowering one, and then how mothers, through creative re-arrangements of social scenarios and places, use rock as “music asylums” (DeNora, 2013), both for (temporary) “removal” and “refurnishing” from mothering roles.

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<sup>253</sup> Stamp collectors are another example of amateurs making markets (Van Der Grijp, 2002).

<sup>254</sup> A version of this chapter was published (Grácio, 2016). I have interviewed ten mothers, ranging from early thirties to early fifties. They are all educated (hold a degree), middle-class (paid) working mothers. Most are divorced (three are married). See Appendix 8.

<sup>255</sup> I use the term musical mothering styles and practices to refer broadly to the “attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors that parents [mothers] bring to [musical] settings in which they interact [musically] with their child or children” (Alwin, 2004, p. 152). I use the term mothering as different from motherhood to refer to the social and cultural practices of mothering and not the biological status of being a mother (cf. O’Reilly, Andrea, 2004).

Women rockers who become mothers use rock music as an *active ingredient* (DeNora, 2000) in mothering. The mothers<sup>256</sup> described how they either intuitively or consciously use music on specific occasions, times or life stages, to bond, care for, interact with and teach their children and for being together – in other words, music is used as a child-rearing technique and a “technology of” mothering – in the Foucauldian sense of a technology of the self, as worked by DeNora (1999). Different elements configure these methods and the ways in which music is used in the mother-child relationship, namely the age of the children (since a toddler is not a teenager), the number of children, the mother’s musical role (fan, musician or DJ), and the personal musical maps of each family member, as well as the intergenerational family culture.

In western societies motherhood is represented as a child-centered experience performed by selfless mothers who, guided by experts, are the central caregivers, and invest emotionally and financially in their children – in what Hays (1998) has termed “intensive mothering” grounded in an ethos of “sacrificial motherhood” (O’Reilly, Andrea, 2004). Rosa Monteiro (2005) study of Portuguese (salaried) working mothers analyzed the ways in which these mothers negotiate this model. Monteiro found that the work-family dualism does not have to be mutually exclusive, as women value both work and family life, refusing strategies that confine them exclusively to the traditional roles of (house)wives and mothers. A difference was also found between working-class and middle-class mothers: the former tend to identify with a discourse of good mothering as being a “caring mother” who provides total care for her children and the latter with a “mentoring mother” discourse that posits motherhood as crucial, but just one of the realms in which women must be successful. This caring/mentoring dynamic pervades different musical mothering styles and practices in nuanced ways, reflecting the different “attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors that parents [mothers] bring to [musical] settings in which they interact [musically] with their child or children” (Alwin, 2004, p. 152). Musical mothering styles and practices are forms of active engagement with children’s education, and social boundary-making practices.

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<sup>256</sup> Here I take the participants’ view, i.e. the perspectives of the mothers (which may conflict with the children’s perspective). I do not wish to claim that children are passive recipients of adult child-rearing practices or deny their own agency, but the aim is to focus on the mother’s experiences.

### 15.1: Musical Mothering Styles and Practices

The mothers are fully supportive in promoting music-making practices – they expressed a desire for their children to learn musical skills and actively try to engage their children in formal musical learning. However, they have different ideas about what a child should be ‘allowed to’ listen to. Attentiveness and mediation in children’s (shifting) musical tastes is part of the mother’s care work and determining what constitutes child-appropriate music genres is also part of musical mothering. They are more concerned about (and exercise greater control over) musical genres than ways of listening to music and the technologies associated with this – e.g. music played too loud, the use of earbuds. Mothering styles range from encouraging musical (self-) exploration associated with promoting the child’s autonomy, to controlling children’s musical tastes and practices, and from influence and interference to banning (restrictive mediation).

Most of the mothers follow an ‘exposing/showing, not imposing/forcing’ ethos as a practical mothering guideline to deal with children’s musical preferences, which starts at an early age. The music in the domestic environment for newborns and toddlers is something mothers can control. Moreover, the mothers who had rock music at the core of their personal musical maps all refused to play “children’s music”. Instead, they played “their music” for “their children”, renegotiating the dominant discourses on “appropriate” music-for-children and reformulating the rock and heavy metal genres as (their) “children’s music” genre. Catarina highlights her musical choices as part of her family rock music tradition: her father never played “children’s music” for her, so she had no intention of doing so either.

As the children grow up, there is a growing concern to provide them with the space for (musical) exploration, in which colleagues and friends are also acknowledged as potential musical peers. Although exposure is important, the mothers also believe they should not hold their children back and confine them to their own musical tastes. They expressed a concern for the child’s individuality and autonomy that can be articulated musically and recognized that children need to establish themselves as autonomous (musical) subjects.

Lúcia adopts the strategy of giving her children the chance to “taste a bit of everything” – promoting “omnivorous” cultural practices (Peterson & Kern, 1996). Providing her children with a wide range of musical genres and styles – from classical music and opera to Iron Maiden – is seen as part of their broader cultural education, intellectual and cognitive development and a way of enriching their lives. This is a mothering style in which her professional role as a teacher merges with her role as a mother.

Musical self-exploration (usually with friends and peers) might result in a child’s own musical preferences clashing with those of their parents and tensions may arise over musical differences.

Elvira, a 48-year old married mother of two girls (aged 18 and 15), illustrates this tension, and how she deals with it:

I think the more you antagonize them, the worse it becomes... They have to be the ones to discover things, to judge those things, otherwise they can’t tell the good from the bad. And don’t forbid anything: “you’re not listening to this!” I wouldn’t do that. Of course... there are those periods when they’re really influenced by their friends... but it’s also a part of their world, because it’s theirs and their friends’... (Elvira, musician and DJ)

When her children’s tastes clash with hers, Elvira adopts ‘guidance’ as a musical mothering style – “But then, we guide them!” In order to guide, mothers have to monitor their children’s tastes, so they can respond to them:

the youngest likes the band “One Direction”, what can I do? [shrugs her shoulders and laughs]. And I had to explain to them: ‘Are you listening to this song? This is a cover of a Blondie song!’ And she goes: ‘Ahhh! I thought I knew it... Now I remember, we used to listen to it in the car’. Of course! We used to listen to Blondie! (Elvira, musician and DJ)

Musical guidance in this case is accomplished through conversation. “Talking about music” in informal settings has been studied as part of musical communication and as a tool for social action, both among musicians and music fans (MacDonald, Miell, & Wilson, 2005) but it is equally important for mothers, who use it as a form of musical mothering and an educational tool.

Lúcia explained how she teaches her children to pay attention to music, namely to the lyrics: “I always tell them it is very important to listen to what’s being said!”. Lúcia is an Iron Maiden fan and tries to teach her children that listening to songs also involves learning about history, English and life:

I try to pass on that message. And every time I find out something new, I talk to them. Well... I don't have many people to talk to about this, so I talk to them, I pour it out to my children [laughs]. And they get used to that and listen to me, and listen to the songs. (Lúcia, fan)

Here children are also reframed as musical peers: the mother-child relationship is reconfigured in terms of musical fandom. Talking about music and sharing music involves interaction between one music lover and another. It is a dynamic, dialogic relationship in which they learn from each other. Catarina explained how her children's musical remarks opened up new aspects of music for her that she had never thought of – even though she has been a long-time rock music fan.

The apprentice becomes an expert too, as Clarice also experienced. Clarice is a divorced 40-year old mother of a 13-year old boy and an 8-year old daughter. She tells me that she and her older son shared the same musical tastes, but then he evolved into “heavier stuff”, and because of that she became the “softer” one:

He started off listening those Disney Channel songs. Then he started listening to System of a Down, and from there he rushed into heavier stuff, he ran faster than I did! Now he listens to things that I can't, and he can tell the screams from the growls, all those different types of sounds. And I stick to the softer stuff. (Clarice, fan)

The “heavy *versus* soft” opposition is relational. Clarice's musical preferences – such as mathcore – might be considered heavy by some, but within her family musical maps she has become the “soft(er)” one.

