

FUNK'S PHYSICAL AND AFFECTIVE SPACES: THE LOCAL MUSICKING OF SÃO PAULO'S LESBIAN PARTIES

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DOSSIER LOCAL MUSICKING

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ABSTRACT

The article presents an analysis of ethnography carried out in the scene of lesbian parties that take place in Downtown São Paulo, where an eroticized funk circulates, as well as interviews with participants of the scene during the Covid_19 pandemic. The field comprehends two parties: “Sarrada no Brejo” and “Fancha”, (local funk brazilian parties). Based on the notion of local musicking, as well as locality, displacement and intersectionality I analyze the ways of how funk promotes an engagement among the participants, supporting the processes of transformation and identification that configure the lesbian, fat and black bodies. Observing funk music, the performance and the localities involved, I identify in this way of musicking a set of actions that resignify stereotypes and the body considered as an abject, transforming it into a political body through fun, occupation and creation of spaces.

KEYWORDS
Funk, Genre,
Performance,
Local Musicking

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INTRODUÇÃO

In this article I analyze the scene of parties aimed at the lesbian audience that takes place in São Paulo center, based on the notion of local musicking. This concept brings a more in-depth observation of how parties and funk relate themselves to the localities involved, the displacements between physical and virtual spaces (internet) and how they affect the lives of young people involved in the scene. Based on the ethnography carried out in the parties, interviews collections and applied literature, I analyze the different ways an eroticized funk circulates and aimed at lesbian and bisexual women, as well as their role in the processes of transforming bodies considered abject, into political-bodies. The ethnographed local parties are “Sarrada no brejo” and “Fancha”, which have relevant differences and similarities to be considered. Among the similarities, the predominance of eroticized funk stands out - the musical genre most appreciated and played by DJs throughout the night. The least played musical genres include black music, electronic music, and what the interlocutors call “brazilianess”, including pop, axé, tecnobrega (local brazilian genres). The most outstanding difference between the two parties refers to social markers such as color and social class of the participants and organizers. Sarrada no Brejo’s party was created for lesbian, bisexual, black, fat and peripheral women. Fancha’s party includes a public composed mainly by thin, white, middle class, lesbian and bisexual women, (although there are exceptions), who live in neighborhoods around downtown.

The fieldwork was divided into two stages: the first was aimed at visiting these local parties, conducting interviews with participants and organizers, collecting images, photos, etc. I have also started a funk musical production with a funk singer, MC Mano Feu. The second stage took place during the covid_19 pandemic, in 2020, which demanded an adaptation in the ways of ethnographing the scene, because the parties were suspended and activities started to be carried out through the internet, due to social isolation. For this reason, in this phase, I conducted a series of online interviews with other participants and organizers, through Google meeting and Zoom - digital platforms used to hold online meetings. This virtual environment has become extremely relevant to the perpetuation of the parties, because it made it possible to maintain engagement, through realization of live streams, surveys, posts with information on women’s health, sex tips, emotional relationships, series, films, among other issues related to the lesbian daily life.

However, before starting the ethnography, an approximation was needed with the participants or the interlocutors who participate in the parties to make my access and acting easier as a researcher in those spaces. After a previous survey carried out on social networks to identify who the organizers and participants were, I sent messages to some women involved



in the scene, with the intention of explaining my research, explaining my interest in interviewing them and requesting authorization to film the parties. The first contacts were cordial, and the only restriction was related to filming the parties, as the organizers of both parties requested that nude scenes must not be filmed, considering that some women could have their breasts on display, as well as scenes of drunkenness should also be avoided. My acceptance was natural, because I resemble the participants in terms of sexual orientation. Even at the Sarrada no Brejo's party, where the public is mostly black, I was really well welcomed by the organizers and participants, despite being white and a little older compared to the age of the participants. The clothes I wore at parties are similar to the style shared by the participants: jeans, All Star sneakers, blouse with buttons and collar, and short hair. My clothing and accessories also revealed my acting as a researcher because I always walked by the parties with a backpack on my back, carrying a camera, digital recorder and a clipboard with authorization of images terms.

Some of the interviews were conducted in the party queues that were formed on the sidewalks, before the opening of the houses, always in a relaxed atmosphere; except once when a young woman was uncomfortable, because she had already been approached for the same reason, by someone else, on another occasion. These street interviews provide interesting data regarding the social markers of difference, such as age, address and motivations that make these women attend these parties. The line plays an important role, as it is an extension of the party, a space of sociability, meetings, creation of bonds of friendship and affection, or as the participants themselves say, a "warm up" to the party. In one of the talks with a participant in the line, when asked by me if she liked funk, she replied me: "It's so good that today we will not hear the word "cock" in the songs", referring to the selection of funks that the DJs play, characterized by exclusion of phallic, misogynistic content or any reference to compulsory heteronormativity.

Initially my objective was to ethnograph the funk flows that occur in Paraisópolis favela - a local slum in São Paulo located at the south São Paulo city. However, due to the high rate of violence in that region and the death of police officer Juliane dos Santos Duarte, 27, black, lesbian and peripheral, in August 2018, in that community, I changed my mind and started to look for another field. At that moment, I became interested in funk songs produced by women.

In an informal conversation, a colleague told me about MC Mano Feu's work, as she had identified many common issues between my studies and the "lesbian funk songs" that MC composes and interprets. The following day I got in touch with MC Mano Feu, inviting her to chat, where I exposed



my research and proposed to her a collaboration, as I could have her as an interlocutor in the field studied. She immediately accepted my invitation and I met her at the food court of a local shopping mall - located at the Tatuapé subway exit, east side of São Paulo. The conversation started from a structured script of questions previously prepared by me and multiplied in different subjects throughout the conversation. This first contact was essential for me to realize the wide spectrum that the lesbian funk scene involves, which includes issues of gender, class and color; this intersectionality was revealed in the speech of my first interlocutor.

