



ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research
Vol. 09, Issue, 11, pp. 31739-31743, November, 2019



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

FILM AND AUDIOVISUAL FESTIVALS IN CONTEMPORARY BAHIA: MEMORY AND CULTURAL FORMATION

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 12th August, 2019
Received in revised form
26th September, 2019
Accepted 09th October, 2019
Published online 30th November, 2019

Key Words:

Cinema, Exhibitions, Festivals,
Memory, Cultural Formation.

ABSTRACT

This article presents observations about the conditions of possibilities for the execution, structuring and continuity of two cinematographic and audiovisual exhibition actions, from the state of Bahia, Brazil, being: the “Panorama Internacional Coisa de Cinema” [Panorama Internacional Thing of Cinema] and the “Mostra Cinema Conquista” [Conquista Cinema Festival], carried out from 2002 and 2004, in Salvador and in Vitória da Conquista, respectively. By analyzing documentary data, interviews and participation on respective actions, we start from the hypothesis that they were not only sustained by material and objective conditions, related to the period’s economical and political conjunctures, linked to the structural transformations occurred from the Brazilian Cinema recapture, but also to symbolic matters, from cultural formation processes, perceived from the comprehension of their makers’ formation trajectories, the paths they have made for the events, from local conditions and networking articulations in which they partook. It does such seeking theoretical methodological support on sociologist Norbert Elias’ The Symbol Theory and his concept of “configuration”, as well as on Pierre Bourdieu’s praxiological theory that considered interaction processes and the knowledge generated by them, observing human expressions in the modeling of practices.

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Citation: Tamara Chéquer Cotrim and Milene de Cássia Silveira Gusmão. 2019. “Film and audiovisual festivals in contemporary Bahia: memory and cultural formation”, *International Journal of Development Research*, 09, (11), 31739-31743.

INTRODUCTION

The theme dealt with in this article came to light after the unprecedented research done on the alternative exhibition cinema circuit to commercial movie theaters, more specifically, film festivals and exhibitions in Bahia, a study initially dealt with in the scientific initiation research project linked to the Bachelor of Cinema and Audiovisual at the State University of Southwest Bahia, titled: “Alternative Exhibition Circuits: A Mapping from Incentive Policies for Film Clubs and Film Festivals in Contemporary Bahia”. On the occasion, the research identified the holding, between 2003 and 2014, of 48 film festivals in Bahia, whose profiles, structures and dimensions were described and systematized in a previously unpublished information panel. It was found that, through the increase of public funding, some of these events were consolidated and started to appear in the cultural calendar of the state, producing creative experiences that, besides making

possible practices of cinematographic consumption in alternative spaces to those of the big exhibition market, enable regimes of professionalization and cultural formation (VIEIRA and GUSMÃO, 2017). From this work arose the concerns that resulted in the research later developed, already within the scope of the academic master’s degree, in the research line in “Memory, Cinema and Cultural Formation Processes” of the Postgraduate Program in “Memory: Language and Society” of the same institution. In this instance, the intention was to understand the conditions that allowed the continuity of two of the events of audiovisual diffusion, which continue to happen periodically throughout the years being held in the state, which are: “Panorama Internacional Coisa de Cinema” [Panorama Internacional Thing of Cinema]¹ that happens in the city of

¹ “Panorama Internacional Coisa de Cinema” is a festival that exhibits and awards cinematographic and audiovisual works, which began in 2002, in the city of Salvador, by the initiative of its coordinator Claudio Marques. It has an

Salvador and the “Mostra Cinema Conquista” [Conquista Cinema Festival]² that takes place in the city of Vitória da Conquista. The focus of the study turned to these exhibition events because they inaugurated the practice in Bahia in the 2000s, emerged in the years 2002 and 2004, standing out for their relevance, as they are events scheduled³ by the Bahia State Department of Culture, and that total more than 10 editions. According to the data collected in the preliminary research, it was observed that, although these events arose in the same period, sharing a conjuncture of structural, political and economic aspects, including favorable, in the same federative entity and having similar general characteristics, their profiles, that is, the way in which they presented their activities, differed visibly. From this fact came the hypothesis that its directors made different arrangements, also forged according to the difficulties and opportunities presented in each context, so that the events could effectively arise and continue to exist over the years, something we believed to reflect on how the events present themselves, that is, also sculpting their shape and profile. Thus, thinking about the material and also symbolic conditions of realization and structuring, it was possible to elaborate the research question, which concerns the relations that were established, and the knowledge generated through them, which allowed the realization of festivals and film shows in the state of Bahia in the 21st century. This is because, we already noticed, in the previous research, the indications that these exhibition activities were informed by symbols incorporated by their directors, through the intergenerational transmission of experiences and knowledge. In addition, even though their actions are conditioned by the political and economic context, a situation that intends to choose, we observe the different ways of creation in the spaces of the possible.