Having seen how mothers view talking about music as important, there are also other ways of providing musical guidance. Sometimes it may materialize as an unforeseen outcome of the most mundane of actions, as Elizabete, a punk rock fan and 30-year old single mother of a 12-year old daughter, describes:

I started noticing that my daughter liked Regina Spektor, because I would play it as my alarm clock song. Then I was surprised when I checked the browsing history and found searches on Regina Spektor: it was my daughter! And then she asked me the name of the song on the alarm clock because she liked it. And I really liked that she was liking it! So I think it's bit by bit...we can't impose things on our children. That thing about the alarm clock: I didn't do it on purpose, but it worked: I made her like an artist I love. (Elizabete, fan)

However, this “bit by bit” exposure ethos can change into a ban when it comes to pop music, for example the male pop idol Justin Bieber:

Q: Why don't you want your daughter to listen to Justin Bieber? Is it the lyrics, the music itself...?

A: The songs are stupid, and people who like those songs are not very smart, and I want my daughter to be smart. I always associate rock music with good lyrics, rock is something that not everyone can understand. And I have never met anyone who likes rock and is dumb. So, I would like my daughter to like rock, because that increases the chances that she won't turn out dumb.

Q: Yes. I'm asking what it is about rock that makes people like this music genre so much.

A: It's the lyrics because it has to do with a kind of philosophy of life, with political things that you have to understand. It's not just about having a pretty face and boobs, or whatever. And also because of the sound, the sound is strong, especially combined with the lyrics. It makes you think and take action. (Elizabete, fan)

These narratives about rock are common among rock fans – the construction of pop and its fans as the inauthentic, trivial, feminine ‘Other’, and the stigma of “teenyboppers” as a derided type of fandom (Duffett, 2013). Due to these *delineated musical meanings* (Green, 1997), Elizabete contrasts the content of pop and rock music (pop's lightness and stupid lyrics as opposed to rock's profound lyrics and strong sound), through which she establishes classed social types (dumb, shallow vs. critical mind) and femininities (criticism of hypersexualized “girlie” femininity, body vs mind). Classed gender inequalities are reproduced and transmitted by enacting gendered and classed musical stereotypes. The mainstream vision of the child as not-yet-adult and therefore the desire and authority to shape children's pathways through life – within the boundaries of white middle class respectability (Skeggs, 1997) – and the belief that music provides templates for (un)desirable ways of being and lifestyles, leads this mother to resort to extreme parental control.

Clarice deals with her daughter's taste for pop music in a different way. She contrasts her two children's music tastes: her older son started by listening to ‘Disney Channel music’, but evolved to rock and heavy metal, while her daughter “is still in the Disney Channel stage”. This means her daughter listens

to Miley Cyrus,<sup>257</sup> Shakira, and all the “light pop, with dancing chicks”. Although Clarice states she would prefer her daughter to listen to music she identifies with, she is resigned to this and adopts a different mothering style. Instead of forbidding, she tries to be flexible and considers musically “downgrading” to pop and/or electronic.

Having examined how mothers build up their relationship with their children and provide musical care – not without some tensions – configuring classed and gendered musical identities for their children, we turn next to how mothers reconfigure maternal subjectivity – transforming it from a sacrificial ethos into a more empowering one.

#### 15.2: From “Sacrificial Motherhood” to Other Forms of Maternal Subjectivity

Lúcia and Catarina voiced the experience of a radical shift in the way they experienced being a mother, which was articulated in and through music. Both Lúcia and Catarina explained that when their children were born they dedicated themselves to child care and domestic issues and were confined to the space within the house. It was aesthetic material – rock music and heavy metal – that provided the temporal and cultural workspace for the transition from an ethos of sacrificial motherhood to more empowering versions of maternal subjectivity. Conceptualizing music as a “cultural workspace” highlights the ways in which people render music habitable as a space and place for the work – in the ethnomethodological sense – of world-making (DeNora, 2011b).

The two following excerpts describe this transition to a woman-centered experience, constituted in and through musical identities and practices:

Five years ago I was just going home, I had the kids, I wouldn't leave the house and I was confined to one idea... then, it hit me, boom! “I don't want to do this!”... And to be a bit more specific, I can tell you that at the age of 28, after a long period without DJing, I started DJing again. And I decided at the age of 28 that I wanted to have a band and to make music... and maybe that's the greatest inspiration that came from rock... It awakened me to the kind of life I wanted to live. (Catarina, musician and DJ)

The most important thing that music gave me was learning how to be by myself. [...] I can spend an entire day on my own. I don't rely on someone else's opinion or how they feel, in order to feel good. Which gave me a new

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<sup>257</sup> The interview with Clarisse took place in 2012, before the 2013 controversy concerning Miley Cyrus's (sexualized) musical performance – *twerking* – at the MTV Video Music Awards.

balance. And that balance came through music, from everything that music enabled... and from the way I experience music. (Lúcia, fan)

We can see that the transition between these two experiences of mothering was mediated by music and its socio-material practices, but also the way in which it was experienced – music lovers are self-reflexive individuals. Going back to a positive self in the past, for instance – “I used to be a very active and lively person” (Lúcia) – and bringing it forward was a strategy used in both interviews. These women know they are shaping their mothering practices in ways that conflict with images, representations and discourses of the child-centered caregiver - and they report being criticized by family and friends. In order to counteract the dangers of being stigmatized as ‘bad mothers’ these women establish new criteria for good mothering – criteria which they fit – by reaffirming their unconditional love for their children, claiming that they are responsible mothers (no maternal responsibilities and duties are neglected), that they have achieved a balance between motherhood and womanhood, and that being a ‘happy person’ and having time for oneself means being a better mother, which benefits both the mother and her children:

I realized I can do everything [work-life balance], I can keep an optimal balance, I can pay attention to my children, they deserve all my attention, but I can also pay attention to myself, because I also deserve it. And I found out that when you’re doing things that make you happy, that influences your children’s happiness, because you can be more patient with them, you’re much happier, self-fulfilled... (Catarina)

Nowadays, please don’t get me wrong, I love my children! They’re the most important thing in my life. But I learned to have moments for myself. (Lúcia)

Time to oneself is a vital when moving on from *sacrificial motherhood*. It is then that socio-musical practices – DJing, listening to music at home and in the car, and going to concerts - provide a time and a cultural workspace for ‘removal’ from their role as mothers-only.

DeNora uses the concept of ‘asylum’ to describe both phenomenological experiences and environmental constructs: “asylum can be defined as a space, either physical or conceptual, that either offers protection from hostility (a refuge) or, more positively, a space within which to play on/with one’s environment, whether alone or in a concert with others” (DeNora, 2013, p. 47).

In other words, music asylums can be workspaces for *removal* (individual, private) or *refurnishing* (public, collective) activities and experiences, and the two forms are not mutually exclusive. These mothers use rock as a 'music asylum' in the sense it offers both a respite from *sacrificial motherhood*, but also helps them to bond with their children. Music becomes a resource for self-care and care work. Through creative re-arrangements of social scenarios and places, rock music asylums are musically crafted for (temporary) *removal* from the normative expectations, discourses and practices associated with motherhood. These women become rock moms and moms who rock, a valued musical identity beyond the family circle.

### *The In-car Musicking Asylum*

The way in which mothers and children listen to music together in the car configures it as a music asylum. Michael Bull (2004) identified the automobile as a "listening chamber", as a mobile existential space where mobile sound technologies (radio, sound systems, mobile phones) combine, given that "car habitation" is part of an ecology of media uses and everyday routines. Bull points out that drivers use the car as a free space and a refuge. For the mothers who feature in these interviews, a car journey can be both a solitary and a family moment (taking kids to school, picking them up), and this continuous movement is part of their everyday routine. In the confined space of the vehicle, parents are responsible both for their children's safety and their wellbeing, which includes managing the musical environment in the car.

