This abstract presents theoretical reflections and an empiric research that has been carried out since 2013, which aims to understand how multicultural issues have been presented in Brazilian music education. In order to do that, the following research strategies have been employed, namely: 1) a literature review based on Brazilian academic journals; 2) a document analysis of Brazilian legislation and curricula of Music in basic and superior education; 3) questionnaires applied to undergraduate students of three Music Teacher Education courses; and 4) interviews with nine Music Teacher Education courses Professors. The results haven’t been encouraging. Despite Brazil being a very plural country, and even though in the last three years several laws have been passed in order to defend minorities - like black people, LGBT people, and women (Santiago & Ivenicki, 2016a) - a high number of scholars have argued that Music Education in Brazil is still euro-centred, colonized and not related to the musical reality of students of nowadays regular schools (Penna, 2005, 2007; Santiago & Monti, 2014). Although there are examples of some universities, schools or lonely teachers that teach African, Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous music in Music classes, in general, the Brazilian Music Education focuses on teaching traditional notation through western music (Santiago & Ivenicki, 2016; Santiago, 2017). It is has also been reported by the interviewees that the majority of the realities in Music Education in Brazil does not consider the plurality of Brazilian population, as well as differences inside the classrooms, and issues like gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity and religiosity, as
if those issues were not to be considered as part of the role of music education (Santiago, 2017). This reality has arguably its origin in music teacher education offered by universities. It has been contended that universities tend to select their students through a practical and a theoretical music test (the Specific Ability Test), but recent research has shown that generally these music tests only present contents related to western music, popular, media or ethnic music being completely ignored. In that sense, universities tend to select the following kind of ‘profile’ able to enter in the Music Teacher Education courses: someone engaged with ‘classical’ music (Santiago & Ivenicki, 2017; Santiago & Monti, 2018). If a musician with a popular or media repertoire overcomes this “wall” and manages to be selected to study Music in a university, other “walls” will likely rise up, as argued by many scholars who point out that the curricula of Music Teacher Education courses are also euro-centred and do not relate to the musicality of minor groups, like black or indigenous people (Vieira, 2000; Almeida, 2009; Luedy; 2009; Pereira, 2014; Santiago, 2017; Santiago & Ivenicki, 2016; Queiroz, 2017). The present research data pointed out that the only way to teach music that seems to be present in Music Teacher Education courses is what is called ‘conservatory music education’ by Brazilian scholars, meaning the method of teaching music that has been raised in French conservatoires in the XVIII century (Vieira, 2000; Peireira, 2014). Therefore, other ways of teaching music, like Indigenous, African and suburban ‘methodologies’ get invisible, which can arguably make the future music teachers less able to teach music using such ‘methods’ (Santiago, 2017). Also, data showed that most of undergraduate students claim they have not been well prepared to face the challenges that cultural differences in classrooms impose (Santiago & Ivenicki, 2016). Such a situation is likely to have implications on pupils in regular schools. They are likely to feel they are not represented in music classes, and therefore become demotivated to study a subject that is not related with their lives. It is argued that the silence of some cultural identities and music productions and traditions is a form of epistemological racism (Santos, 2004), as it contributes to the production and perpetuation of concrete
racism and discriminations in schools. It is also claimed that if different musicalities were included in music classes repertoires, music classes would help to make students become more tolerant and sensible to others’ musicalities and cultures, therefore positively contributing to the fight against racism, prejudices and xenophobia (Omolo-Oganti, 2009; Schmid, 2014; Sæther, 2008; Karlsen, 2013, 2014) therefore, multiculturalism is seen as a theoretical and political field that could guide music teachers, schools and universities to celebrate cultural differences, as well as to create representativity of minorities and the criticism of all forms of social and cultural negative hierarchisations. But, what are the main challenges to be faced by music teachers, as well as by schools and universities so that Brazilian music education may become multicultural? What needs to be changed? How can these possible changes be made? Data from our study points to the following: 1) First of all, it is necessary to understand that school and universities reproduce social reality. That means that, in fact, epistemological racism in many educational sites only reproduces what happens in the whole society. Therefore, it is central to understand the social demands, including those that are not directly related to music, in order to pinpoint why and how negative social phenomena happen in Brazil. 2) After understanding Brazilian reality as racist, music teacher education offered by universities should arguably be rethought in ways that do not reproduce such a structural racism. To begin with, music university entrance tests aimed at selecting students should be opened to other music knowledges and repertoires besides western music. Such a measure should likely contribute to universities becoming places for the coexistence of different people, with different backgrounds and different musicalities, which could increase hybridisms and positive exchanges between students and professors. 3) The curriculum of music teacher education should be changed in order to include not only the musicality of different cultures (like black, indigenous and suburban music), but also the very ways through which those musicalities are taught; 4) the teachers in formation should be trained both to value, consider and respect the cultural backgrounds of students in
5) more research and experiences should be fostered about multicultural music education in Brazil; and 6) last but not least, Music Teacher Education courses should incorporate discussions on how issues like race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and religiosity permeate music education so as to create approaches that could respect those kinds of differences.