URBAN IDENTITIES IN MUSIC GEOGRAPHIES: A CONTINENTAL-SCALE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Cities are important themes in music, and their related urban identities have framed continuously the various contexts of popular music in the recent decades. This article addresses some issues in Music Geographies focusing on how cities and towns appear in popular music and in its related culture. Particularly, the study unveils the presence of the cities and towns in music, decoding the main themes of their identities behind the lyrics and the musical messages. Firstly, the research shows the presence of the cities in music through continental and regional scales mapping, to identify the spatial distribution of cities in popular music. Secondly, their incidence is considered to understand their presence in various songs, with many of them being emblematic songs in the culture of popular music. Thirdly, some case-studies at continental scale are investigated through particular methods to unveil the main issues of urban identities. The research bases on quantitative investigation, GIS, visual methodologies and lyrics analysis. The main findings argue that, at different regional scales of analysis, cities and their urban identities are omnipresent themes in popular music. They are an integral part of contemporary Music Geographies, with relevant spatial and cultural inequalities, thus opening new avenues for further research.

Keywords: music cities, landscape, spatial analysis, music cartographies, continents, regions

INTRODUCTION

There are plenty of studies and long research focusing on the close connection between place, identity and music, from a geographical perspective. Many scholars argued these questions in music geography as Brown et al. (2000), Cohen (2017), Connell & Gibson (2004), Florida & Jackson (2010), Gallagher et al. (2017), Gibson & Connell (2005), Hudson (2006), Johansson & Bell (2009), Jucu (2016), Leyshon et al. (1998), Lashua et al. (2014), Kearney (2010), Kong (1995), Milburn (2017), Power & Jansson (2004), Richardson & Wilkie (2014), Rossetto & Andriago (2017), Watson (2008, 2012), Watson et al. (2009), to select just a few of the names. They frame the new discipline of music geographies that now, more than ever, is encountering continuously valuable success both in recent geographical discourses and in geo-spatial analysis, thus providing a fertile ground for ongoing geographical debates.

Against such a background, popular music in general “has traditionally been associated strongly with cities as loci of where new music is conceived” (Verboord & van Noord, 2016, p. 59). However, cities, as an important topic for numberless popular songs (Cohen, 2017) and their related urban identities, still remain peripheral in present geographical research, claiming for new research to provide the main perspectives in the construction of the new relationships

between music and spaces and between cities and places in relation to their identities. The main hypothesis of this study relies on the stance that cities and towns, as places with specific identities, always inspired music, providing certain and unique backgrounds of inspiration for many artists in music production. In saying this, it is important to state that we refer to popular music and particularly to the high ranked songs performed by legendary artists of popular music in the last decades.

Furthermore, through their messages, songs portray stories about cities, features of their landscapes, relevant events of local culture and aspects defining the cities and towns as places with unique or eventually common identities, particularly when we refer to the cities with a huge heritage of popular music culture or to urban areas so far distinguished in the music industry and music business sectors. Cities appear in music regardless of their size and location and, of course, regardless of their cultural belonging, with a significant dominance in the western cultures that unsurprisingly overlap the popular music development.

Considering this, the main objectives of the study are to map the cities and towns whether they are 'world' or 'provincial' cities (see Long, 2014), to understand their spatial distribution in close connection to popular music culture development.¹ Then, their presence and frequency in popular music songs – often internationally acknowledged and performed by emblematic artists – is unveiled, to explain the dominance of some cities in popular music. Finally, to portray the features of urban identity, several cases framed at a continental scale approach, are investigated to provide new critical understandings on the issues of local, regional and global urban identities. In doing so, the first section of the paper addresses some theoretical insights to provide a critical background on recent theories on cities, music and the geographies of music.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: DEALING WITH MUSIC GEOGRAPHY, CITIES, AND URBAN IDENTITY

Within the broad field of Human Geography, Cultural Geography remains one of the most vibrant disciplines. It is focused on "the study of relationship between culture and place", on the people's cultural values, on their daily, common and extraordinary practices, as well as on their artefacts. Furthermore, it investigates "how culture is distributed over spaces, how place and identities are produced, how people make sense of place and build senses of place, how people produce and communicate meanings" (Castree et al., 2013, p. 88; see also Anderson et al., 2002; Duncan et al., 2008; Mitchell, 2000). Considering this, Music Geography remains an

¹ This article makes use of a part of the findings and results from a previous research focused on cities, music and geography. Some of them have been partly published in the article *Cities, Music and Geographies: Mapping Cities and Decoding Their Meanings in Disco-Pop-Dance (DPD) Culture*, as a conference proceeding of *MUSICULT Conference*, held on 13-14 of May, 2016, in Istanbul, Turkey. Some key findings have been presented within the conference papers of the *International Conference Perspectives of Geographical Approach on Territorial Development; Theories, Methods and Practices*, organized by the Department of Geography, West University of Timișoara, Romania, through the conference presentation entitled *Spatialising Cities in the Culture of Popular Music through GIS Analysis*, co-authored by Dr. Florina Ardelean. I would like to thank my colleague Dr. Florina Ardelean, Lecturer at the Department of Geography, for her valuable work in designing the maps used in this article. I extend my thanks to the anonymous reviewers of this article for their comments on the earlier versions of my paper and also for their very constructive feedback in improving the content of the article.

integral part of recent cultural geographies because music represents one of the most relevant traits, values or cultural products of human communities, often inhabiting all places and spaces, from the physical perspective to the fluid and virtual one, thus continuously flowing both through all media and electronic technologies that embrace our everyday behaviours and our daily lives and experiences. Therefore, “music is an integral part of the human experience” (Johansson & Bell, 2009, p. 1) and this idea argues that Music and Geography are “intimately connected”, expressing multiple connections between music, space and place (Johansson & Bell, 2009, p. 1).