For Clarice and her children, the car is the place where they all listen to music together (as opposed to the privatized home space). The car becomes more than a listening chamber, as the practice of listening to music in the car includes singing along. In-car singing can also be a way of controlling both the sonic environment and disruptive behavior, as Laurinda, a mother of three preschool children, vividly describes: "It is a way of stabilizing the environment. Sometimes things are about to go wrong (tantrums, fights...) and you start: 'ok kids, let's sing a song! All together now!'" Through joint attention, and mutual "tuning-in", in the virtual space of a shared song, through mother's instructions, Laurinda also gains control over the unruly children's bodies that get entrained

by singing along. The bodies are regulated through music, and bodily order is re-established – even if temporarily.

The way mothers and children listen to music together in the car tells us much about the configurations of car as a music asylum, and its dependent of the children's age, as well as on specific occasions. Some mothers allow their children to choose the car soundtrack, especially when they're very young, or in special occasions, such as long journeys (holidays).

For Lúcia, when driving alone, the car and the soundtrack she carefully chooses become the privileged 'listening chamber' for removal. When accompanied by her children, the mother's car is a space for "mom's music". Although Lúcia plays the music she likes, she opens up a space for negotiation and uses music to teach her children to respect different musical tastes. In-car musicking becomes a template for modelling cooperative, prosocial musical and extra-musical behavior, as Lúcia explains:

At first, when they asked me to change the song, I would. But then... they have to understand that even if they don't like a song, someone else might! And if we're in the car, if we're 3 or 4 people in the car, we must reach an agreement. Sometimes we have to give up what we want to play or listen to. But that was easy to change. Now, before they ask me to change the song, they first ask me 'do you like this song?' If I say "yes", they won't say anything. If I say "I don't like it that much", then they ask "could you please change it?", and I do.

When mothers give up listening to their music, it is common practice to use the radio as the car soundtrack to create a neutral musical atmosphere. The radio is a common choice when mothers abdicate from listening to "their" music and try to promote a more consensual musical atmosphere.

Carla is a heavy metal musician. Since she wants her two teen and pre-teen boys to find their own musical tastes, she listens to the radio in the car and/or plays her children's musical choices – which she finds beneficial as she can also expand her musical knowledge as a musician. However, there are exceptions to the music routine in the car that are related to Carla's role as a musician. When the new album by Carla's band came out, they all listened to it in the car and the children would comment on it: "I like this song better" or "play the other one". On another occasion Carla was unexpectedly invited to play in a band. As she had very little time to rehearse, she listened repeatedly to the

songs in the car to memorize them. The car became her rehearsal space and her children the spectators – although not passively, as Carla reported, since they would express their discontent with the situation. When Carla's role as a mother overlaps with her role as a musician, the former is relegated to the background, and the latter comes to the fore.

### *Concerts and the dancefloor*

Attending concerts and DJing can be both a space for removal and refurbishing. Nazaré Pinela and her husband are regular concert goers and their holidays have always revolve around going to concerts abroad. And she explains that she always brought her two sons to the concerts, and she frames that as part of family life.

For other mothers, attending to concerts, either alone or with friends and/or partners, constitutes important activities for *removal*. Not having to take care of their children means they feel more relaxed and enjoy the music in a more attentive way. But it is not just about the listening itself, it is about the experience of participating in the activity of concert-going, it is about being able to step back from the mother role for that moment, which is described as a moment of freedom. Elvira illustrates this position:

Children have to know that their parents, in this case, me, the mother, I also have my own life, beyond family life and professional life. There are occasions when I take my daughters with me, either to concerts or events where my friends are. I don't exclude them from those occasions. However, it's important that they know that their mother has a life of her own.

Although these mothers describe how they use the occasions as musicians or DJs to *remove* from mothering, the boundaries are fluid. For instance, Carla has written about her children in her lyrics, which she sings in concerts. When Catarina is DJing she plays songs in her set that are her "children's songs". Also, whenever she takes a break, she also (not exclusively) talks about her children shows their smartphone pictures, to her friends that went to her set.

### Summary

For women rock fans who became mothers, rock musicking practices are integrated into their everyday lives and mundane child-rearing and childcare

practices. As music stages an “object lesson” (DeNora, 2011b) not just about aesthetics, but also about morality, competences and social types, these mothers negotiate how children listen to music and which genres they explore, thus configuring specific musical childhoods, crafting classed and gendered subjectivities for their children. They also use rock music to negotiate their own roles as mothers, musically staging more empowering ways of being mothers – as “rock moms”.

Rock musicking becomes an “active ingredient” in the making of family life and relationships, creating memories and nostalgia, supporting mundane interactions and offering musical opportunities for family members. In fact, it becomes a socio-material practice that *holds together* rock families.

## CONCLUSIONS

The studies on gender and rock have largely focused on popular individual musicians, rock stars, and solo vocal artists, as well as rock bands. Studies also analysed specific feminist movements within rock history, mainly punk, riot grrrl, grunge and, more recently, 1960s girl groups. The production of culture approach in these studies focused on the social construction of artistic careers and (media) representations of artists.

My research, instead, focused on women rockers and their music practices. My research documented the actual musical engagements of women in everyday life and onstage. In this sense, my work is indebted to ethnographies of local music practice (H. S. Bennett, 1980; Sara Cohen, 1991; Finnegan, 2007), but most importantly, to the study of music in everyday life (Bull, 2000; DeNora, 2000). In this vein, my work used a music-in-action approach, which explored music as socio-material practice and performative action (N. Cook, 2014; DeNora, 2011b; Frith, 1996; McCormick, 2015). This research is also indebted to the *mutual shaping* approach pursued in feminist technoscience (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999). Understanding how gender and rock music mutually shape and co-produce each other meant investigating how gender shaped musical practice and, at the same time, how rock music was an active ingredient in the formation of gender identities. By considering how music itself is a mediator of gender identities, my approach built upon and expanded the classic ethnographies of female rockers (Bayton, 1998; Leblanc, 1999; Schippers, 2002). In all of these sources, music itself was discussed.

This approach allowed me to see how women's experiences are complex and varied, and how discourses on the masculinity of rock music and gendered subjectivities may be negotiated in diverse and often unpredictable ways.

To refer to women rockers I borrowed the term *amateurs* from Hennion (2001), which captured the double meaning of amateur: non-professional and music lover. Referring to women rockers - that might be fans, musicians and/or DJs - as amateurs, helped me to capture the blurring of the boundaries between producers and consumers that has been analytically unexplored in the accounts of rock music and gender.

I followed these *amateurs* in the rock music practice context and in their daily life. Participants in this study were aged between late twenties and early forties. This age cohort expanded the usual focus on young punk rockers (youth cultures and subcultures) or, more recently, the turn to ageing punk rockers (A. Bennett & Hodkinson, 2012).

To account for the wider constellations of musical practices, and to account for music in its relational, collective and performative sense, I borrowed the term “musicking” (Small, 1998). I followed *amateurs* from the bedroom to the band, from home listening to the DJ set, from playing music to the craft of rock artefacts, without making *a priori* assumptions about what is or is not a rocker. Following the lead of authors who expanded the way we understand cultural participation and cultural practice (DeNora, 2013; D. J. Hargreaves et al., 2012; Pitts, 2005; S. Young, 2012), I believe this thesis has contributed to a more dynamic understanding of “rock users” by opening up a whole set of rock music experiences for analysis, including dancing, DJing, crafting, mothering, or in-car musicking practices.

My research was conducted in Portugal. The thesis of cultural imperialism has proven to be reductionist (T. Rose, 1994), and my research complicates those abstracts theorizations. Instead, it documents, empirically, how cultural forms and music genres are appropriated by specific users, in specific locations. My research extends the traditional focus within popular music scholarship on Anglo-American rock culture, feminist mo(ve)ments, and subcultures (Kearney, 2017, p. xvii), to place emphasis instead on a place and a age group (late twenties to early forties) that have otherwise been overlooked.