MC Mano Feu is black, lives in Cabreúva - local municipality of São Paulo, is chocolate seller on the subway (at the time of the interview) and she goes to downtown São Paulo to make small presentations at the parties mentioned, among other events on the largest scene of the LGBTQIA + circuit. Her challenge is extremely huge, because in most of the concerts she plays, she doesn't get paid, and when she does, it's a low amount of money, so she must use her own resources to pay the bus and metro tickets. The value of the artist fee is small or is not paid due to the low profit that the parties generate, just enough to cover the expenses related to the space's rent, security, bar, cleaning professionals. The price charged at the box office is also low, around 10 to 15 reais (local Brazilian currency) so that it is an accessible price to all the frequenters. However, the place provides a stage, sound equipment and visibility for the MCs and DJs that perform on the scene.

Also, MC Mano Feu's life story and performance in the scene brought me a lot of data to be thought about it as other identities connected to each party also show me differences and similarities, within the scope of lesbian socialities. If initially, I was interested only in the modes of production and circulation of funk in the lesbian context, as soon as I started to get in touch with the field I came across other questions that demanded a more critical look at how funk articulates with the intersections of class, color, sexualities, ways of musicking (producing, play funks and dance) and displacement around the city.

It is important mentioning that on my previous researches I have already dealt with the issue of social markers of difference in scenes aimed at the LGBT audience (as the initials of the community lesbian, gay, bisexuals and trans was written two decades ago), such as the work of Regina Facchini (2008), who analyzes the intersections between gender, race, class and sexualities in the scene of "rock of the girls" (rock das minas) in the city of São Paulo. Isadora Lins França (2010) also contributed to the debate about male homosexual sociability in the city of São Paulo, with an emphasis on the consumption and subjectivities of this audience, where she identified and analyzed social markers of difference such

as class, color / race, sexuality and generation. These authors use two pioneering and classic studies as theoretical reference, in the context of male sexuality in the city of São Paulo, carried out by José Fábio Barbosa da Silva (1958)² e Néstor Perlongher (1987).

From the datas I selected, I was able to observe how funk can act as an aggregating and propitiating element of performative experiences, with the potential to impact the subjectivities of the participants, especially in the process of acceptance of the lesbian body and also the fat and black bodies. Despite the importance of funk in maintaining the scene, the protagonism belongs to the women that join themselves in a private space to try different experiences through their bodies through funk music which brings a sensual performance and affective encounters. This way of engaging collectively with music, in this case, funk, in a specific place for this practice, is an example of local musicking.

The verb *musicking*, or music, conceived by Christopher Small (1998) assumes that any individual who sings, plays or composes, without the use of musical notation or attachment to musical works, is based on melodies and rhythms brought in memory, acquired within his culture, tradition and his own capacity for invention. The notion of “local musicking” was first employed by Suzel Reily in 2016 in his research on local music practiced in the city of Campanha, Minas Gerais, including the musical ensembles considered “local” by the population, such as Campanhense Coral, the music band, Congados and the Folia de reis (local bands in Brazil) (Brucher; Reily 2018 p. 8). According to the authors, the relationship between music and locality occurs, because “*musicking*” (or ‘music’) is always a situated act and, therefore, is always local” (Brucher; Reily 2018 p. 10). This concept helps in the understanding of the local musicking of the studied scene, which is configured by practices, performances and musical productions classified as “amateur” and which are located in São Paulo downtown, as demonstrated by the research mentioned above.

KNOWING THE PARTIES

I went for the first time to Sarrada no Brejo’s party that I was invited by MC Mano Feu who made a short presentation where she sang some funk songs, one of them she composed entitled “Sou sapatão” (I’m dyke) and some other successful funk songs, such as the funks of MC 2 K that refer to the female body and pleasure. Sarrada no Brejo started in 2016 and it

² According to Gibran T. Braga, “the work of José Fábio Barbosa da Silva (2005), written in 1958, is considered the first gender study in the country” (Braga 2017, p. 15). Braga also refers to the work of Nestor Perlongher (2008 [1987]) whose master’s research became “an unavoidable reference not only in studies on sexuality and the city” (Braga 2017 p. 15).



was established for some time at a space called Muss, located at 66, Bento Freitas, Street – in a local neighborhood called República, Downtown São Paulo. I took my camcorder and recorder to collect interviews and also to film the event and the presentation of Mano Feu. I made a previous contact with two organizers of the event through a Facebook's message, who promptly agreed to my entry and filming, as well as offered me an interview, which the excerpts will be shown below. The organizers, as well as most of the regulars, are black and live in peripheral neighborhoods, such as Jardim São Luiz, south zone, other neighborhoods in the east and Carapicuíba - municipality of São Paulo. The average age of the regulars is between 20 and 30 years, approximately. The coexistence in this space between black and white lesbians is essential for the configuration of the party; but it is also a generator of conflicts, as will be described below.

Then I was also invited to Fancha's party by MC Mano Feu, and at the time the party was held at Morpheus space, located at 110 Ana Cintra, Street, Campos Elíseos neighborhood, also in downtown São Paulo. I made a previous contact with the organizer, Isabela Catão, to conduct a 30 minutes interview before the beginning of the party. Opposite to Sarrada do Brejo's party, the predominance of the audience was white at Fancha's party as well as the organizer and promoter. The audience might look a little bit younger – between the ages of 18 and 25. I noticed that the funk repertoire is practically the same played by the DJs of Sarrada no Brejo.

Fancha's party appeared for the first time in 2016 in the southern zone of Rio de Janeiro city and it moved to centre both for financial issues and to make easier the commuting of participants who came from both the southern zone and the most popular neighborhoods of the southern north. In 2017 the party came to São Paulo, also located in the centre.