Particularizing, popular music as a representative cultural value and as a product of human society is a “cultural form that actively produces geographic discourses and can be used to understand broader social relations and trends including identity, ethnicity, and attachment of place, cultural economies, social activism and politics” (Johansson & Bell, 2009, p. 2). Against such a background, cities and their urban identities remain important features to be investigated through the lens of music geographies, since they are particular places with specific identities, frequently unveiled through and by popular music either directly or collateral and allusive. The cities’ landscapes and soundscapes are key features in these different ways of expression, with the discussion going much further and strongly in-depth in cities’ investigation through and by music and, particularly through popular music. Krims (2007) provides a critical reader connecting music and Urban Geography, where cities are seen as important places in music as the author points out, through mapping, how cities are represented in music and how the complex process of urban development generates new forms of music and new functions of music in urban areas. Hence, this article focuses on both these perspectives, highlighting the urban identities in music and in Music Geographies, conveying that cities and urban places open multiple approaches on such analyses since they provide multiple approaching avenues. Summing these theoretical insights, cities as particular places and their related identities are relevant topics of research in recent Music Geographies regardless of the spatial-scale approach.

Accordingly, there are many ways in which cities are approached in the field of Music Geography. They appear as ‘music scenes’, in fact fortunate places for important concerts, festivals and other different music performance venues. Furthermore, these scenes are locations for music production and consumption (Florida & Jackson, 2010). Against such a background, specific institutions and firms specialized in music recordings and music diffusion are often present in the cities and towns worldwide. Recording studios, much of them internationally acknowledged, radio and TV stations, music marketing and management agencies are just a few examples portraying the presence of music infrastructure in the cities in this era of globalization (see Kruger & Trandafoiu, 2013).

In addition, cities are places that host important music halls, arenas and stadiums on which artists perform in the front of large audiences (Florida & Jackson, 2010; Long, 2014). Due to local cultural traditions related to music production and consumption, cities are birthplaces of music genres (DiMaggio, 1987; Long, 2014) and of music artists, singers and performers. They set an intimate relation with their native regions (see Long, 2014), with many of these artists being legendary icons both for their places of belonging and for the global audience.

Then, cities are places for music tourism, offering relevant events, shows and festivals, attracting within their audience numberless tourists. Consequently, cities often turned into important music venues and destinations or they were places of festivals and sites of popular music heritage (Connell & Gibson, 2003; Gibson & Connell, 2005; 2011; Cohen et al., 2014;

Krims, 2007). There are many examples proving these, with world cities and places like Las Vegas, New York, Paris, Moscow and Tokyo being just several instances with worldwide recognition (Long, 2014). Going further and considering music both as cultural and economic good, with a large production and consumption, music industry appears as a major vector in framing relevant music clusters. They group various numbers of cities in regions and areas where popular music turned into one of the most significant businesses and creative or cultural industries in contemporary global entertainment (Bennett & Peterson, 2004). Therefore, within cities, music shapes specific landscapes and soundscapes.

Through the lens of music and Music Geographies, cities are places with both specific landscapes and soundscapes that are directly perceived by people, fans or music consumers or intermediately perceived and consumed through visual channels as television, visual recordings and, more recently, through internet channels of which YouTube remains the most important one in participatory culture (Chau, 2010). In terms of musical perception of the urban spaces, beyond the visual perspectives, cities and their related urban identities remain important places waiting to be decoded through the music messages transposed in songs and through lyrics analysis of those songs. The strength and the deep meanings of these messages are often amplified by the music genre performed, as well as by the performers themselves, mostly when a piece of music is performed by a cherished music artist by a large audience.

Therefore, decoding cities through music, based on listening research (i.e. research based on listening to music) connected to the sense of hearing (Smith, 1997; Gallagher & Prior, 2014; Gallagher et al., 2017), remains one of the key issues in our understanding on both city landscapes and soundscapes. Since music is defined as a cultural dominant feature of our society, cities are significant places for music heritage and for music tourism (Gibson & Connell, 2005). All above-mentioned approaches unveil urban identity, regardless of city size, cultural and economic background, its specific urban history and heritage, arguing the close relation between music, cities, place and identity and the local, regional, national, international and global cultures. Considering American thought in Cultural Geography, with Geography of Music being an emerging part of the field (see Kong, 1995; Kearney, 2010), cities could be approached as cultural hearths from which the music is distributed and diffused in the present all around the Globe, in the developed and developing world. On the contrary, cities are places with a huge power of attraction for music consumers in terms of fans, tourists and all those people that share tastes in music consumption. In such a context, both music (as a specific style or genre or as a particular product or value) and legendary musicians play together a decisive role. In these cases, the big cities remain a priority leading to the idea that world cities always found a particular position in music and in Music Geographies alike. Counter wise, secondary cities remain one step behind, but frame two major types of cities in Music Geography, as Long (2014) points out: the 'world cities' and the 'provincial cities'. This argues that music, as a cultural trait of our society, habits in all urban areas to a different extent, defining their common or specific urban identities.