In view of this, we proposed to study the possibilities of the existence of “Panorama” and the “Conquista Festival” under the bias of memory, because inserted in this field it would be possible to consider not only certain objective and structural aspects of the context in which they are part, but also certain symbolic conditions that support the choices and strategies created by the performers of these practices, that is, their expressive possibilities in face of the demands of the prevailing social context. Therefore, we also began to analyze the personal and professional life stories of Claudio Marques, coordinator of “Panorama Thing of Cinema” and Esmon Primo, coordinator of “Conquista Cinema Festival”, certain

average duration of seven days, generally occurring in the last quarter of the year, and was based in various locations throughout the city, during its editions, until in 2009, settled in the Itaú Glauber Rocha Space, former Cine Glauber Rocha, reopened after extensive negotiations by Claudio himself with the managers of Instituto Itaú Cultural.

2The “Mostra Cinema Conquista” was held for the first time in 2004, in the city of Vitória da Conquista, in the interior of the state of Bahia, by the attitude of its coordinator Esmon Primo, as a result of activities developed at the State University of Southwest Bahia - UESB., throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. As its name implies, it is not as competitive as Panorama, but it also has a duration of about seven days, happening annually on dates always in the second semester. Film screenings have already taken place in various places around the city, such as Cine Madrigal, a major street cinema in the city, and the Camilo de Jesus Lima Culture Center, a reference space for cultural actions in the city.

3The notice for scheduled events was launched by the Bahian government in 2012, with the purpose of providing stability to the holding of consolidated events, with a view to encouraging regular and periodically promoted cultural projects and activities in the state of Bahia. The aim of this instrument is to form a cultural calendar that contemplates various segments of culture from different regions of the state, stipulating the support for up to 3 editions, renewable for two more.

personality characteristics that guide his actions in the social and cultural world the guidelines of your choices, combined with the programs of the initial ten years of these events, in order to understand the processes of cultural formation, the different formative pathways of individuals, the generation of knowledge, based on the perception, incorporation and expression in the social world of certain gestures learned in the encounters and relationships between them. For this, we take as a methodological reference the symbolic theory (1994c) of sociologist Norbert Elias, as well as the notion of configuration (1994b), associated with the concept of habitus (2009) developed by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, seeking to draw an arrangement that gives to understand the strategies created by people to deal effectively and productively in face of the demands and obstacles arising from the dynamics of the social world. Thus, we aim to understand how the practices of the individuals mentioned above took place, analyzing on what basis they are based and under which symbols are based. For this we turn the focus of our interests to the learning about cinema that took place along its formation trajectories, that is, the accumulation of knowledge of the lived experiences, which we believe constitute these practices. Ultimately, it is worth noting that we consider the individual as part of social processes, in constant movement in the social conjuncture of the time, also contributing to the social dynamic as a whole.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The analysis of the object presented above is anchored in an empirical research work that seeks to understand, in a deeper way, the social practices of cinematographic and audiovisual diffusion that occur in alternative exhibition circuits, that is, in exhibitions and/or film festivals. It takes into account, more generally, the Brazilian panorama of the audiovisual festival circuit, which according to information published in 2011 in the report entitled Sectorial Panel of Audiovisual Festivals, based on indicators from 2007, 2008 and 2009, is one of the most important and diverse circuits of audiovisual festivals in the world. It has become, over time, a strategic circuit with wide national coverage, which attracts an audience of more than 2.8 million spectators per year and fulfills the indispensable role of bringing cinema to significant populations in the country. It consists of a set of events of varied economic and historical profile, with different conceptual nuances and thematic approaches. Each one, with its importance and creativity, contributes to the diffusion of audiovisual production that is not found in the limited circuit of commercial halls in the country, present in only 8% of the municipalities of the national territory. Moreover, in the most specific plan, it considers the mapping performed on the shows and festivals of cinema and audiovisual in Bahia, as recorded above.