Before the beginning of the Covid_19 pandemic, which paralyzed social activities in March 2020, Sarrada no Brejo's party happened monthly as well Fancha's party, with the exception that Fancha's party changes the address frequently, being held always in the centre and more affluent neighborhoods, both in the city of São Paulo and in Rio de Janeiro.

In this first contact to the field and after the initial contact with the parties' environments, I identified similarities related to the need to have a safe place for young women to protect themselves from violence caused by homophobia and to perform affective experiences, without the male harassment. Another similar aspect refers to the style, especially clothing. I noticed that women who do not perform femininity, have short hair, wear loose shorts or long pants, sneakers, loose t-shirt, shirt with buttons or polo, caps and accessories that go beyond generation: the fanny pack. Andrea Lacombe (2006) also points out the recurrent use of this accessory



in her field research that occurred in a pub in Rio de Janeiro downtown, frequented by women who had relationships with other women. In an article published on his master's thesis, Lacombe (2006) dedicates a section to the subject entitled " 'Pochete is a dyke's badge': women's masculinities" (Lacombe 2006, p. 215). For Lacombe (2006), this accessory "embodied the commonly stereotyped male aspect", which "externalizes the genitalia, placing it in a body situation similar to that of men" (Lacombe 2006, p. 218). Currently I realize in my field that the fanny pack has been resignified, becoming a symbol of a lesbian identity, or gay identity, or any orientation within the diversity represented in the acronym LGBTQIA+.

Both parties have a similar aesthetic, conceived by drawings and collages on the walls that refer to the vagina, uterus, among other feminine symbols. It is also common to happen during the parties, small sales fairs of lesbian-themed artifacts that are produced by participants, such as clothes, accessories, paintings, refrigerator magnets, chocolates in the shape of vulva, even tattoos that are made during the event, generating economy. Services such as security, firefighter, bar and cleaning are performed only by women.

According to an interview given by two organizers of Sarrada no Brejo's party, Michelli Moreira and Márcia Fabiana, on 10/10/2018, black and residents of neighborhoods far from centre, the party emerged as a consequence of the Collective action of Luana Barbosa. The Collective also emerged without a name, in the 14th Walk of Lesbian and Bisexual Women of São Paulo that occurred in 2016, from a gathering of a black women group.

At the time of the emergence of the Collective (still unnamed), occurred the crime motivated by homophobia that victimized the young Luana Barbosa dos Reis, killed by the Military Police in Ribeirão Preto, in São Paulo countryside, after approaching followed by beating. This brutal crime occasioned strong commotion among the participants, to the point where they decided to honor Luana Barbosa, giving her name to the Collective. Marcia argues that after Luana's death, "they all found themselves very vulnerable as lesbian and black women and understood how much their fragilities were. And it was from this meeting that the Collective Luana Barbosa emerged." Luana Barbosa Collective conducts conversation circles about harm reduction, affectivity and loneliness of black women, as well as activities with homeless people, such as campaigns to collect food for this population that is also invisible, as well as lesbian women, in the words of Márcia.

The Collective Luana Barbosa began to realize events such as parties, "crawfundings" and festivals to raise funds to the caravans that took different participants from São Paulo to Ribeirão Preto, to follow the hearings

related to the judicial process of the death of Luana Barbosa. The expenses of the trip added to the bus rental costs were very expensive.

Among the actions taken to obtain financial funds, arises the party *Sarrada no Brejo*, which reverts all the income from the box office to cover expenses of women who are in social vulnerability situations such as electricity bills, gas, rental assistance etc. Another relevant action that demonstrates affection, collaboration and sorority is the *Brejinho Nursery*: a space reserved for the children's care while the regulars can have fun without any worries. *Brejinho Nursery* works concomitantly with the party, at the participants' houses who live near the party will happen, under the care of women Luana Barbosa Collective or *Sarrada do Brejo's* party.

Fancha's party has its own characteristics in relation to the type of sociability or space for affection. According to the interview given by Isabela Catão on 1/12/2018, photographer and organizer of the party that occurs in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, its beginning took place in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 due to the scarcity of parties aimed at the lesbian public, which practically did not exist at that time. The organizer explains that the interest in an all-female party was also personal, because she did not like to go to clubs attended by men so she idealized a party only for lesbian women. Initially the party took place in Botafogo - middle/upper class neighborhood of the south zone of Rio de Janeiro, but the organizer wanted to make something more accessible. Then the party switched to downtown, which, according to Isabela, "is where everything happens, has "muvuca"³ and movement and the access is easier". It is interesting to highlight that this displacement occurs from a privileged south neighborhood to centre, a different movement to what occurs with the *Sarrada no Brejo's* party, which goes from the periphery to the centre.

In São Paulo, Fancha's party was initially held downtown, then switching to the west, such as Pinheiros, middle/upper class. In an interview given on 1/12/2018 *the promoter* and DJ of *Festa Fancha*, Juliana de Borba reports that "São Paulo has a lot of dance clubs but it is not at all that lesbians feel at ease. The importance of Fancha, in this sense, is to provide this space of encounter between lesbian women, because they miss a lot these kind spaces" argues Juliana de Borba:

At this moment of the current political situation in Brazil we really need to come together and have these places, so that they are really strengthened, because it is very important for us to identify, to live with people who have the same experience as us. Fancha's party is important because we can find people like us. Even for the girls who are taking

³ A big crowd, agglomeration or simply an amount of people together.

over yourself now and getting to know each other, having an exclusive space to live their experiences, having contact with other girls, is in the sense of strengthening the “rolê” (tour).⁴

It is worth mentioning the displacement made by the organizers of Fancha Festival, through excursions between Rio and São Paulo, allowing the young women from São Paulo to attend the parties in Rio and vice versa. The trips take place in rented buses with the money obtained through the sale of advance tickets to the participants. This displacement creates more spaces of affection, exchange of experiences and fun, which are the bus and the route. The scarcity of parties aimed at the lesbian public reproduces the male hegemony entrenched in society, considering that most of these events are aimed at gay male audiences. As Gibran T. Braga (2017) argues in his thesis on body policies constituted in spaces of sociability and male fun in the LGBTQIA+ electronic music scene of the city of São Paulo and Berlin “the spaces in question ‘dialogue with versions of homosexuality’, especially the male, since the vast majority of the public everywhere is men” (Braga 2017, p.18).