As a key feature of contemporary cities in an era of globalization, urban identity is a concept labelling various attributes of the urban space: contemporary, real, authentic and traditional (Fredericks, 2004). Identities are related to all places and spaces, including cities (see Lalli, 1992, 1998), being shaped by various political regimes and economic contexts, thus generating different and particular urban landscapes (Young & Kaczmarek, 2008; Tólle, 2010). Consequently, urban identity tends to become an essential feature of environment (Otkay, 2002), in which cities and towns are specific human environment issuing the intervention of the people in the places where they live and to which they construct a strong attachment.

Therefore, place attachment and place memory are, among other features, significant and meaningful elements defining and sensing the urban places (see Hague & Mercer, 1998; Ujang, 2012). The urban landscapes are perhaps the most relevant elements in defining the urban identities, portraying traditional characteristics, global legacies, aspects of urban evolution and (re)construction and local and regional cultural identities (Kaymaz, 2013; Mah, 2014; Neill, 2003). All these issues of the world and provincial cities and towns are often revealed by music and particularly by popular songs of contemporary pop culture, with these cities unveiling various agglomeration and spatial differences at a global scale and within continents, regions and states.

Scanning the world through popular music analysis, the maps of cities and towns in music both at the global and regional scales are relevant tools for our understanding about the presence of the urban areas in the culture of popular music and in their frequencies in popular songs. What are the spatial distribution and the incidence of the sung cities in the recent global popular culture? Why and how do they appear in different popular tunes? Approaching the meaning of place through popular music and since cities remain in music as places of meanings, what makes these places meaningful in music is important to decode. These questions are investigated in the following sections.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses a mixed-methods approach, starting with a quantitative one. In order to map the cities and towns featured in the songs of popular music culture, an inventory of all tunes and artists has been made, whether they were included in major international top charts of the global music with a large audience and strongly imprinted in the global collective memory, or they were less known and present in certain parts of local music cultures and traditions with no large spatial diffusion. Online available databases have been used² to design representative maps at different spatial scales from global to continental scales, and after mapping at national and regional levels. The maps were produced using ArcGIS, a specialized platform enabling the production of both intelligent and expressive maps. These methods were useful for investigating both the spatial distribution of cities in popular music and their frequency. This approach brought to the fore relevant issues related to the spatial distribution of the cities that are major themes in popular music, highlighting relevant connections between the cities and towns as specific places and the regions development empowered by internationalization and globalization, with music being a large consumed product, regardless of the various types of consumption, from simple listening to live performances and touristic activities (see Kruger & Trandafoiu, 2014). On the other hand, the under-represented and blank areas highlight the cities' absence in the popular music culture. In these areas, popular music culture seems to be more local (local musicians being represented instead of world renowned ones). Thus, the maps are important for our understanding about the presence of cities in popular tunes, while mapping procedures in geographical analysis on music remain relevant (Cohen et al., 2015; Florida & Jackson, 2010; Kong, 1995; Krims, 2007).

In order to unveil the meanings of the cities, the method of lyrics analysis was used for some case studies sampled from top popular music. Lyrics analysis and the listening processes in geographical research remain relevant tools especially in Music Geography, since lyrics represent important codes in addressing valuable messages (see Kong, 1995; Gallagher et al.,

² The databases used in this study were compiled under a single database (JUCU DATABASE, 2016-2018).

2007). Music lyrics are also important in geographical analysis because they trace the links between music space (i.e. where music dominates within culture) and cities' identity, providing a range of new perspectives on the culture of popular music (Connell & Gibson, 2004). In so proceeding, beyond the lyrics, as most important remains the sense of hearing (Smith, 1997), with music having to be completely understood in its whole including the artist, his act of performance, the meaning of lyrics and of their messages, etc. Referring to cities, there are many songs unveiling the cities' landscapes, their features and issues, their people's ways of life and their images. Therefore, lyrics analysis in defining urban identities and landscapes through perception of the landscapes and the urban landscapes observation through music is stated by Cosgrove (1984).

Whether these issues have been addressed in the past through participative observation, at present, (in)direct observation using the new technologies and, particularly, the internet and YouTube remain channels in facilitating urban analysis through music and music videos (Rossetto & Andrigo, 2017). Consequently, these resources welcome the new visual methodology usage, both in Geography and in popular music culture analysis. Based on the conceptual background and using the above-mentioned methodological framework, the next sections focus on the main issues on cities' spatial distribution through popular music culture and on their related urban identities expressed through and by popular music tunes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mapping cities' spatial distribution using the analysis of popular music songs

Turning now to the key findings of this research, the first question addressed was to map the cities featured in popular music as relevant themes. The global approach highlights that many of cities and towns from different countries have been included in various songs along time. From North America to Eastern Asia and from Europe to South Africa, cities and towns appeared in music to a different extent (in the underdeveloped world to be rather absent due to relevant reasons). Figure 1 globally presents the total number of the songs named after cities and towns per country. The largest number of songs referring to cities and towns appears in the developed world and in the economically advanced countries. In saying that, the most important reasons related to the deep roots of popular music culture in the globalised world, in which both the world and provincial cities appear as central themes in popular music. New York, London, Paris are convincing examples to name just a few. In this context, cities from countries such as USA, UK, France and Germany remain emblematic.