#### *The gendering of musical practice at the amateur level*

In the organisational culture of the rock world, the band is the most important unit of music-making, oriented to live performance. The empirical work confirmed that the Portuguese rock music world is shaped by vertical and horizontal gender segregation dynamics. There are gendered pathways into rock musicking practices that share resemblances with pathways of women entering other male-dominated organizational fields of practice, such as the arts, sports and the labour market.

In line with other socio-music studies, this study confirmed that family plays an important role in participants' musical engagement from an early age regardless of the genre (Sara Cohen, 1991; Finnegan, 2007; Green, 2001; Reeves, 2015). Parental encouragement and financial support, mainly from fathers and siblings, played a crucial role in how girls accessed and owned electronic instruments and engaged in musical tuition. At the same time, parents participated in defining what genres and instruments were considered to be suitable for girls. Singing, playing the piano or keyboards and playing acoustic guitar were encouraged, but playing the drums or being in a band, was sometimes even forbidden. Girls, on the other hand, worked to display musical commitment ("taking music seriously"). In exchange for their musical participation, girls were expected to be good students, an identity that girls invested in and of which they were proud. The good student discourse (school achievement) regulated girls' musical activities and identities.

Another enabling factor of girls' and women's musical participation was their access to male networks (not just fathers and brothers, but also male friends and boyfriends/partners and brothers-in-law). Belonging to a male network is a form of social capital and, in this case, it provided access to electronic instruments, musical skill acquisition in a positive learning environment, engagement in non-traditional female instruments, as well as participation in bands. It is mostly through heterosexual dyads that girls and women participated in bands (homogamy), and musicking together (at home and/or in the band) was an active ingredient of these couples' shared culture. If male networks enabled musical participation, they also configured women's musical participation in specific and often precarious ways. Instead of instrument specialization, the participants played several instruments, and were dependent upon the needs of their partners and their partner's bands.

Girls and women accessed male networks through specific gendered performances, combined with the good student discourse. It was the gendered performance of a rock, heterosexual *female masculinity* (Halberstam, 2002) that regulated access to rock worlds and especially to rock musicianship (instrumental practice and band membership). Female masculinity granted respectability for girls and women in the male-dominated rock world, allowing them to negotiate gender norms, as well as to safely access an otherwise

male-only space. If other studies have accounted for tomboys and gender rebels in rock worlds, they left unexplored how social actors tap into cultural resources to achieve specific gender performances throughout their life course and in specific contexts. Female masculinity, which had different expressions throughout participants' life course (from tomboys to women with balls or tough women) is achieved by reflexively mobilizing material culture (clothing, props) and gender-stereotyped and embodied behaviour (posture, voice tone). Female rockers were assembled by an "aesthetics of dissonant juxtaposition" that allowed a presentation of a rock self that was not too feminine (rejecting *emphasized femininity*), but also, not too masculine (avoiding the *lesbian threat*). To avoid jeopardizing the heteronormative matrix, girls and women worked to display heteronormative bodies ("I am feminine") and/or behaviour (being in long-term monogamist heterosexual relationships). Female masculinity is played out as a socially acceptable form of gender transgression, within the confinements of white, middle-class heteronormativity. Female masculinity for post-school woman was combined with a discourse of responsibility, which replaced the good student discourse. Women can still have fun and keep their responsibilities, such as keeping a job, adulthood commitments or a stable heterosexual relationship. This can be seen as part of what McRobbie has termed the "new gender regime" in the post-feminist and post-girl-power era, based on an "ethic of freedom" (Nikolas Rose), whereby young women can choose to do what they want if they act as self-responsible subjects (McRobbie, 2009, p. 21).

Participation in bands, a space with specific musical and non-musical organizational features, was considered by participants to be a "natural" and rewarding form of musical engagement in rock. In Portugal, most girls and women rockers participated in male-centred bands through homogamic trajectories of band membership. Female bands were scarce in Portugal. This is not surprising, given that women were underrepresented as rock musicians, but also because there was not a Portuguese riot grrrl scene, as described by the Anglo-Saxon literature or as experienced by two participants who had formerly been part of a riot grrrl scene outside Portugal. As such, the girls and women who belonged to a female band displayed pride and a sense of "making history"

in what they saw as the typical Portuguese underdeveloped socio-musical landscape.

Band membership in a male or female band (which was not mutually exclusive) configured musical participation in different ways. In male bands, girls and women were relegated to the traditional roles of singers, sometimes bass players, or, at best, second guitar. This phenomenon termed instrument segregation was based on what participants' male bandmates defined for them as musical skills and roles (male skill ascription). If female rockers were excluded from bands' decision-making and creative processes, they were called upon to be "the girl in the band", to take non-musical "female roles" in the band's life such as nurturing. These rockers had to prove themselves to join the bands' *boys' club*. Once they did it, by fitting in, accordingly, to the band's needs, they are welcomed in the band. Once in the band, rockers can rely on "male protection" (for example, from audiences' sexual harassment). In exchange for band membership and male protection, the girl in the band is implicitly expected to display rock sexiness onstage.

This type of marketing strategy potentially attracting audiences (femaleness as a commodity) was used in both male and female bands, but with different caveats and consequences. Whereas in male bands musicians "selling sex" posed no risk for the band's musical reputation and authenticity, in female bands sexiness became an aesthetic of risk.

In the context of the female band, women became more vulnerable because gender is highly visible. There was an intentional female gendering of the female band, from bands' naming practices to the lyrical content to onstage clothing. To cope with an aesthetic of risk, female bands' onstage presentation was subjected to collective decisions in the physical or imagined backstage. Female bands could only "sell sex" without "selling out" when accompanied with the display of high musical quality (unless it was a beginners' band, punk band or both).

Female bands were also more vulnerable to breakups, as there were fewer women musicians to replace leaving members. Band membership in the female band demanded not just musical ability (in fact, female bands were more open to accommodate heterogenous levels of musical proficiency), but also interpersonal skills and commitment to the band. The female band was not

usually based on pre-existing friendships. The female band was created by female homosocial bonds, built through repeated musical practice, but also through talking about (even “bitching”) and sharing both musical and non-musical topics. The rehearsal space resembled the atmosphere of bedroom cultures, but it was also a socio-musical space for “venting” together. The band became a “protected” context for music-making for girls and women, because it was based on female homosocial bonds, where allegiance to the group was displayed fiercely which allowed its survival.

Women rockers (not just those in female bands) tried to compensate their femaleness as otherness by engaging in discourses and practices to be “taken seriously.” This implied that there was a sensed lack of recognition. Achieving high standards of musicianship (with resemblances of a military discourses of effort and sacrifice), and displaying commitment were strategies mobilized by female rockers to achieve worthiness and recognition in their rock worlds. Part of this strategy implied othering other women (non-musicians and non-rockers); but also naming and praising other women as inspiring musicians (both their local music peers, but also popular Anglo-American musicians).

Participation in male bands was restrictive in terms of an unequal distribution of musical opportunities and expertise for “the girl in the band”. On the other hand, participation in male bands, despite being restrictive, still opened up musical avenues for these women such as opportunities to practice, develop musical skills, make emergent new aspects of their musical selves on which they can act upon or even to play a non-traditional female musical role.

Despite inequalities in musical participation, interviewees’ discourses positively highlighted the role of men’s support and mentorship. My findings are in line with those of other researchers regarding Portuguese artists: the representation of practice is one of equality, although practices are gender segregated (Conde et al., 2003; Guerra et al., 2017; J. A. Simões, 2013).

Most interviewees identified the female band as a site of “girl power”, claiming that female bands were assembled to prove that “girls can do it”. These Portuguese bands did not grow out of feminist activism or a connection to trans-local riot grrrl networks (only Les Baton Rouge and Dead By Pregarancy were integrated in those networks). Hence the conflicting positions among

participants in female bands on who was or was not worthy of being labelled “riot grrrl.”