The empiricism results from data collected during the execution phase of the scientific initiation project, and later, from analyzes of the “Panorama” and “Conquista” initial ten-year programming, from interviews with filmmakers, from participation in events, in documents provided by Esmon and by Claudio, as well as his collaborators, in addition to the information accessed on the event⁴ websites. The literature search was restricted due to the few works that discuss the

4Website of the “Cinema Conquista Festival” <http://www.mostracinemaconquista.com.br/>. “Panorama Internacional Thing of Cinema” website <http://coisadecinema.com.br/xiv-panorama/>.

theme more generally, or that deal with festivals and film shows in the country. About exhibitions and festivals in Bahia, except for the research "Alternative exhibition circuits: a mapping from the public incentive policies for film clubs, exhibitions and festivals in contemporary Bahia", mentioned earlier, we did not find any other academic work. To account for this endeavor, the orientation of this research is based on the construction of a methodological arrangement, taking as reference the sociology of the processes and figurations of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of action or praxiology initially as authors who present theories that aim to study life daily life that is closer to the reality experienced by people, which does not separate the individual from the society of which he is part. Aiming at understanding the social world, it takes into consideration both objective and subjective relationships, returning to practice (BOURDIEU, 2009), claiming that individuals are part of society and cannot be seen as distant from it (ELIAS, 1980). We understand the society inspired by the idea developed by Norbert Elias (1994c, p.51), that it would not be constituted by a "mass of individual actions comparable to a pile of sand", nor "an anthill of individuals programmed towards cooperation. mechanical ", above all "a web of living people "who live in different ways but are interdependent, that is, they are in relation to each other, each of these people being part of a certain place, performing a certain function. It would be a continuous flow, open to the past and the future, "in it, only with great difficulty can the eye discern a fixed point" (ELIAS, 1994a, p.18). In this context, social practices, always historical and social, would be the "place of the dialectic of *opus operatum* and *modus operandi*, the objectified products and the incorporated products of historical practice, structures and *habitus*." (BOURDIEU, 2009, p. 87).

I take as a basis the concept of figuration elaborated by Elias (1994a), because it is based on the understanding of relational interdependencies and on the functionality that make explicit the dependencies between individuals, observing the links in the relational chains that connect people socially, despite having a certain freedom of Act. They are complex webs of interdependence built by individuals in relation to each other, which "form the nexus of what is here called configuration, that is, a structure of mutually oriented and dependent people." (ELIAS, 1994b, p.249). Aware of the processes of human interaction within society, this author observes in the interdependent relationships that are waged within a specific social environment, the constitution of its own rules, but which do not limit the individuals who are part of it to have their own strategies. Therefore, we propose a careful look at the social learning processes that shape people throughout their lives, which allow humans to learn from the experiences of the people in their group, transmitted by a line of previous generations. (ELIAS, 1994c), and who are able to conform their actions in the present. The author clarifies, by reflecting how individuals guide their thoughts, ideas and actions in the social sphere that the great advantage that human beings have, compared to other animals, is the ability to guide their behavior through the knowledge learned, this has undoubtedly ensured the survival of human groups throughout the ages. The human biological constitution allows its members to learn; store and act according to experiences lived and transmitted by the group through generations, enabling the development of this animal species through these processes, the synthesis that is made of the symbols that have been apprehended of knowledge. Anchored in the studies of the aforementioned

author Norbert Elias, we are interested in understanding what we do with the knowledge learned through the relationships we have throughout our lives, generated from exchanges and experiences with other people. This is because, we believe that we are beings who not only transmit symbols, but also receive and store them, synthesizing and thus producing knowledge, and are therefore able to guide our behaviors through knowledge learned (ELIAS, 1994c). Following this reasoning, I focus on the analysis of the incorporation, by Esmon Primo and Cláudio Marques, of the learning generated from the relationships that were established over time in the field of cinema and audiovisual, especially in Bahia. The importance of analyzing the social trajectories of these filmmakers is observed, observing them systematically in a social context, which is built on the dynamics established between the choices given the opportunities and possibilities presented throughout their lives. The concept of *habitus*, developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), is brought to serve as a guide to understand in more detail how the individual incorporates this social knowledge transmitted generationally by individuals in the same group, always historical for the agent, and how this process has repercussions on the practices performed by them, since the social agent does not present himself only as the executor of social structures, something objectively programmed outside him. The actions of the agents and the constitutive structures of the field are part of the same dynamic, which result in social practices that go beyond the objective structures by themselves, because they are also formed in the subjectivity of the agents, a fact that allows the creation of novelty and the transformation Social. An individual would be like a socialized body in action, "a structured body, a body that has incorporated the immanent structures of a particular world or sector of that world, of a field, and which structures both the perception of that world and the action in that world." (BOURDIEU, 2008, p.144), incorporating ways of thinking and acting, responding to requests from the social environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With the study undertaken, it was shown that the possibilities for the initial realization of "Panorama Thing of Cinema" and "Conquista Festival" were informed, in general, by the increase of cinematographic and audiovisual production, since the resumption of Brazilian cinema, a process that begins in mid-1995 and intensified even more in the 2000s. As well as by the cultural policies that made it possible to expand the alternative circuit of exhibition, as noted in the item above. Whether due to the new technologies in the audiovisual field that provided greater technical ease in the making of cinematographic and audiovisual works, either due to the governmental measures issued in 2003 in Brazil and in Bahia in 2007, which facilitated incentives, financial resources for the production of the works by the public power. Going deeper into the analysis, according to the interviews with the filmmakers, it was noticed that the possibilities of triggering the practices pointed out here, in a closer observation, were also related to the life and environment stories in which they were inserted. Cláudio Marques and Esmon Cousin. In the case of Claudio, being a person from a very early age linked to the practice of critical writing, journalism, even informally, by rediscovering the cinema in his life, joined the two experiences to launch, since 1995, the "Thing of Cinema" newspaper, containing reviews of the films that passed in the Bahian capital. Over the years, the decay of street cinemas and the