The parties take place in rented places as spaces for events or in bars, always close to subway stations and bus stops, to facilitate access, considering that much of the public comes from peripheral neighborhoods, mainly in Sarrada no Brejo’s party. Funk with an eroticized content that is performed in both parties is the object of study that underlies the present discussion, considering its potential to resignify misogynistic narratives contained in the lyrics and provide a performance through dance.

1. INTERSECTIONS, COMMUTES AND OCCUPATION OF SPACES

Despite the similarities in the format of the two parties, there are differences in relation to the participants and the intrinsic motivational origin of each one. The participants of Fancha’s party have slightly better financial conditions and reside in neighborhoods closer to the centre or middle class. As Avta Brah (2006) suggests any “analysis of the interconnections between racism, class, gender, sexuality or any other marker of ‘difference’ must take into account the position of the different racisms among themselves” (Brah 2006, p. 331). This notion helps in the analysis of intersectionalities because the parties originated from disparate demands.

The notion of locality is relevant to the studied scene, due to the center/periphery displacement made by most of the participants and which is

⁴ Referring to the Bolsonaro government, elected in 2018, defending a conservative agenda that is made explicit through a homophobic and misogynist discourse.



related to the places of origin, color and social class of the participants. It is not by chance that the public of Sarrada no Brejo's party, mostly formed by black women, resides in peripheral neighborhoods and has less purchasing power compared to the white and middle-class public that attends Fancha's party.

This social class and color differences indicate a perpetuation of what is observed outside the parties – the structural and institutional racism that affects the lives of black women and, even more aggressively, the lives of black, lesbian and peripheral women. On structural and institutional racism, I bring the arguments of Sueli Carneiro, who understands this phenomenon as the performance of “whiteness as a system of power founded on racial contract, of which all whites are beneficiaries”. It is structural because Western white supremacy acts “in the world as an unnamed political system, because it structures ‘a racially organized society, a racial state and a legal-racial system, where the status of whites and non-whites is clearly demarcated, either by law or by custom’” (Carneiro 2011, p. 91). Carneiro argues that institutional racism is verified in “processes, attitudes and behaviors that contribute to discrimination through unintentional prejudice, ignorance, inattention and racist stereotypes that harm certain racial-ethnic groups”(Carneiro 2011, p. 25).

It is not appropriate to reduce the impacts that homophobia and segregation have on the lives of white lesbian women, but it is necessary to shed a light on the social abyss that distinguishes their lives from the reality faced by black women in Brazil. The Social inequality delimits spaces for black and white people, among other social markers of difference, which links the issue of class and race to the locality. In this sense, Sueli Carneiro (2011), argues that the combination of racism with sexism “produces on black women (...) emotional sequelae with mental health damage and lowering of self-esteem; in a shorter life expectancy, (...) and especially in confinement in occupations of lesser prestige and lower class” (Carneiro 2011, p. 127-128).

2. PERIPHERY-CENTER DISPLACEMENTS AND THE CREATION OF SPACES THROUGH FUNK

The importance of downtown São Paulo for the sociability of the LGBTQI+ community has been increasingly studied in the areas of social sciences, anthropology, ethnomusicology, among others. For decades, Downtown São Paulo has been the place that accommodates the different forms of homosexual sociability, such as bars and parties. According to Gibran T. Braga (2017), in the 1980s, the scenes multiplied due to the visibility that

sexual diversity gained. The phenomenon of *disco* and, later, dance floors with DJ, allowed the emergence of “spaces of interaction in which various erotic-affective contacts are expressed” (Braga 2017, p. 16). As Braga points out, in the 1990s, several bars and clubs aimed at LGBT audiences (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people) (*ibid*) appear.

The ideas of Heitor Frúgoli (2000) help to remake the path of the various sociability that occupied the center of São Paulo, starting from the transformation process of the center in the 70s, as well as its growing deindustrialization that generated other financial centers and consumption and entertainment (Frúgoli 2000, p. 21). Frúgoli also noted the “strong interclass character” of the centre, due to the daily crossing of people who belong to the middle and upper classes who work in companies, with low-income people living in the surroundings and those who use public transportation. For Frúgoli, the center is “an area of interclass use, with a conflicting sociocultural diversity” (Frúgoli 2000 p. 216).

Isadora Lins França (2010) researched the ways in which male homosexuality acted in the city center in the first decade of 2000, seeking to understand the articulation between consumption and subjectivities and “markers of difference - such as gender, sexuality, class, age and color/race - working in the production of subjects, categories and styles related to homosexuality” (França 2010 p. 3). Bruno Puccinelli (2017) also studied the processes of production of the city and centrality, peripheries, center and margin, from the observation of the “segmented leisure and real estate markets in the Republic and Consolation districts and interrelations that establish with (homo)sexualities, especially with the gay category” (Puccinelli 2017 p. 15), as well as its transformations in the last 15 years.