Portuguese female bands were closer to a commodified version of “girl power” discourse (paragon to Spice Girls) as discussed by the Anglo-Saxon literature, and set against an “authentic” riot grrrl version of girl power. The commodified girl power discourse undercut feminist principles by reducing feminist rhetoric, ideas and icons to individual consumer choices in the capitalist market (Gill & Scharff, 2012; Harris, 2004; Kearney, 2006; Taft, 2004). I subscribe, however, to claims that a commodified version of “girl power” can generate innovative cultural and feminist outcomes and social change (Hains, 2012, 2014). Hains (2014) shows how fans of Spice Girls - “the commodified version” of grrrl power-experience their love for music. Considering the girls’ and women’s personal chronology of listening, the author shows that girls who encounter Spice Girls in the first place (before they meet riot grrrl) – as it was mainstream music, it was easier to access – became sensitized to feminist issues, which they pursue as they become young women.

Female bands reframed feminism as a musical performance and the band as a lesson on gender and rock. The female band was a socio-musical “woman-friendly” space, welcoming both heterosexual and homosexual women and non-binary musicians. Underpinned by an *aesthetic cosmopolitanism*, new ways of being a Portuguese rocker were registered onstage. Female bands expanded the available musical and non-musical roles for women, highlighting female musical ability, autonomy and identity as creative producers.

#### *An active ingredient in gendered and musical everyday life performances*

Despite the restrictions and inequalities, participation in rock was meaningful and consequential in the lives of these women. Rock music was a social ordering device of participants’ pathways, from the choice of a partner to mundane activities like dressing and home decoration; from leisure and amateur activities like being in a band, concert going and meeting people that are music-alike to semi-professional activities like making rock crafts, aspiring to be professional musicians or keeping “rock friendly” jobs. Participants used rock music as an aesthetic material for world-making and building a creative, meaningful life. Rock’s material and visual culture (not just clothes and

embodied behaviour, but also musical instruments) were also used as active ingredients in the performance of gender identities.

Musical practice (instrument playing and singing) took shape in relation to gender. Each rock instrument (voice, electric guitars, electric bass and drum kits) configured bodily action and embodied gender performances with its shape, weight, size, playing conventions, gender stereotypes and gender delineations.

Vocalists' gender identity was musically mediated through their voices. Their voices, were not biological givens, however, since they were mediated by gender issues, media and other social discourses, situated contexts, vocal techniques and genre conventions and technologies such as the microphone. Vocalists also actively constructed the pathways of their voices by deepening, growling, screaming or not screaming. Women may have sometimes lost a musical opportunity when they were pushed out from the guitar to the role of vocalists or bassists (instrument segregation), new musical outcomes arose. Singers gained a new performing singing body and gained power in the rock band, due to their traditional musical role as singers.

Resisting the under-appreciation of the bass, due to its feminization (Clawson, 1993), women employed alternative value parameters. These value criteria were gender-delineated with masculinity such as deep bass tones and a large size. Bassists also highlighted the role of the bass in structuring the songs (not mere supportive role to the songs), and how, in female bands, the bass line is a key element. These were counter-discourses resisting the under-appreciation of the feminised bass.

Interviewees associated the electric guitar with "hard" music, authentic rock'n'roll, which relied on othering the acoustic guitar as soft music. However, gendered playing conventions were challenged. The flamboyant guitar hero ideal was dismissed as showing off or a sign of immaturity in favour of playing with comfort. However, the two most experienced semi-professional guitarists had to keep the "male standards" of the technical virtuosity to be accepted among peers.

The experience of playing an electric guitar was described as a powerful embodied experience. Despite the *delineations* of guitar with masculinity, it was especially the drum kit that was discursively constructed as a male instrument.

Female drummers displayed “female drummer pride”, and made their gender identity relevant against the discourses on the drum kit as a masculine instrument. Playing the drums and gender were co-constructed through the pull of the sound itself (loudness) and through the claim of gendered musical value (being a good female drummer). To become a drummer was to become a skilled, coordinated, strong, musical body. This might be a new bodily experience, especially for women. The use of a drum kit was an active ingredient in the remaking of embodied gendered identities as well as a source of wellbeing and physical pleasure.

The DJ mixer can also be conceptualized as a rock instrument, and the DJ set as a real-time music performance. In fact, playing an instrument or being in a band were just some of the forms of musical participation. Following rock amateurs broadened up the scope of “musical production” and new practices opened up for analysis. Djing, mothering and crafting, were the ethnographic examples I brought here in order to document how amateurs pass on their love of rock through artefacts, services and social relations that have been overlooked in rock scholarship.

The figure of DJ and the DJ set blur distinctions between producer and consumer, live and recorded music, private and public space. These DJs reframe the masculinist music connoisseur paradigm: it is not about name-dropping of bands and albums but rather rock music connoisseurship is about mastering their own audio-libraries and “reading the audience.” In other words, knowing “what music works” in each DJ set. DJ’s tacit skills are not about scratching (as in EDM) but selecting a repertoire of music from their personal audio-library, to build the sequences and the “good passages” that enable a successful rock musical pathway, in specific times and places (specific bars, nightclubs or outdoors; specific cities, countries; summertime, a friend’s party). The rock DJ set is an improvised, contingent, negotiated and participatory musical journey. Rock music as a genre and its resistance to *scratching* acts as a prosthetic device in the socio-musical space of a set, affording specific forms of collective action, sociability, bodily conduct (jumps, mosh pit, screams), and states of feeling (“moments of happiness”, fun, euphoria, adrenaline). At the same time, this heterogeneous network of DJs and its audio-libraries, audiences, spatial arrangements and alcohol, affords new meanings

(folksonomies) for rock music songs in local contexts (eg: the same song becomes danceable or unplayable, romantic or depressing, background or foreground music, familiar or B-side either its played in the DJ's home or in the set, either its played in summer or in a specific city).

The pathways to DJing are also gendered, with similarities to the pathways into rock bands. Many women started DJing either because they were women (femaleness as commodity, novelty value or the claim to girl power) or because they DJ with their (male) partners (homogamic pathways into DJing). In the set, female DJs revealed how they carefully managed their bodily display and played with their gender in the set, from avoiding performing to excessive dancing to display sexiness. The set is actively gendered female through DJ naming and visual culture (in posters, flyers and Facebook pages), through the choice of music (eg: riot grrrl music, blues women singers or having a "dirty rock" set) and/or through their clothing practices, DJ set decoration and use of props. The act of DJing was referred to as "empowering" by all of the participants, which they contrasted with other non-empowering spheres of their social lives.

DJing can also be an odd job for women rockers that is often not exclusive, but rather done in combination with other inter-sectorial activities. From performing as musician to making and selling rock crafts, all these activities provided different sources of (odd) income. They also provided ways of making money that are not of menial nature, but are linked to identities that are positively valued, a source of a pleasure and reward, beyond financial gains.

Handcrafted rock artefacts, from clothing items, accessories and even food items, were produced and sold through the creation of a label and relied on the ease of sales through online platforms [mostly Facebook], which enabled the development of extensive semi-entrepreneurial networks. What are considered traditional female activities and skills, such as sewing, knitting, decorating and baking, were re-contextualized within an artistic discourse of talent and creativity. These activities become independent cultural and artistic practices, performed by "authentic" rockers, who are involved right through from the start to the finish of a single garment or item. These women's production narratives are informed by a neo-artisanal frame, an ethical, grass-roots 'subcultural entrepreneurialism' (McRobbie, 1989a, 2013). Beyond micro-scale business,

these rock crafts furnish the material culture of rock. Rock aesthetics and gender practices and ideologies, in the context of rock music worlds, its DIY ethos and networks, generated opportunities for young and not so young woman. It allowed participants to cope with contexts of precarious working situations and/or in to search for more meaningful livelihoods. Musicians and amateurs co-produce informal markets, articulating and deriving socio-economic value from their love for music and from their status as women rockers. Hence, creating new meanings for rock music and reconfiguring gender ideologies and roles. And, at the same time, blurring the lines between musical and non-musical, paid and unpaid, formal and informal, domestic/private and public.