Reduced values of cities represented in music are obvious in under developed and developing countries as an outcome of the strong limitations of the global cultural flows on the one hand, and on the other, because of their cultural and economic features. However, the cities of these countries are tuned in local popular music presenting domestic musical traditions in local and regional cultures without being largely diffused at continental and global scales. In all, regardless of their location, cities appear as veritable music scenes and real geographical creative centres referred to as scenes that were "originally used to describe the geographic concentration of specific kinds of music genres that evolved in mid-twentieth-century" as Florida & Jackson (2010, p. 311) pointed out. Going further, the authors exemplify these scenes with New Orleans as the city of jazz music, Nashville, the home of country, Memphis as the cultural hearth of soul, Chicago as the city of blues and so on (see also Long, 2014; Verbroed & van Noord, 2016). Such instances highlight the major importance of musical traditions in urban identity formation, as well as the role of musical heritage in the

construction and the spatial and temporal reproduction of urban identities. Considering location and economically speaking, there are relevant agglomerations of such music scenes (see Florida & Jackson, 2010).

Figure 1: The map of the total number of songs named after cities per country

Source: Ioan Sebastian JUCU (2016, p. 272)

Analysing the maps in Figure 2 and Figure 3, such agglomerations appear both in America and Europe framed both by the umbrella of the popular music culture amplified by the globalization flows and by the cultural musical traditions of different regions and places. The continental investigation unveils the absence of such agglomerations in Africa, South America and Asia (excepting Japan). Considering the presence of the world and provincial cities, it is obvious that both are present with a certain predominance of capital cities (both national and regional) as Figure 2 and Figure 3 portray.

The North America, with its cities, remains emblematic in mapping the spatial distribution of the cities in popular music. So far, Detroit is one of the most important music scenes since it is referred to as “one of the most legendary rock music scenes [...] and the home of innovative and highly influential rock bands and of techno, and other musical styles”; Detroit is “a robust pool of musical and business talent”, a city with an outstanding musical legacy (Florida & Jackson, 2010, p. 310). Another sample is Nashville, viewed in the specialized literature as “an expressive place” in music production and distribution, followed by other American cities as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Las Vegas, Buffalo, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Tampa, Washington, etc. Forming relevant cultural and musical clusters these cities shape relevant music regions, often globally acknowledged. Nashville–Davidson–Murfeesboro, New York–Northern New Jersey–Long Island, Los Angeles–Long Beach–Santa Ana and San Francisco–Oakland–Fremont, are just a few of the regions in this context. All these regions, places and cities are relevant music scenes through their music traditions and legacies, through their cultural and creative economies, of which music industry remains a key activity, and through local activities based on tourism. New York and Los Angeles are relevant examples in the music and popular music field since they are leading locations for music employment. The largest

metropolitan areas, small and medium-sized towns also remain representative (see Florida & Jackson, 2010; Long, 2014).

Europe is in the second position with world cities as Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, etc., being largely expressed and featured in popular music songs (Hall, 1998). Beside these, important provincial cities complete the list of European cities in popular music. Sheffield and Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle and Bristol are just a few samples (Brown et al., 2000; Long, 2014). The European cities follow the same patterns as American cities and towns do. Music scenes as London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, and Manchester are ubiquitous urban places featured in the songs of popular music.

Less represented are both the capital and provincial cities and towns from Central and Eastern Europe. One key argument in the under representation of these cities could be the political backgrounds. On the one hand, the formerly socialist policies disagreed for decades with Western cultural values, thus the popular music of the west was not been an integral part of peoples' everyday life. On the other hand, music industry and cultural or creative economies were not acknowledged within these states economy. However, as Figures 4 and 5 show, some capital cities appear in different songs produced in the frame of the local popular cultures.

The comparative analysis of the maps unveils a major disruption between developed countries of the West, including USA, and developing countries of Central and Eastern Europe and of South America. As it was already stated, the main reasons are closely related to the local, regional and national economies and politics that produced specific regional culture types, with no particular focus on popular music cultures. However, despite various cultural, political and ideological barriers, some western music scenes reached out to the eastern audience, as for instance the emblematic songs of Sinatra, *New York, New York*, or *Viva Las Vegas* performed by Elvis Presley. Counter wise, with the political black out disappearance in the 1990s, the *Wind of change* song featuring in its lyrics certain urban places of Moscow and Gorky Park went around the world as a symbol of Communism backlash. Against such a background, the European context remains an interesting subject for further debates in line with the popular music culture (re)production.