Inspired by these theoretical references, I highlight the interview held on 12/11/2020 with Fernanda Gomes, one of the organizers of Sarrada no Brejo’s party, mother, black, social assistant, resident of Jardim São Luís and born in Campo Limpo – both peripheral districts of the southern part of the city of São Paulo. This interview took place in the second phase of the research, during the Covid_19 pandemic, through the Google Meeting *platform*, both her and I at home. According to his statement, the central region was chosen to hold the parties in order to facilitate the access of participants who reside in peripheral neighborhoods located in the north, south, east, west and also in the city center. As can be seen, the center is the easiest place to access for all. Both Fernanda and other interviewed participants mention the existence of homophobia and misogyny also in the “quebradas⁵”, what exposes the bodies that do not perform femininity

5 Popular way of referring to neighborhoods, peripheries and slums.

or non-binary, more vulnerable to violence by intolerance. In this sense, the parties become spaces of protection, besides providing entertainment and affective encounters.

As Fernanda reports, these young women occupy spaces with their black, fat and non-feminized bodies, largely:

I think that any articulation of lesbian or bisexual woman, any cultural action, of a movement to occupy space, is a feminist articulation, finally, to resume the spaces and say: I exist, I'm here. And it's possible to continue, we don't stay at "rolê" death in life, you know? Because I always thought that my life as a lesbian woman would be a life being death in life; like, I die every day because I can't access spaces, I don't know. Here in the periphery I'm afraid of my family to find out, or because there is also homophobia here in the "quebrada", and I cannot go to Paulista Avenue because there I'll take a lamp on the head or be chased.⁶ And for me if Sarrada is the party that takes over Ferro's Bar⁷, that resumes these movements of finding only lesbian women, then it is a space of feminist militancy that discusses race and gender through movement with the body⁸.

To understand this displacement from the periphery to the center, I resort to the categories of "pieces, stains and paths", developed by José Guilherme Magnani (2008) that categorize different urban spaces. The notion of "piece" is used by the anthropologist to refer to peripheral neighborhoods, in the case of their argumentation, as well as the relationships and actions that are formed within the boundaries of a neighborhood and interaction between individuals who know themselves or have a family bond.

Analyzing the city center, Magnani identified places of encounter and leisure, where most of the regulars do not know each other, "but recognize themselves as carriers of the same symbols that refer to tastes, orientations, values, consumption habits, similar ways of life" (Magnani 2008, p. 39). In the city center, Magnani also identified the "spots", which comprehend a set of bars, restaurants, theaters etc. The circuit of parties and bars aimed at the lesbian public can be thought of as part of a "stain"

6 It is a " homophobic attack on young people on Avenida Paulista – São Paulo in 2010: at the time, a group of people passing by the Avenue were hit with fluorescent lamps by five boys (Braga, Gibran T. 2017 p. 127).

7 Ferro's bar operated between the 1960s and 1990s, located in downtown São Paulo, and was frequented by women: journalists, intellectuals, activists, peripheral prostitutes, and lgbt audiences in general. From 1967, the bar began to be occupied by lesbians, becoming a meeting point and political discussions. According to the blog "Outros outubro virão". Available at: <https://outrosoutubrovirao.wordpress.com/2019/06/28/dia-do-orgulho-lgbt-voce-ja-ouviu-falar-do-ferros-bar/>. Accessed at: 19/09/2020.

8 Interview given by Fernanda Gomes on 12/02/2020.

composed of a wide network of events aimed at LGBTQIA+ audiences that take place in São Paulo.

A relevant aspect of this scene refers to its ephemerality, because events may change, such as change of address or interruption of parties due to internal issues of the group. Thus, the parties exist while they happen, materialize in the lived moment, which can last an entire night. To understand this ephemeral construction of party spaces, it is worth resorting to the ideas of Michel Agier (2011) who conducted ethnographic investigations in Africa and Latin America, in popular neighborhoods, invasions, temporary camps for refugees, displaced persons or migrants. For Agier, it is essential to think about the city from precarious spaces, which requires a certain stripping of goods, senses and relationships. Agier argues that “this precariousness is noticeable in time and space because these places appear, transform, or disappear quickly” (Agier 2011). Agier’s ideas are based on the precariousness of the scene studied, manifested in the social environments and in the daily life of the interlocutors, in view of the numerous difficulties they face due to sexual orientation, class and color. Violence driven by homophobia, misogyny or racism makes these lives precarious in the face of conservatism in society. Just as the parties are also precarious because they depend on a reasonable amount of paying people, to ensure the holding of events. Because of this precariousness, the parties change addresses or can paralyze activities for numerous issues.⁹

Returning to the context of funk prom or “baile funk”, since its emergence in Rio’s favelas in the 1980s, funk is associated with violence, drug use and sex, lack of engagement or criticism, as the media has been constantly notifying. Hermano Vianna (2014) observed in his ethnography of the first baile funk in Rio’s favelas, that “people were there to dance and not to listen to speeches” (Vianna 2014). For Vianna, “funk parties are not worthy”, despite the fidelity of the public.

Opposite to what Vianna argues about the ephemerality and absence of critical positioning of the local funks in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Braga (2017) identifies in the LGBTQIA+ scene that he ethnographed in São Paulo downtown, engagement and perpetuation of feelings aroused in the parties that extend to the lives of the participants: “when the engagement in the scenes is intense, as is the case of most of my interlocutors, the festivals produce results that exceed the range of events themselves” (Braga 2017 p. 28). In both parties that I have been researching, the engagement is explicit and essential for the perpetuation of the scene, as it is also what motivates this displacement from the periphery to the center, carried out by a significant

⁹ The festivals remain paralyzed due to the pandemic of covid_19, from the beginning in 2020, until the publication of this article.

part of the public. This movement helps to make the center more dynamic, full of paths. Observing this movement, Agier (2011) conceived the city as a process: “city where you can live, city where you can feel, city in process... This is a question that concerns the city dwellers and their experience of cities” (Agier 2011). Agier observes the city from spaces or forms of groupings and performances, such as carnival, which become visible “and act on the meaning of life” (idem). For Agier, cultural inventions influence identity constructions, even when we speak of “communities of the instant, formed in the activity (be it political, aesthetic or ritual) and not of the supposed eternal, primordial and non-contextual community identities” (Agier 2011).