DJing can be also conceptualized in the context of home, where mothers often regulate the home soundscape. Drawing on ethnographic examples of a dyadic family relationship (mother-children), I have documented how family and domestic spaces are relevant when analysing everyday rock musicking. Music is the medium which constitutes the domestic and affective soundscapes of the home, family life and family relationships.

For women rock fans who became mothers, rock musicking practices were integrated into their everyday lives and mundane child-rearing and childcare practices. As music stages an “object lesson” (DeNora, 2011b) not just about aesthetics, but also about morality, competences and social types, these mothers negotiate how children listen to music and which genres they explore, thus configuring specific musical childhoods, crafting classed and gendered subjectivities for their children. They also use rock music to negotiate their own roles as mothers, musically staging more empowering ways of being mothers – as rock moms.

Rock musicking became an “active ingredient” in the making of family life and relationships, creating memories and nostalgia, supporting mundane interactions and offering musical opportunities for family members. In fact, it became a socio-material practice that “holds together” rock families. Employing an ‘in action’ approach, within the pragmatist tradition (T. E. McDonnell et al., 2017), allowed me to delve deeper in participants’ actual engagements with rock musicking.

### *The gender and sexual politics of socio-musical participation*

Portugal is characterized as possessing a weak civil society with low degree of collective social movements, including feminism (Amâncio & Santos, 2012; V. Ferreira, 1999; B. D. S. Santos, 1993). However, political participation can be conceptualized in non-traditional ways which is beyond unions, associations and social movements.

Musicking is already a form of socio-musical-political participation. Embodied musical participation affords world-building, togetherness and offers “object lessons” of gender roles. This can be an unintentional act of resistance and more of an “unintended consequence” of human agency (S. Scott, 2004, p. 131).

Portuguese women have used rock music to solve the ‘problems’ of women’s underrepresentation in music-making, the lack of Portuguese role models and *hegemonic masculinity*. They work through these problems as they encounter situations by employing rock, its practice, material culture and counterculture discourse in situated contexts. For some participants, it was also the ‘solution’ that retroactively defined the problem (Whitford as cited in McDonnell et al. 2017), as participants only felt confined and/or privileged as “female” as they engaged in rock worlds.

Rock musicking configured embodied social action and aesthetic agency. Musical agency enabled individual empowerment through rock, but it also escalated and spread into the public sphere, even if it was a micro public sphere (DeNora, 2013), or a nano public sphere. From the interaction of the Portuguese women with rock (as a cultural object, technologically mediated), in situated contexts, emerged social change and cultural innovation.

These women are registering in the public musical sphere alternative femininities and different forms of ageing and adulthood<sup>258</sup>. Either by retaining in adult life the hedonistic ethos of bohemian cultures (against traditional discourses, being a rocker “is not a phase”, as participants kept repeating), or by using rock music as a technology of mothering.

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<sup>258</sup> Women’s rock cultures have similarities with what Halberstam (2006) describes for queer subcultures, namely that they are neither male nor necessarily young, and allow to map different forms of adulthood.

These rockers' gender performances added to the 'inventory' of gender (Connell, 1987) locally available in Portugal. By "keeping at it" [rock culture], women rockers challenged musical gendered representations and stereotypes. Socio-musical spaces (on-stage, but also off-stage and everyday life) worked here as "cultural workspaces", capable of social change, potentially leading to new attitudes, or at least questioning the available traditional roles for women and changing heteronormative cultural scripts of gender.

International feminist debates point to a post-feminist sensibility that *undoes feminism*, rendering it unnecessary and old fashioned. This is pervasive in the media and has led young women to *repudiate* feminism (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2009; Scharff, 2013).

There might be signs of change. After I finished the fieldwork, new bands who self-identified as queer emerged, as well as venues which were more welcoming to queer musicians and their audiences (such as Galeria Zé dos Bois or venue Damas). Not to mention the 2016 Lady Fest Lisbon [*Rama em Flor*] and in 2017 the music festival *FEM FEST* <sup>259</sup>. Also, if in 2012 Anarchicks claimed to be "apolitical", in 2015 they released an album "We Claim the Right" in response to the popular media feminist campaign #weclaimtheright. There might be emerging new trends in the relationship between music, feminist activism and popular culture in Portugal.

Finally, in the matter of gender equality politics, the Portuguese State and local government should be called to play a part in pushing for gender equality in music worlds. My empirical work showed how local government and youth-oriented policies and institutions have helped in the formation and maintenance of female bands. Even if those policies were not directly aimed at girls or young women, they ended up benefiting them. In fact, the literature that shows how women's careers (artistic or not) were at a disadvantage when dependent upon informal networks. As such, girls and women's artistic careers were favoured by formal education<sup>260</sup>, institutional initiatives and public intervention (Buscatto,

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<sup>259</sup> Although these events have taken place mostly in Lisbon, there have been online repercussion.

<sup>260</sup> Buscatto found that women jazz musicians are more likely than their male counterparts to have attended conservatories and jazz schools, which is fundamental for their careers, giving them access to ensemble music (collective musical practice) and where they met peers, and engaged in lasting social ties important for the artistic development (Buscatto, 2014, Buscatto 2007).

2007b, 2014). An example of “good practices” came from the French music world. Ortiz (as cited in Buscatto, 2014) found that French boys were more likely to play in private spaces, “with pals”<sup>261</sup>, than their female counterparts. French girls and women rock musicians benefited from publicly funded studios. In Portugal, to my knowledge, there is no such public infra-structures. An investment in making rehearsals spaces and electronic instruments available in state schools could possibly benefit girls’ rock musicianship<sup>262</sup>.

### *Future work*

Despite I take an intersectional perspective on gender, I have dealt relatively little with race and ethnicity issues. Given Portugal’s colonial past and heritage, and given the growing population of Portuguese Afro-descendants, a new perspective on rock music should be articulated by the voices of the black Portuguese, even if they are studied as “non-users” of rock). This is of utmost importance, given the role of black culture in the history of rock. Black Portuguese are usually more represented in studies on hip-hop, despite it still being largely a white-dominated field, or on studies on African music.

Given that the study of masculinities is such a recent topic of scholarly work, the study of the gendered Portuguese rock culture, would benefit from exploring men’s gender performances and gender relations. For instance, what is the role of material culture in men’s gender performances in rock worlds? Are there “male femininities” in rock worlds? Do men play pink guitars? I was still referring to men and women, despite the non-binary take on gender.

Couple’s culture in rock worlds, beyond the muse or homogamy frame, could be deepened through observational analysis of rock couples in their everyday life - in the vein of media studies and home ethnographies (Morley, 1986; Pink, 2003). Also the exploration of homosexual couple’s musical cultures could open up new lines of inquiry.

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<sup>261</sup>Also in France, Sylvia Faure (as cited in Buscatto, 2014) found the same evidence for women hip-hop dancers at the amateur and professional levels.

<sup>262</sup> Rehearsal studios in Portugal are private. I am not aware if there is a communal management of those spaces. Only students in Music Academies and Music School have access to their institution facilities and equipment.

In my fieldwork, self-identified non-binary people doing rock were a minority. However, the above mentioned emergent changes will open up empirical avenues to pursue.

Other topics of enquiry include the use of rock music in the recent Portuguese field of music therapy and the construction of gender and (dis)ability through rock music. Although they are beyond the scope of this research, they are an open door to explore.

Longitudinal work on intergenerational rock culture, through the lens of family dyads, should be pursued, this time taking into perspective the growing and grown children of the rock moms interviewed.

The sustainability of small rock business and entrepreneurial rock careers in a long-term perspective should also be explored. Likewise, the clients and consumers of the rock crafters, as well as the links and gaps between the amateur world and music industry world should be studied. This could contribute to the repertoire of good and bad practices of grass-roots artistic entrepreneurialism in a southern European country.

The Portuguese reception of “female rock literature”, given the recent translations to Portuguese of Patti Smith’s and Kim Gordon’s autobiographies, could be another interesting topic to explore deeper the role of rock music and its discourses on the construction of experiences of Portuguese rockers and literature lovers.

