

Hypothesis of Polymetric Structures in Afro-Brazilian Music

Gérald Guillot

Iremus, Paris, France

University of Teaching Education, Lausanne, Switzerland

Due to Atlantic Trade, some “characteristic devices” (Pressing, 2002) would have been inherited from African music by Afro-Brazilian Music. One of these devices is the polymetric structure. While this concept is used by many musicologists, for Western and non-Western music, some authors claim against its existence (Agawu, 2003; London, 2012). Very few studies deal with this potential music property in the Afro-Brazilian repertoire. Thus, this paper relates a preliminary study about the verification of the hypothesis of the presence, in Afro-Brazilian music, of polymetric structures. Several concepts related to meter are evaluated for their application to this musical corpus. Some analyzes based on samples coming from a selection of Afro-Brazilian music (samba, *maracatu de baque virado* and *coco*) are presented. The studies on African and Afro-Brazilian dance, especially the concepts of “polycentrism” (Welsh-Ashante, 2001) and “polymetric lines” (Naveda & Leman, 2008) open promising ways for future investigation on a theoretical plan. Then, an experimental protocol such as Magill & Pressing (1997) will allow to test our hypothesis with a psycho-cognitive approach.