In her interview, Fernanda Gomes, organizer of Sarrada no Brejo’s party, highlights that parties that took place in São Paulo downtown and influenced the emergence of Sarrada in Brejo’s party, such as “*Don’t Touch My Hair*” – created by black, lesbian and bisexual women and also attended by gays, trans and all the acronyms of the LGBTQIA+ nomenclature. She also mentioned the Batekoo Party, aimed at gay and black men. Within this lgbtqia+ scene or stain that formed in downtown São Paulo, originated the lesbian scene formed by parties and other events, such as carnival blocks, where the Siga Bem Caminhoneira stands out, formed largely by lesbian women. The Sarrada no Brejo, in turn, influenced the emergence of the Fancha Festival and others that arose later.

Bruno Nzinga Ribeiro (2021) ethnographed what he called the “black LGBT scene” that is strong for its political aspect. In his ethnography, Ribeiro cites Sarrada no Brejo’s party as a member of the LGBT black scene in São Paulo. The author also mentions the Don’t touch my hair and Batekoo parties, which emerged in 2015, have inspired the organization of other collectives and parties, also to the reference made by Fernanda in the excerpt of the interview mentioned above. Ribeiro (2021) also ethnographed the Helipa LGBT *baile*, which takes place in the slum of Heliópolis and is attended by a wide range of sexual orientations and styles, different bodies, hair and clothes, many of which are symbols of black resistance, such as braids and voluminous or curled hair in turbans. From these examples of parties and occupied spaces, it is possible to observe the relationship between the locality, the forms of engagement and shared experiences that occur to the sound of funk.

The affective dimension identified in the parties can be understood as a “feeling structure” mentioned by Arjun Appadurai ([1996] 2010) and that is a way of creating engagement. For Appadurai this structure of feelings is produced from particular ways of organized activities that produce material effects, which cannot be separated from the real environment where social life is constituted. In the ethnographed scene, this dimension is formed through the construction of a network of support, affections,

entrepreneurship and political engagement with regard to lesbian representation, intersectionalities, construction of a political body to confront homophobia and racism. In this sense the Spanish trans philosopher Paul B. Preciado (2019) argues that “we can understand the bodies and identities of abnormal as political powers” (Preciado 2019, p. 422).

Another space widely used and fostered by the lesbian party scene is the virtual, or the internet. For Appadurai the virtual space unfolds new and complex connections including producers, local, global and diasporic audiences (Appadurai 2010, p. 194). In the lesbian funk scene, I notice that the virtual space is quite significant, because it is from social networks that the organizers of the parties disclose their events, promotions and agenda, in addition to posting clips, sharing photos, funks, promoting discussions through posts, debates in lives etc. In the period of the Covid_19 in 2020, the scene became totally virtual, as all activities were focused mainly on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube.

3. SOCIO-SPATIAL DIFFERENCES AND MARKERS

By observing the different audiences and the interests of each party, the social, class and color differences that configure them are evidenced by the types of engagement these parties foster. Sarrada no Brejo’s party, for example, at the beginning of the pandemic produced and shared on Facebook some videos of parties’ publicity, which were produced by the participants themselves in order to give prominence to the lesbian body, fat and black, as can be observed in the video “The fat women attack” (in portuguese it’s called *As gordas atacam*).¹⁰ In a live held by Sarrada no Brejo’s party on Facebook on 09/07/2020, there was a debate between three participants who are frequenters of the party since its emergence. All of them mentioned the influence that the party exerted on the process of self-affirmation of the identity and lesbian body of each one. They also reported feelings experienced in the participation of the recording of the clip “The fat women attack”, referring to the creation of self-esteem, because the images praised the beauty of their bodies.

The funk lyrics used in the clip follows:

*“Exaggerated butt size GG
makes me hypnotized, I cannot move.
When she dances, swings, stirs and swings
how much abundance,
she makes the ground tremble” (MC 2K).*

¹⁰ https://www.facebook.com/sarradanobrejoafesta/videos/?ref=page_internal

The video “The fat women attack” had the participation of a group of 8 women, most black, but all fat and who did sensual choreographies to the sound of a funk sung by MC 2K, which praises the female fat body. The clip was recorded in Campo Limpo, south zone of São Paulo and the background images are of houses, squares and streets. To the sound of funk, women do sensual choreographies, especially the famous “swing the tail”¹¹ wearing clothes such as bikinis, swimsuits, shorts and tops, in order to expose the bodies. In Facebook live a participant reported that for the first time she started to see beauty in her body after she saw herself in the video clip.

At Fancha Party’s *Facebook page*, there is a more playful content than politicized, but also focused on issues related to the lesbian universe, ranging from tips on relationship, sex tips, jokes with stereotypes, to advertising of erotic accessories for female homo affective sexual practice. They also make social campaigns, such as offering free entry for a year when the parties come back, for women that are health professionals and who worked in the front line during the Covid_19 pandemic. Despite the more relaxed aspect of the party, the participants demonstrate the same concerns regarding safety and autonomy over the body, experienced from the performance of funk dance.

Despite the specific audiences of each party, a diversity of bodies passes through them: black, white, fat, masculinized, feminized and those appropriate to culturally constructed standards of beauty, which intersect, sometimes causing conflicting situations.