Similar patterns are specific of Asia and Africa. As Figure 6 shows, the Asian cities featured in popular music unveil two different paths. The first refers to developed countries as Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand and The Philippines, with the most present cities in music being Tokyo, Yokohama, Bangkok and Hong Kong. Other provincial cities from South Asian countries appear in various domestic songs of local and regional cultures, with no large resonance but emblematic for the local communities of those regions and areas.

Turning now to the national scales, the cities of four countries have been approached. Firstly, as it was stated before, USA remains the leading country both in music economies and in the global popular music culture, with the most numerous cities and towns featured in music. As Figure 7 (Map of USA) shows, most of them are concentrated in large urban areas with significant musical heritage. Together with metropolitan area and regional capitals, there are many small and medium-sized cities and towns that make the subject of numerous popular songs. Remaining in the Anglophone culture, the case of UK (Figure 7, Map of UK) indicates the presence of capital cities like London and Dublin and provincial cities like Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool to name just a few of them.

Figure 2: Songs featuring cities and towns in their contents

Source: Ioan Sebastian JUCU (2016, p. 271)

Figure 3: Songs featuring capital cities in their contents

Source: Ioan Sebastian JUCU (2016, p. 271)

Figure 4: Songs named after cities in America
Source: Own map based on JUCU Database (2016-2018)

Figure 5: Songs named after cities in Europe

Source: Own map based on JUCU Database (2016-2018)

The same pattern fits to French popular music culture, with Paris being the leading city in the popular topics for songs, accompanied by many provincial cities (Figure 8, Map of France). Beyond romantic stories that habit in different popular songs and the features or places unveiled by specific urban landscapes transposed in music, the city of Paris is discovered through music by its specific aura and soundscapes since it remains in the popular music culture as the city where the sound of accordions reverberates and the place portrayed in numberless romantic compositions (see Long, 2014). Berlin and Hamburg are the most sung cities in Germany (Figure 8, Map of Germany), followed by regional cities as Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Dresden, etc. that are present in popular songs belonging to the German popular musical culture without international resonance. Along time, within the history of popular music culture, the cities' identity was expressed by various artists, ranging from legendary musicians, who reached global audience, to local musicians enriching the local musical backgrounds of different regions and places (Jucu, 2016). In addition, their tunes have been placed in high ranked positions of the international music charts or, on the contrary, their songs met no large spatial and temporal diffusion, but remained deeply embedded in the local collective memories revealing the strong attachment to local places.

Figure 6: Songs named after cities in Asia

Source: Own map based on JUCU Database (2016-2018)

An in-depth analysis of the above issue will not be realised here, but several examples might be evident. As it was previously stated, Elvis Presley, the king of rock and roll, and Frank Sinatra – an authentic American music legend (see Milburn, 2017), are emblematic musical figures in this context, supporting both the history and the cultural heritage of the American popular music. Their songs on the emblematic cities of New York and Las Vegas still stand as never dying all-time hits, expressing American urban identities. They were expressed through music also by other artists, as it is the case of the American Bruce Springsteen (*Streets of Philadelphia*), of Alicia Keys (*New York – Empire State of Mind*), or of various European artists, as leading musicians during the time of disco-pop culture era: Dieter Bohlen and Thomas Anders, C. C. Catch, Sheree, etc. The repertoires of the latter group of artists included songs revealing both the landscapes and the magic auras of diverse European cities, in most cases the capitals. Paris, Milan and Berlin are just several examples. The city of Vienna from *Vienna calling* song, performed by Falco, and *Barcelona*, from the homonymous song performed by the legendary Freddie Mercury and Montserrat Caballé, are also emblematic songs in the global popular culture.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

UNITED KINGDOM

Total number of songs named after cities

Figure 7: Songs named after cities in USA and UK

Source: Own map based on JUCU Database (2016-2018)

GERMANY

FRANCE

Figure 8: Songs named after cities in Germany and France

Source: Own map based on JUCU Database (2016-2018)

The cities from other continents, such as Casablanca, Tokyo, and Bangkok have been featured in popular music regardless of their genres and styles. Even though some songs have not expressed the cities in their lyrics, they usually used the cities as a visual expression in their videos, unveiling the cities landscapes and their related urban identities. For instance, New York is an emblematic place featured in music videos of a range of artists: Céline Dion (*A new day has come, I'm alive*), Bruce Springsteen (*Streets of Philadelphia*), etc.³ Paris and London are other examples. To sum up, emblematic urban places and iconic landscapes are revealed as major landmarks of the cities. Central Park and Time Square in New York and the Tour Eiffel of Paris are emblematic and meaningful places, defining the urban identity of the cities they belong to (Jucu, 2016).

On the other hand, cities as music scenes are emblematic places to which the artists and musicians lives and performances relate to. The mapped cities as New York, Las Vegas, London, Paris, Liverpool, and Los Angeles are relevant examples, since they are important places in the field of music industry at the international level. Furthermore, these cities are also prominent places because they are veritable homes for internationally-acknowledged musical venues. There is much relevant evidence that might be largely contextualized but, of these, Radio City Music Hall from New York stands as a musical global symbol for the international popular music culture (Figure 9). This showplace of the American nation hosted, in time, the most important artists, concerts and shows, thus turning into an emblematic musical landmark both for New York City and for the American culture of popular music.⁴ A similar venue is Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, a music venue for some of the legendary artists and musicians of the world.