proportional growth of them in shopping malls brought him the desire to reverse this process, at least to soften it, a fact that made him think of seeking the possibilities of producing the movie. “Panorama Thing of Cinema” festival, in Salvador’s movie theaters, in 2002. According to Claudio Marques (2016, oral information):

I was writing about cinema at that time and I started traveling a lot for festivals in Brazil and outside Brazil too, and here I had a panorama, let’s say, very difficult. In the 90s, many street rooms closed, we had few multiplex, these mall theaters, and the circuit was bad, really bad. There were few films that really interested me. When this cinema here [Cine Glauber Rocha] closed in 1998, it was the last thud, it is a very special place for me. I was always connected to the historical center, so it affected me a lot and it was there, at that moment, that I started thinking about showing movies. (MARQUES, 2016, oral information, emphasis added).

In relation to Cinema Conquista Show, the allocation of Esmon as a state servant to UESB - State University of Southwest Bahia since 1991, and the relationships in this environment over the years with people already connected to the audiovisual in the institution and in the city, provided him with certain learning and opportunities that culminated in the possibility of formatting of the Show project and its effective viability in 2004. According to Esmon Primo (2016, oral information):

Therefore, now I get away from the Culture Center and Jorge⁵ calls me to learn how to play video in 1989. I was enjoying this video thing and it was the opportunity to go to UESB so Jorge starts sewing my way to the University. I mean, I was leaving the Department of Agriculture, but afraid of losing the benefits of six or seven years of work for the state. [...] I was pushing, until I joined UESB in 1989 unofficially, I was arriving by the DITORA⁶, doing some events with Jorge, university projects of culture, and only in December 1991 is that the official role transferring me to Education Secretariat - DIREC 20, available to UESB. (PRIMO, 2016, verbal information, emphasis added).

Esmon is dedicated to the implementation of cultural projects, specifically audiovisual, at the State University of Southwest Bahia and in the city until, in 2004, effectively envisions the possibility of formatting and realization of what would be the “Conquista Cinema Festival”. At least in the early years, the two events counted on the individual efforts of these filmmakers and the opportunities sought within their microenvironments, since even with the structural aspects, such as the growing cinematographic and audiovisual production in Brazil and Bahia, it is not yet possible. it had

⁵Jorge Luiz Melquesedeque was the first employee of the university, when he was still the Faculty of Teacher Training of Vitória da Conquista, which has been in existence since 1972 (GUSMÃO, 2001) and, therefore, followed this film club movement closely.

⁶UESB’s existing body, which in the early 1990’s was called the Technical Operational Sub-Manager of Audiovisual Resources, becoming a board so that it could have autonomy, making it necessary to appoint a director and two coordinators. According to Esmon Primo (2016), as Jorge and he were not called to fill the positions and to have in mind another proposal of video production, it was formed the idea of creating the Video Producer – ProVideo, which only materialized in 1996, Jorge being the director and Esmon the coordinator. (Verbal information).