Once again, I remind Fernanda Gomes’ interview, who described how conflicts and mediations occur at Sarrada do Brejo’s party, transcribed below:

We always emphasized clearly in the events and in the dissemination that the priority of the party were fat and black women, because as in the beginning we put 900 people inside and there are spaces that don’t fit 1000 people inside. So they’d come in first and if it got too tight, the white women would stay out of it and not go in. And all right, for us it was all right, all quiet, always privileging black women. But for a while, a period, white women began to question this place too: where were we putting them? Why the comparison, this separatism? And then it was very difficult to hold this “marimba” (meaning for problem in English) and to say that it was not separatism that it gave priority to black women. And that happened for a while, especially among younger black women. There is a dispute, has a hurt, a historical resentment and we can’t control everything. We warned them not to go through each other’s bodies, that

¹¹ According to Ribeiro (2021), it is a peculiar dance of funk, in which the subjects bend the trunk forward, stirring the hip in various ways, “mixing with contractions of the legs (action that the interlocutors call twerk)” (Ribeiro 2021).

they weren't harassers, racists. Because of this, some black women stopped attending or went to other parties. We tried to mediate this conflict in the sense: the priority is black women, but we do not need to attack each other; neither you attack us nor we attack you and we'll play our party. But it's very difficult, there's always racial conflicts in Sarrada, there's always some black girl looking for us saying that some white woman did it, or some white woman saying that some black woman did it.

What seems a dispute within the territory of the parties, or in the words of França and Ribeiro (2020), "territories of affections", is a political contestation manifested through the bodies, which, being together, bring out the historical memory of violence arising from moralizing judgments. In this sense, França and Ribeiro argue that there is a "growing claim of the body as the very space of political dispute, in which hair, clothes, performances and desires are in themselves contesting conventions and the production of other meanings about themselves and the social world" (França; Ribeiro 2020).

4. LOCAL MUSICKING IN FUNK: PRODUCTIONS, ENCOUNTERS, CONSTRUCTIONS, DECONSTRUCTIONS

In both parties I identify the practice of local musicking, because the participants engage in different ways through funk, performance and various actions that keep the parties active, as will be described below. The parties provide through funk, not only dance, but also space and structure for presentations of lesbian MCs who had difficulties early in their career to access heterosexual spaces, but who are very successful in the LGBTQIA+ scene. The rapper Luana Hansen made her first performances at Sarrada no Brejo's party, singing songs of her own, at the time when she had already been successful on the alternative circuit / LGBTQIA +. Likewise, MC Dricka, who is currently very successful in the funk's environment and at the stream Youtube, also went through the stages of Sarrada do Brejo in the beginning of her career. The musical productions are performed, most of the time, by "self-taught" producers, who at the beginning of their careers, use precarious equipment and low-cost technology. Many studios on the outskirts operate on the basis of the "gambiarra¹²", which does not decrease the quality of productions. On the contrary, despite the precariousness of resources, the creativity and knowledge acquired in practice allows these producers to create complex beats montages and interesting editions of voices, timbres and samplers not being limited to academic aesthetic standards. Male producers are

¹² This word is a manner of refers to thing that was repaired in an improvised way.

still the majority in the funk market, despite the emergence of women music producers, as Badsista, who works with Linn da Quebrada – trans singer who calls herself “a legion”, as described on her Instagram profile.

Although funk currently circulates through the parties of the white elite and other environments such as LGBTQIA+, its origin is black, translocal and diasporic. As Adriana Lopes (2011) argues, it is not necessary to seek the origins of funk to identify its African matrix, because musical genres that have the same origin are not homogeneous, but carry the “aesthetic/political principle that functions as a source of inspiration for the construction of the most different black musical practices, adaptable to their own local realities” (Lopes 2011 p. 27).

Among the displacements, occupation and creation of physical, affective and virtual spaces and other aspects that configure the local musicking of the studied scene, there is the misogynist factor, explicit in the funk lyrics, especially the “putaria”. Since the 2000s, when women’s MCs replaced the space of female sexual submission demarcated in the lyrics, by the leading role of the body by appropriating this eroticized funk style, they generated great repercussion in the academic environment and in the sensationalist press¹³.

Next, I highlight an excerpt from an interview given by Fernanda in which she talks about the misogyny of funk and resignification of stereotypes performed at parties:

In funk, although it is a peripheral music, and we do not deny it, most of the lyrics will delimit what the place of the woman in society, which is the place of solitude, which is that of this abused body, that is mistreated and that will serve the man at any cost. And we always think we’re going to use the gun against themselves. So if they use us as an object, we will stop relating to them, obviously because we love women, but also to overthrow patriarchy. And we will also use the music that men make, not only funk, rap, axé, samba, but mainly funk to show us free, to discuss this place that is much discussed superficially, which is the place of the free body. But we wanted to do it in practice: we will dance funk and in the part that men make fun of women we will make fun of them. We will use funk to break with the image of these standard women, the blondes of the body, to put the fat women who are black, to be able to roll to the ground and say that we can and do not need men for this. Funk is a peripheral culture and is also ours; we have there Tati Quebra Barraco, our great idol, MC Carol, Gaiola das Popozudas, those of the old ones that are our inspiration.

¹³ This phenomenon was evidenced in the reaction provoked by the master’s thesis entitled “My pussy is the power: Female representation through funk: identity, feminism and cultural industry” writing by Mariana Gomes Caetano (2015).

At Sarrada do Brejo's party, at a specific moment of the night, lap dance takes place – in which only fat and black women take the stage to make sexy performances characteristic of funk. According to the participants' testimony, the lap dance performance provides engagement and respect between them, through the mutual admiration of their bodies. They reported in a live transmission at the beginning of the pandemic, 09/07/2020, how important and liberating it was to learn how to dance funk, to go up on stage and expose their bodies sensually. With their bodies considered abject, through performance, they create a space to deconstruct and resignify stereotypes. In this scene, the local musicking occurred through funk, creating many ways of engagement in physical, in affective and virtual territory.