Figure 9: Radio City Music Hall as an emblematic international musical and urban landmark, New York, USA

Source: Ioan Sebastian JUCU, 2017

³ The mentioned songs and artist have been listened to carefully and the lyrics have been investigated in-depth.

⁴ Radio City Music Hall remains an iconic institution for all the greatest artists of the world.

Beyond the musical venues and musical landmarks of the cities, the urban identities of the mapped cities frequently featured in the songs of popular music culture related to various events that marked the cities' destiny. Whether they were political, economic, social or cultural, the events always marked the cities' existence, turning them into symbolic places inspiring various artists and their music. There are many examples. One of them relates to the city of Moscow, through the song of legendary rock band Scorpions: *Wind of change*, talking about the unity of Eastern Europe to the Western culture. The song is a symbol of freedom and the mentioned separated worlds could go on "like brothers."⁵ Considering provincial cities in a similar background, the second case refers to the city of Timișoara. It remains symbolic in the Romanian Communism breakdown, with the city being the cultural hearth of the Anti-Communist Romanian Revolution, in December 1989. Two rock bands – Phoenix and Pro Musica – performed the song *Timișoara*, expressing the national urban identity as a place of anti-Communist revolt and freedom (see also, Voiculescu, 1999/2000). Other events messaged in various popular songs are connected to different fests, carnivals, and local, regional and international cultural celebrations. The song *Samba de Janeiro* integrally unveils both the unique landscape and the soundscape of Rio de Janeiro, expressing the feelings of joy and happiness. On the other hand, the background of popular music songs includes pieces of music talking about tragic events of human mankind. The popular hit of the top songstress of the 1980s and 1990s, Sandra, titled *Hiroshima*, brings to the fore messages on the dramatic times when the city was devastated through atomic bombing, claiming that such atrocities should never be forgotten and calling for peace. Summing it all up, the urban identities of the cities are largely expressed through various songs of popular music, but to different spatial extents. The next section presents these issues considering a continental approach.

Discovering urban identities of cities through popular music

America

The North American cities certainly are the most present in popular music songs, since they have an important musical heritage and remain major locations in global music industry, in cultural/creative economies and in tourism, and in the music of many legendary artists alike. There are many songs echoing, through their lyrics and videos, about the places and the urban landmarks, thus unveiling the cities' identity. The Broadway, Harlem and Brooklyn districts, Brooklyn Bridge (Figure 10, left), East Avenue, etc. are several examples of places included in timeless tunes about New York City, the most present city in popular music. Beaches and Caribbean seas are unveiled in songs about Miami, while Claiborne Avenue and Bourbon Street are places discovered in popular songs about New Orleans. In most songs, it is acknowledged that New York is the city that never sleeps, but this feature also fits to other American cities such as Las Vegas, Miami, and Philadelphia.⁶

The urban landscapes are also revealed, with New York being the city of inspiring lights (Figure 10, right) as Las Vegas is the city of the bright lights and neon flashing. The urban landscapes portrayed in music are evident especially when they are associated with pictures from these places. The idea of "concrete jungle" referring to New York in Alicia Keys' song is evident, as

⁵ Based on listening *Wind of Change* of Scorpions Band.

⁶ Based on the songs featuring New York in their lyrics: of these, several meaningful songs are *Empire State of Mind* – Alicia Keys, *New York, New York* – Frank Sinatra, *New York City Girls* – Modern Talking, *I love New York* – Madonna, *Englishman in New York* – Sting.

Figure 11 (left) illustrates, and the city's skyscrapers lights are expressively designed on the front cover of Sinatra's album *New York, New York* (Figure 11, right). Urban landscapes also include images and environments of the urban streets. For instance, people gentleness is conveyed regarding San Francisco. In addition, soundscapes are revealed when the artists sing about the urban noise, either created by urban agglomeration or sirens (New York) or by music, fun and parties (Miami, Las Vegas). Through music, the ways of life in each city are discovered, presenting specific activities in line with the city's economic profile and with its urban identity.⁷

Figure 10: New York – (left) Brooklyn Bridge and a section of the skyline;
(right) Avenues and the city lights

Source: Ioan Sebastian JUCU, 2017

Figure 11: (left) Skyscrapers or the 'concrete jungle' of New York;
(right) The lights of New York designed on the front cover of Sinatra's album

Source: Ioan Sebastian JUCU, 2017; SINATRA (1983)

⁷ Based on *Viva Las Vegas* – Elvis Presley and *Welcome to Miami* – Will Smith.

Music is a proof of artists' and inhabitants' place attachment, whether it is New York, San Francisco, Miami, Las Vegas, and New Orleans etc. Of these, New York remains an emblematic city, a symbolic urban place, in movies and videos that present in a realistic manner its urban features. Furthermore, it will always be a city of inspiration and delight for both visitors and local people, of unique urban places. However, the cities' uniqueness revealed by different songs does not fit only for New York, but also for Las Vegas, Miami, New Orleans alike, and, for other provincial cities from America.