public incentives for the exhibition sector that were well-delineated to the point that they were ready to be handled by them. From the year 2007, the state of Bahia will also launch announcements to encourage festivals and film shows, something seen as a gain for the strengthening of the national cinema chain, also particularly for the directors of these events, but that demanded producers a certain kind of specific knowledge that they have never had to deal with before. The new political, economic and social designs now require certain skills of the filmmakers, such as the examination of public notices, budgeting and sanitation of the various requirements imposed to be met by the often essential public incentives to make it possible to stay in time these exhibition events, forcing them to adapt to new government bureaucratic demands, compelling their professionalization. Taking away the needs of adaptation before the public and the changes and reframing that the consumption of this type of event suffer over time. Not for nothing, the two events were adjusting, both in view of the structural issues that were emerging as well as micro aspects, mainly related to the adequacy of the initial project to the intertwining of financial possibilities with the need for public formation, therefore, how many and which training activities would be available, number of films, curatorial bias, among others. In this context, the research pointed to a certain profile of “Panorama”, as it was clear that Claudio had established a life project, exploring the various ways of effectively making cinema, and reports that “since 1995, I put in my head that I was going to work with cinema” (MARQUES, 2016, verbal information). Its active attitude, open to the new contours of contemporary cinema and audiovisual, with the improvement of a business rationality over the years, allowed the event to grow, to increase visibility and reach of its activities, as well as a greater intertwining with issues related to the market, that is, with the industrial chain of cinema and audiovisual in Brazil. Cláudio Marques (2016), oral information) reports:

I was talking to some people who have always worked with us, with Marília, who I know that in the history of festivals, if we persist, we have a year that clicks with the audience, we left six thousand people, increasing for eight thousand, twelve thousand and fifteen thousand and this year, I haven’t closed the bill yet, but we’re between eighteen thousand and twenty thousand people in one week, which is an incredible number. (MARQUES, 2016, oral information).

Regarding the “Conquista Cinema Festival”, the event presented itself with a constant and bulky axis of formation, practically supported by public institutions and the public incentives coming through the edicts for the State culture. What is noticeable is that this fact is linked to the profile of its director Esmon, informed by the long years of work in a higher education institution, the State University of Southwest Bahia, by the personal ties made, mainly political, and by the opportunities that he seized throughout his life, away from a broader perception of the potential inherent in the practice he set out to perform. What is noticeable is that the International Panorama Thing of Cinema and the Cinema Conquista Show, in a comparative way, something that the methodology of the work opens to happen, despite having appeared in the same period of time, informed and demanded by a similar social, economic and political context, bring aspects that differentiate them, here attributed to the distinct formative paths of their directors, something that corroborates with the thought that social practices do not arise only by determinations external to

individuals, but also by through them. Looking through the micro social bias, the same historical moment, studied from the analogous practices that emerged in it, can present significant variants, because they are informed by symbols that were incorporated in the course of their directors' lives, that is, they belong to the core of each *habitus* of the directors, built through their socialization processes, which informs the profile of each practice, the way in which they were organizing and/or structuring themselves. The formative potential of these alternative cinematographic and audiovisual exhibition practices stands out for commercial movie theaters - festivals and film shows because, in a certain way, the experiences acquired in the experiences provided in this environment, formed the propitious scenario so that learning could be learned incorporated by the people who participated in them, directly or indirectly, helping in their constitutions as people and professionals in the field, extolling the fluid characteristic with which these learning processes are moved. That is, the exhibition events discussed here were environments that created the conditions for various experiences to be exchanged and various lessons incorporated in the field of cinema and audiovisual. Even the Panorama and the Show itself, the needs of the event and the material demands, were demanding from their makers certain choices and certain paths to follow that brought with them learning, based on experience, that formed them as cultural producers with a recognition in the group they are part of. What draws our attention, in the case of Bahia, taking into account the historicity of the practice of showing films at festivals and film screenings, are still spaces whose experiences provided by them have the ability to extrapolate the direct and immediate experience of an individual., contributing to the process of incorporating certain learnings that affect the whole group of people to which he belongs. Hence, the reason for choosing to analyze the proposed object through the field of memory, affiliating the perspective of observing the long-term learning processes present in social practices as a whole. At this moment, going back in time also provided the possibility of observing the link between the "Bahia Film Club" and the holding of the "Bahia Film Festival", glimpsing a web of people whose knowledge generated and enhanced by these environments, through knowledge and experiences shared, even if only by observation and indirectly, extended over time, in a continuous flow and open to new thoughts, therefore, to transformations. The conception of movie clubs as the genesis of film and audiovisual festivals and exhibitions came in this wake, as the space that proposed the exhibition of films alternative to the circuit of the commercial halls linked to the large exhibition companies, which provided, in many moments, the conditions

materials for the realization of the exhibition events, as well as the place where the criticism of the films and the appreciation of the cinema began, among other practices related to the cinematic knowledge/doing. The work points to a closer understanding of the reality of how the social movement happens, which is not seen apart from people, but constituted from an interweaving of relationships demanded and adapted to the opportunities presented, in a game of tensions and strategies that are part of life in society.

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