5. IMPORTANCE OF FUNK FOR LGBTQIA+ SCENE

In one of the stages of ethnography that I performed together with MC Mano Feu, either producing funk or photographing their performances at parties, I heard several times her saying that that lesbian funk should talk about sex between women, female pleasure and use swear words referring to female genitalia, as heterosexual men do, because “if they can use obscene words, why can we women also not?” Perhaps the elements that create a greater adhering around funk are the performance that enables experimentation of sensuality, the resignification of swearing and protagonism given to lesbian sexuality. The autonomy of funk in the face of aesthetic or virtuosic criteria constructed hegemonically, allows individuals to use this musical genre as a way to express what they want. In this sense, funk provides freedom of expression both in the processes of composition, production, and performance.

One of the important transformations in funk was the protagonism that came to be given to women MCs, especially in the 2000s, as Raquel Moreira (2014) argues. However, according to Moreira, since the 1990s, “carioca female funk” was already present in the *funkeiro* movement, with MCs singing lyrics that addressed sex, relationship and competition between women, having as protagonist MC Dandara. In the 2000s, women's groups (or “bondes) such as “Gaiola das Popozudas” began to bring funk to the media, becoming responsible for the success of the musical genre. From this female protagonist, other gender developments emerged in funk, such as the incorporation of the LGBTQIA+ audience.

To understand the body as a political element and open to the numerous possibilities of gender performativity, it is worth bringing Judith Butler's ideas about gender construction. For the philosopher, genre “is both intentional and performative, where ‘performative’ suggests a dramatic and

contingent construction of meaning” (Butler 2018, p. 240). Butler argues that if there is subversion, it must occur from the terms of the law, through the unexpected metamorphoses that arise when this law turns against itself, creating new possibilities of existence. For Butler, “the culturally constructed body will then be liberated, not for its ‘natural’ past, nor for its original pleasures, but for an open future of cultural possibilities” (Butler 2018 p. 164). If the body is a space open to infinite cultural possibilities, funk can provide the embodiment of this freedom and autonomy through performance and discourse constructed from the diversity of bodies and sexualities.

The subversion to which Butler refers is motivated by repression that makes it essential to create survival strategies, as well as the “new possibilities of existence”. Among the survival strategies, such as acceptance of identity and body, stands out the resignification of the misogynistic narratives of funk, performed by DJs and MCs that operate in the scene, because it destabilizes the notion of binary and compulsory heteronormativity. What is at stake is not a dispute between sexualities, but a rupture with consolidated binary categories and with the hegemony of heterosexual men who regulate sexual relations and socially accepted behaviors.

On this deconstruction it is worth mentioning the provocation made by Paul B. Preciado (2020), about the political construction of the gaze: “how to modify visual hierarchies that constituted us as subjects? How to shift the visual codes that have historically served to designate the normal or the abject?” (Preciado 2020 p. 104). Preciado analyzes what he calls “*contraficcões*” – artistic expressions that “question the dominant ways of seeing norm and deviation” (idem, p. 105). For Preciado, questioning is a way to “invent other visual fictions that modify our collective imaginary” (Preciado 2020 p. 105). In another publication, Preciado (2019) demonstrates how Judith Butler used the notion of performativity to understand the acts of speech in which “sapas” (dyke), and transsexuals turned hegemonic language inside out, appropriating their performative force. Butler will call ‘queer performativity’” this political force (Preciado 2019 p. 416).

Queer performativity enables infinite constructions of sexualities, acting in the resignification of stereotypes, as shown by Preciado: “sapatona goes from an insult pronounced by heterosexual subjects to mark lesbians as ‘abject, to later transform into a contestation and productive self-denomination of a group of ‘abject bodies’” (Preciado 2019 p. 416).

On the importance of the resignification of pejorative stereotypes, I highlight Raquel Moreira’s (2014) study on the performance of MC Paloma, who proudly calls herself “the first trans woman of funk” (Moreira 2014, p. 44). Among marginalized groups, Moreira highlights the subversive potential that abject femininities present.

There are more and more spaces where musical making is re-signifiable by LGBTQIA+ people, such as music festivals. According to Cynthia Boucher (2018), the relevance of queer festivals also consists in giving visibility to the musical production of LGBTQIA+ individuals, as with the festival No Enough, Riot Grrrl and Ladyfest. Such festivals provide women with different ways of making music in environments that are affirmative, welcoming and encouraging. Because it is a musical genre created and produced by self-taught producers, funk can be appropriated and reconfigured freely by any individual and thus welcome all forms of identity ages and performances.

CONCLUSION

Briefly, by understanding the field that I researched as an open space for the invention of new fictions that untangle the collective imaginary about the stereotypes of femininity and beauty, it is possible to think of lesbian funk as a reinvention of funk in its original context, constructed from the intersectionality between gender, race, class and locality.

This new construction of funk modifies the intention and direction of erotic themes, as well as expands it beyond the limits of the peripheries and favelas (or slums). Funk perpetuates itself and moves through time and space, starting from the hills and communities of Rio de Janeiro landing on the LGBTQIA+ dance floors of numerous localities. From a resignified erotic narrative, lesbian funk creates a non-binary space that allows the deconstruction of genres, reconstruction of identities and development of survival strategies propitiated by the parties. The physical, affective and virtual locality in which funk transits, provides the potential to absorb discourses of excluded, marginalized and stigmatized bodies, transforming them into political bodies, body-processes. If funk is considered an artistic expression derived from deviation, it is within it that deviating bodies subvert the logic that delegitimizes individuals by their sexual orientation, race or social class, occupying, resignifying and recreating localities from shared musical and performance practices.

TRANSLATION:
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