The investigated songs through lyrics analysis express the gender perspectives of the big American cities. Women work so hard in New York for daily existence, songs expressing the hard life of the female population, while in the cities of Miami and Las Vegas, songs portray ladies ready for fun in luxury places. Miami is revealed as "the city when the heat is on", with sunny beaches and clubs. All songs welcome people unveiling demographical heterogeneity with Spanish, Indian, Asian, Cuban and other ethnicities being there present, as well as black or white people. Regardless of nations and races, people find in these cities attractive places for fun (Miami) or for fun and gambling (Las Vegas). The latter is the city "turnin' day into nighttime" and "the night into daytime", with gambling, music, and money being the most defining urban features in the production of the urban identity of this city. On the other hand, both New York and Las Vegas are cities that, through their identities and magical auras, could change the people perspectives about life and living.⁸ Through all these selected arguments expressed by the music lyrics, the investigated cities unveil their identities, framed by historical backgrounds, by traditional economies shaped by global perspectives and by internationally acknowledged cultural heritage.

Some the above-discussed features and urban characteristics fit cities from Latin America. Consequently, Rio de Janeiro is the city of samba and carnivals, with joy and fun being the main features defining its urban and cultural identity. The phenomenon of day and nighttime in the carnival appears as the strength of Rio de Janeiro. Then symbolic places and local landmarks are revealed: Avenida Central, Copacabana Beach, as well as the general landscape with the streets and their bustle being frequently highlighted.⁹ Feelings of love and place attachment are provided in the lyrics of popular songs evoking Brasilia.

Europe

The European cities featured in popular music songs convey the same patterns as North American cities, since West European popular music culture presents a close connection with the American popular one and shape similar patterns. The world cities are included in music together with countless regional urban settlements, but to a limited extent in comparison to American cities. The most featured cities in music, as it was previously mapped are London, Paris, Rome, Ibiza, Liverpool, Barcelona and Milan. At a glance, their similar features with American popular music culture is quite evident. First of all, London and Paris are significant metropolis for both cultural industries and music industry. Secondly, to these cities the destiny of numberless musicians and artist are closely connected, the two world cities being significant in the context of music production and consumption, as well as for music business, musical events and music tourism according to two different cultural backgrounds: on one hand,

⁸ Idem.

⁹ According to *List of songs about Rio de Janeiro* (2018).

Anglophone culture and its related music, and on the other, mainly the French culture. To these, other types of Latin cultures appear, like Spanish and Italian, each of them highlighting in different ways and extents the European urban identities.¹⁰

There are many legendary artists performing songs about London, starting with Beatles, Ella Fitzgerald and Barry Manilow and ending with Fleetwood Mack, Genesis and Phil Collins, Elton John, David Bowie, Eddie Grant, Pet Shop Boys, Adele and Ed Sheeran to name just several examples. Places and urban landmarks are frequently revealed as well as the specific landscape of the city. Places and urban features as Trafalgar Square, Big Ben, Emperor's Gate, Waterloo Station, Kensington Church, Warwick Avenue, West End and the Thames are places that a listener could find in popular music.

Related to place attachment, this issue is emotionally and geographically conveyed, illustrating fuller portraits of this city as the home town of various artists, expressing the faith in and love of London local people, of the London boys, and of the West End girls. Other topics featured in many songs are the city's life and its cultural history, the pro-diversity feelings, the nightlife atmosphere and street violence, to the city as a place where people come from all over the world to live there (Time Out editors, 2015; NME, 2017), thus reminding about New York and portraying multiple similarities between the urban identities of the world European city of London and the American New York.

In the same vein is featured Paris, sung both in English and French. The city's soundscapes and landscapes are major topics that fill the songs' lyrics and illustrate emblematic landmarks and places. Champs-Élysées, the Seine River, Maxim's, Montmartre, Moulin Rouge, Palace Royal, Notre Dame Cathedral (Figure 12, left), the bridges over the Seine River are several French landmarks. To these, the magic aura of Paris is revealed with various artists singing about the bells of Paris, about Parisian cafés, about the street landscapes (Figure 12, right) and so on. Among numberless artists resounding Paris in their songs, we find legendary French musicians: Demis Roussos, Louis Armstrong, Joe Dassin, Charles Aznavour, Édith Piaf, Mirreille Mathieu and Vanessa Paradis listed together with English, American and German musicians like Madonna, Chris de Burg, Prince, The Beatles, and Chris Rea. Their songs convey other relevant topics such as Paris the city of love, romance, luxury and even a city of decadence.¹¹

Barcelona is featured in a variety of songs. An emblematic melody in the popular culture is tuned by Freddy Mercury and Montserrat Caballé, the city being pictured in music as a magical place with a beautiful horizon, a "real jewel in the sun". This metaphor describes the beautiful and unique landscape (Figure 13) shaped by human and physical assets as the distinct architecture, the magical aura of the streets, the beach, the sea, the sun, all competing in the production of a particular urban landscape. In the Mediterranean area as well, the city of Ibiza was also the topic of some songs in the pop-dance culture, with similar characteristics to Miami.¹²

¹⁰ The songs of the artists named in the text have been listened to carefully in order to decode the messages in their lyrics.