Finally, given the lack of studies on reception and use of music in Portuguese music sociology, more empirical work needs to be done in terms of personal listening and other prosumer practices, accounting for all the mediations opened by amateurs as they musick together.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: List of Interviewees

List of interviewees (data collected in interviews face-to-face):

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Musical role</b>	<b>Secondary musical role (if applicable)</b>	<b>Year of birth</b>	<b>Educational Background</b>
n°1	fan		1983	Degree in Psychology
n°2	DJ		1980	unfinished degree
n°3	fan		1969	degree in Education
n°4	musician	vocals&guitar	1980	degree in History
n°5	DJ		1980	degree in Law
n°6	musician	all-female band	BAND	
n°6.1	musician	drums	1984	University Student
n°6.2	musician	bass	1984	Degree in Music Education
n°7	fan		1982	Master in Sociology
n°8	fan		1985	Master in Biology
n°9	DJ		1984	degree in Law+ Training in Journalism
n°10	DJ		1980	Master in Architecture
n°11	fan		1982	Degree in Sociology
N°12	DJ		1981	Degree in Educação Visual e Tecnológica prof ensino básico+pós-grad
n°13	fan		1972	Degree in Architecture
n°14	musician	vocals&guitar	1979	Degree in Visual Arts
n°15	musician	all-female band	BAND	
n°15b & 59	musician	drums	1982	Degree in Marketing
n°16	musician	vocals	1960s	Musician
n°17	BAND		BAND	
N°18	DJ		1971	Degree in Psychology
n°19	fan		1979	Degree in History of Art
n°20	musician	guitar	1971	Degree in Biology
n°21	musician	drums	1985	Degree in Psychology
n°22	musician	bass	1984	degree in PHOTOGRAPHY
n°23	fan		1964	secondary school
N°24	musician	drums	1989	degree in PHOTOGRAPHY
n°25a	DJ	Duo DJ	1985	secondary school
n°25b	DJ	Duo DJ	1982	secondary school
n°26	musician	drums	1978	Degree in Journalism
n°27	musician	bass	1964	Secondary school
n°28a	fan		1970	9th grade
n°28b	fan		1969	10 th grade
n°29	musician		1978	degree in Music
n°30	fan		1988	degree in modern languages
n°31	musician	bass	1979	Degree in History/doing master
n°32	musician	bass	1983	Degree in Engeneer
n°33	musician	vocals	1976	PhD in Linguistics
n°34	fan		1976	Degree in Tourism
n°35	fan		1981	Master in IT
n°36	musician	vocals&guitar	1994	Secondary school student/Sound

				Technician
n°37	fan		1979	M.A social science
n°38	DJ		1979	Degree in philosophy
n°39	DJ		1986	Degree Life Sciences
n°40	musician	drums	1982	Degree in Music
n°41	musician	vocals	1980s	High School (12th grade)
n°42	musician	vocals	1976	High School (12th grade)
n°43	DJ			High School (12th grade)
n°44	musician	bass	1973	Degree in Architecture
n°45	musician	bass	1989	Degree in Architecture
n°46	musician	guitar	1975	Degree in Anthropology
n°47	musician	drums	1988	Secondary school
N°48	musician	vocals	1995	Professional Course
N°49	DJ	Radio DJ	1995	Degree and MA journalism
n°50	musician	vocals&guitar	1972	Master Marketing
n°51	musician	all-female band	BAND	
n°52	musician	drums	1978	Secondary school
n°53	musician	drums	1987	Degree in Nursing
n° 54	musician	drums	1985	MA Biology
n°55	fan		1964	Secondary school
n°56	Band	all-female band	Born 1990s	University students
N°57	musician	vocals&guitar	1979	Degree and Master in Journalism
n°58	musician	bass	1976	Degree in Modern Language/ Music Conservatoire
N°60	DJ	Duo DJs	1988 1987	Degree in Journalism

## Appendix 2: Female Bands

List of female bands/female-centred bands (1990-2014), interviewed or searched through archival material:

<b>Band's name</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Genre/style (self-defined)</b>
1. Pickle Puss	1994-1998	Faro	Rock
2. Voodoo Dolls	1994-2000	Coimbra	Rock
3. Everground	1994-1997	Lisboa	Rock
4. Muses Land // Smug	1995-2001	Viseu	Rock
5. Black Widows	1995-2007	Lisbon	heavy metal (white)
6. Les Baton Rouge	1998-	Lisboa	"New Wave Art band"
7. Pinhead Society	1990s	Lisboa	
8. Un- Predictable	2004-2008	Lisboa	Punk
9. Dead By Pregnancy	2004-	Porto	"Angry Grrrl"
10. Rockalady	2005-	Lisboa	"Rock/numetal"
11. Bellenden Ker	2008-2011	Lisboa	"Bellenden Rock"
12. The Dirty Coal Train	2010-	Lisboa	"Garage, Post Punk, Blues"
13. Pega Monstro	2011-	Lisboa	Indie rock
14. Anarchicks	2011-	Lisboa	"Rock, punk, electro"
15. No No	2012-2013	Viseu	"Pós-punk"
16. T.P.M.	2000s	Algarve	
17. Escarro Rosa (pink spit)		Coimbra	

### Queer Bands from 2014 onwards

- Clementine
- Vaia a Praia
- Tender Bender

### Appendix 3: Online recruiting advertising

I posted an online recruiting advertisements, hoping to expand the age and geographical scope of my sample.

#### **“Mulheres e Música Rock em Portugal” - pedido de colaboração**

Sou estudante de doutoramento na Universidade de Exeter (UK) e o meu projecto de doutoramento – em parceria com o CES (Coimbra) – intitula-se “Mulheres e Música Rock em Portugal”. Entendendo rock em sentido amplo, pretendo entrevistar mulheres que se considerem fãs de rock, bem como vocalistas e/ou instrumentistas em bandas e/ou DJs de rock, e perceber os seus usos deste género musical.

Estou à procura de mulheres que queiram colaborar neste projecto, mulheres de todas as idades e de todas as regiões do país.

A quem queira colaborar, o meu contacto: [rsga201@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:rsga201@exeter.ac.uk).

A confidencialidade e o anonimato da informação disponibilizada será assegurado, e as participantes poderão desistir da sua colaboração, em qualquer momento.

Muito obrigada!

Rita Grácio

#### **“Women rock music lovers - request to participate”**

I'm a PhD student in the University of Exeter doing research on women and rock music in Portugal. I'm recruiting women that consider themselves “rock music fans” (whether they're also musicians or not and considering “rock music” in the most broader sense) to describe how they listen to rock music in their daily lives, using the Internet (by watching/hearing videos on youtube, by sharing music with other people through e-mail, by posting music on Facebook, etc, etc). Women that wish to collaborate can send me an e-mail, and I will reply with some specific questions, that they can answer (by writing, by taking pictures or sending music).

The questions are about the following topics: rock music & identity, musical tastes, online spaces, musical activities online, music and relationships.

The confidentiality and anonymity will be assured, and the participants are able to withdraw at any time.

So, if you're a women rock music fan I'll be very glad to hear from you!

My name is rita grácio and my e-mail is: [rsga201@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:rsga201@exeter.ac.uk)

and my personal homepage is: <http://eprofile.exeter.ac.uk/portfolio.php?uid=rsga201>

## Appendix 4: Interview Schedule

All interviews were asked a set of questions about their listening activities, concert going, tastes. In case they were musicians and/or DJs another set of questions was part of the interview schedule (Interview Schedule 1).

### Interview Schedule 1 - Interview topics with fans/musicians

If possible, previously ask interviewees to choose (and bring, if possible):

- a music that defines themselves or that they just love it (“The song is you”)
- a music that represents a particular moment in their live that they want to share and talk about it with me
- music that defines what is to be a women, or aspects of being a women

#### Background Information

The beginning: rock music

Music & Taste

Music & Emotions

Music Practices in daily life, domestic space, work place, public spaces, travelling

Music Practices in exceptional occasions (social events, concerts, private parties, etc)

Music & Internet

Music & Identities (gender, ageing, Portuguese identities)

Music & the Others (social relationships mediated through music)

Music, Love & Intimate encounters

#### **If participants are also musicians:**

Musical Careers

Learning Practices (of popular musicians)

Instruments

Rehearsing

Concerts & Performances

Internet uses for musicians

Musician's relationship with other musicians

Musician's personal relationships

Gender & Ageing & national identities

### Interview Schedule 2 - Interview design for drummers

Prior to the interview, I'll visit the Portuguese grass-roots drummer's website

“bateristas.pt” (drummers.pt), and I'll analyze the discourses on drums and drummers circulating there.

I will e-mail the interviewees asking specifically to observe them playing. And asking if they have photos and videos of concerts and rehearsals they performed, so we can watch them (even if they feel that belongs to the past, or they're embarrassed of it).

I'll try to film them rehearsing alone and in the band.

If they rehearse alone, I'll leave the camera steady and walk away?

If they rehearse with the band I'll film and ask to attend the rehearsal?

After I collect the images, will do video-elicitation interviews, near the drummers, so there can be instrument playing elicitation and demonstration.

The 1<sup>st</sup> part of the video-elicitation interview will be based on the watch and stop, and much unstructured

I'll ask them to demonstrate/talk about their way of playing/own style, comparison of playing in different (genre) bands, different genre modes of playing different instrument

A 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this interview will be based on the talk about the discourses on the drums and drummers.

## Appendix 5: Design and Interview topics with DJs

1<sup>st</sup>) observation and, if possible, filming a rock music DJ set (with DJ's consent).

2<sup>nd</sup>) Interviews 1:1, using the previously recorded material.

Background Questions

Music Tastes

Rock Music in DJ sets (genre)

Rock Music in daily lives

Discussion around the recorded material (watch-stop-talk)

Performance and Body regulation through Rock Music

Dancing Rock Music

Rock Music and emotions

## Appendix 6: Consent form

### ETHICS CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS (fans)

#### **Title of Research Project**

Women and Rock Music in Portugal

#### **Details of Project**

This project aims to understand the diversity of uses of rock music by women, in everyday life and in exceptional occasions, in different places, through a variety of mediums. This study will focus on the Portuguese context.

Your part in this study will involve participating in a recorded interview. If you choose to take part in this research, you are undertaking this on a voluntary basis and have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. You also have the right to refuse to answer any questions I may ask without giving me reasons.

#### **Contact Details**

For further information about the research or your interview data, please contact:

Rita Grácio, Department of Sociology & Philosophy, University of Exeter

[rsga201@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:rsga201@exeter.ac.uk)

[ritagracio@ces.uc.pt](mailto:ritagracio@ces.uc.pt)

#### **Confidentiality**

Interview recordings and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes of research (final thesis and papers/articles) and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). However, if you request it, you will be supplied with a copy of your interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit (please give your email below). Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

#### **Anonymity:**

Would you prefer your interview information to be held and used on an anonymous basis with no mention of your name? (You will have a pseudonym and all details that can identify you will be changed).

#### **If Yes**

*Name of interviewee:.....*

#### **If No, you can choose your pseudonym or leave it to the researcher**

*(Pseudonym to be used:.....)*

#### **Recording**

Will you allow the recording of this interview, or do you prefer written notes only?

.....

#### **Consent**



**Confidentiality**

Visual data (films and/or pictures), interview recordings and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes of research and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). As outcomes of this research it is expected the production of a website and (non-profit) documentary about women and rock music. In order to produce them, it will only be used visual data, information and excerpts of the interviews that you wish and consent to share – nothing will be used without your consent and you might refuse to share any information at all to produce the website and/or the documentary. Also, if you request it, you will be supplied with a copy of your interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit.

**Anonymity:**

Would you prefer your interview information to be held and used on an anonymous basis with no mention of your name? (You will have a pseudonym and all details that can identify you will be changed).

**If Yes**

Name of interviewee:.....

**If No, you can choose your pseudonym or leave it to the researcher**

(Pseudonym to be used:.....)

**Recording and Filming**

Will you allow the recording and filming of this interview? Or do you prefer only (audio) recording? Or do you prefer not to be recorded nor filmed, just written notes only?

.....

Will you allow the filming of your DJ set/rehearsal/concert?

.....

**Consent**

I confirm that I am over the age of eighteen (18) and therefore legally allowed to participate.

I understand the above information and voluntarily consent to participate and to the use of my data for the purposes specified above.

**TICK HERE:**     

**DATE**.....

**Note:** Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data

Name of interviewee:.....

Signature: .....

Email/phone:.....

Signature of researcher.....

Two copies should be signed, both by the interviewer and by the participant. I, the interviewer, will leave a signed copy of this consent form with you, the participant, at the time of the interview, and keep the other copy with me.

## ETHICS CONSENT FORM FOR ONLINE PARTICIPATION

### **Title of Research Project**

Women and Rock Music in Portugal

### **Details of Project**

This project aims to understand the diversity of uses of rock music by women, in everyday life and in exceptional occasions, in different places, through a variety of mediums. This study will focus on the Portuguese context.

Your part in this study will involve participating with written (and/or visual and/or audio) information and maybe engage in an e-mail interview. If you choose to take part in this research, you are undertaking this on a voluntary basis and have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. You also have the right to refuse to answer any questions made without giving me reasons.

### **Contact Details**

For further information about the research or your interview data, please contact:  
Rita Grácio, Department of Sociology & Philosophy, University of Exeter

[rsga201@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:rsga201@exeter.ac.uk)

[ritagracio@ces.uc.pt](mailto:ritagracio@ces.uc.pt)

### **Confidentiality**

The information you sent will be held in confidence. It will not be used other than for the purposes of research (final thesis and papers/articles) and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

### **Anonymity:**

Would you prefer your given information to be held and used on an anonymous basis with no mention of your name? (You will have a pseudonym and all details that can identify you will be changed).

### **If Yes**

Name of interviewee:.....

**If No, do you can choose your pseudonym or leave it to the researcher**  
(Pseudonym to be used:.....)



## Appendix 7: Rock DJs

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Birth</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Alone/split/both</b>
1. Blue-Bullet	1964	Rock (80s) & kitsch music	alone
2. Trebaruna (Sónia Monteiro)	1971	heavy metal, Rock,	both (with husband, with friends)
3. "Aurora"	1980	Punk, Rock,	both
4. Miss Honey White	1980	rock	both
5. Miss Bonnie Parker (Ana Neno)	1980	rock	both
6. "Luisa"	1981	Rock	Both (with brother)
7. Casa Cláudia		Rock, Electro	Rock
8. Bitch Set	1983	Rock, women's rock	Split (2 woman)
9. Twisted Sisters	1982 1985	Rock & heavy metal	Split (2 woman)
10. Swinging Sister			Split (3 women)
11. Rucquettes	1989	Rock	Split (2 woman)
12. "Ed"	1988	Electro-rock-pop	alone

Interview with Radio DJ:

Programme Meduse (female musicians only) - Coimbra

Programme Lipstick Rock-Coloured (rock only) - Lisboa

Non-interviewed DJs:

DJ Katz, Lisboa, regular at Clube Noir

## Appendix 8: Rock Moms

<b>INTERVIEWEE</b>	<b>MUSICAL ROLE</b>	<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN &amp; SEX</b>
1. Carla	Musician	Divorced	2 sons
2. Catarina	Musician, DJ	Divorced	2 sons, 1 daughter
3. Clarice	Fan	Divorced	1 son, 1 daughter
4. Elizabete	Fan	Single mother	1 daughter
5. Elvira	Musician, DJ	Married	2 daughters
6. Fátima	Former musician	Married	2 sons
7. Hilda	Musician	Divorced	1 son, 1 daughter
8. Laurinda	Musician	Married	3 daughters, 1 son
9. Lúcia	Fan	Married	2 sons

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