¹¹ The songs of the mentioned artists have been investigated carefully for us to understand their meanings.

¹² Based on the song named after Ibiza, *We're going to Ibiza* – Vengaboys.

Figure 12: France, Paris – (left) Notre Dame Cathedral;
(right) The streets of Paris and their related landscapes

Source: Ioan Sebastian JUCU, 2013

Figure 13: The seascape of Barcelona, Spain

Source: Ioan Sebastian JUCU, 2013

Asia, Africa and Australia

Asia and Africa are continents with few cities issued in popular music songs. Or particularly, African and Asian cities do not meet the same intensity in the context of global music culture as America and Europe, due to different cultural backgrounds and specific economic contexts. However, where the force of globalization reached, the situations are quite similar with the western world. This fits to countries such as Japan and Hong Kong. The in-depth analysis on cities featured in music in this part of the world unveils the world cities presence in music to a limited extent, with the small regional cities largely issued especially in traditional music, without large audience. In addition, the musicians who performed this music did not reach to an international and global audience as in the case of the Western world.

Against such a background, the city of Tokyo is an exception. Alongside with many traditional songs, some melodies of artists like Elton John, Ace of Base, Jean Michel Jarre and Gina T, represent the mysterious life of the city, the landscape of lights, roof-tops, and trains of the city, and the people living there (women and kids). The Oriental urban landscape is also described through the Cities of Bangkok and Hong Kong, with the meaning of these cities being less evoked through music and songs.¹³ The cities are revealed in terms of local cultural belonging and related to issues of urban insecurity.

Analysing Africa, from several North African cities included in some tunes, Casablanca is so far the most recognizable in popular music, but with no relevant evidence of the city life.¹⁴ This illustrates the peripheral position of these regions in the global popular music culture belonging mostly to the Anglo-American and European popular music. The same is for Australia, noticing that even though the cities from these regions are not largely echoed, there are countless local songs in the regions' traditional cultures, discussing about various features of the local urban identities.

The above selective analyses prove the existence of a geography of spatial inequalities in global popular music culture that translates in the cities' presence in different popular songs. Such a geographical reality argues that popular music culture strengthened in Europe and North America. While the cities of these continents illustrate through music complex issues of their urban identities, urban places of less developed and of the developing world seem to be peripheral in the current flows of global popular music. This finding certainly opens up new avenues for further research and in-depth investigations on particular regions, cities and places marginalized by the global popular music culture songs.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper dealt with cities, urban identities and geography through the lens of continental-scale analysis to unveil the presence of the cities in the songs of popular music and to explore their urban identities echoed by the messages of music, particularly, the popular music. Cities all over the world, be they global cities of provincial urban areas are a topic for popular music culture expressing the meanings of the cities, the meaning of their cultural and historical backgrounds, their specific cultures and their landscape, thus providing complex pictures framed in music lyrics.

¹³ Based on the song *One night in Bangkok* – Murray Head.

¹⁴ Based on the song *Casablanca* – Bertie Higgins.

The spatial distribution of the cities featured in popular songs, as well as the global distribution of the songs named after cities and towns, unveil geographies of inequality (Lloyd & Clark, 2000; Smith, 1997), with the predominance of the cities in the North American and West-European cultures of popular music. Such paths of distribution show the close relation of popular music with the economic development of those states, with the emergence of the cultural and creative economies and with the specific musical pathways under the globalization umbrella. Beside capital cities, as world and global urban habitats, that are highly present in the popular music tunes, non-metropolitan and provincial cities are present unveiling especially features of local and regional cultures. However, a wide range of cities are featured in music with their frequency being evident in the home-places of popular music culture and of music industries and music business. USA and developed countries of Western Europe record the highest number of songs named after cities, with the associated tunes often performed by legendary artists, expressing multiple features of the cities' identities. Place attachment, landscapes and soundscapes, landmarks and emblematic urban symbols, place memory and everyday life aspects are the main topics in the investigated songs. Counter wise, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa present a lower number of the cities in music due to various political, economic and cultural backgrounds, reasons and contexts. In these cases, the popular songs referring to cities and towns frequently unveil issues of local and regional cultures inhabiting their related territories.

Since numberless songs have been performed by emblematic and iconic artists of the popular music stardom, they reached out to a wider audience, thus diffusing through music the features of cities' identities. Consequently, cities as New York, San Francisco, Memphis, New Orleans, Los Angeles, London, Paris, and Tokyo and so on remain emblematic places, music expressing their urban identities, making them iconic geographical places in the popular music culture. Furthermore, the relation place, identity and time is illustrated through the everlasting tunes strongly internalized in people's collective memory, regardless of the scale of analysis.

These concluding remarks, briefly argue the meaning of the close links between music, cities and urban identity under the new umbrella of Music Geographies that calls for ongoing analysis. Of course, the findings of this article, as well as their discussion, call for further research since each pathway of spatial distribution through the popular music culture provides new openings for future in/depth critical investigation and each city provides its own culture, history and heritage that could be largely expanded for comprehensive understandings on cities and their urban identities using popular music as a specific research avenue. Furthermore, the article opens up new ways in approaching the cities and their urban identities through popular music research and, generally, in the field of Music Geographies.

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