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SOCIO-SPATIAL DISPUTES IN BRAZILIAN "PERIPHERIES"*

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## *Making out with the city:*

(homo)sexualities and socio-spatial  
disputes in Brazilian “peripheries”

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### **Abstract**

This article makes use of the constitution of (homo)sexualities and socio-spatial disputes in certain Brazilian “peripheries”. Specifically, it is the synthesis of the results of a doctoral research in anthropology concerning “peripheries”, sociabilities and disputes between homosexual men at bars situated in “peripheral” areas of the cities of São Paulo and Belém, Brazil. The starting point of the ethnography was the scrutiny of specific bars frequented by different publics, favouring the interlocutors’ handling of the manner in which they negotiate identifications and disputes, with a view to understanding the meanings and significations given to “periphery”. In this sense, the emic notion *making out with the city* served as a point of elucidation to qualify and materialise different modes of space production, especially in Brazilian urban “peripheries”, directly interfering in the ways in such cities are accessed and desired.

**Keywords:** Brazilian “peripheries”; (Homo)sexualities; Socio-spatial disputes.

# *Transando com a cidade:*

(homo)sexualidades e agenciamentos  
socioespaciais nas “periferias” brasileiras

## **Resumo**

O presente artigo lança mão da constituição de (homo)sexualidades e agenciamentos socioespaciais em determinadas “periferias” brasileiras. Trata-se, especificamente, da síntese dos resultados de uma pesquisa de doutorado em antropologia sobre “periferias”, sociabilidades e disputas entre homens homossexuais em bares localizados em regiões “periféricas” das cidades de São Paulo e Belém. A etnografia realizada tomou como ponto de partida o escrutínio de bares específicos frequentados por públicos diversos, privilegiando o manejo feito pelos interlocutores a respeito dos modos como eles negociam identidades e disputas, com vistas à compreensão acerca dos sentidos e significados dados à “periferia”. Nesse sentido, a expressão *transando com a cidade* serviu de ponto elucidativo para qualificar e materializar distintos modos de produção do espaço, especialmente nas “periferias” urbanas brasileiras, interferindo diretamente nas maneiras como são acessadas e desejadas tais cidades.

**Palavras-chave:** “Periferias” brasileiras; (Homo)sexualidades; Agenciamentos socioespaciais.

# *Making out with the city:*

(homo)sexualities and socio-spatial

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Ramon Reis

[...] With cities, it is as with dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed, but even the most unexpected dream is a rebus that conceals a desire or, its reverse, a fear. Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else. [...] Cities also believe they are the work of the mind or of chance, but neither the one nor the other suffices to hold up their walls. You take delight not in a city’s seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives a question of yours.

Invisible cities, Italo Calvino.

## Introduction

Are cities producers of composites forged by the fertile imagination of their inhabitants? If so, is it this same imagination that produces urban spaces as a vector for the constitution of relationships, identifications and belongings? Is it possible, for example, to make out with cities in the sense of mediating (homo)sexualities<sup>1</sup>, sociabilities and disputes?

My intention here is not a bombardment of complex and decontextualised questions, far from it, my purpose is to consider the problematisation of certain aspects that, in general, begin with points of action much more so than points of reflection. This does not denote that there is no inversion of these meanings, but our way of dealing with cities, of accessing and desiring them, serves less to question certain city statutes, than what I seek to emphasise in this article, to wit, the articulation between “peripheries”<sup>2</sup> and (homo)sexualities based on the relationships established between homosexual men in three bars located in “peripheral” regions of the cities of São Paulo and Belém, namely: Guingás, Luar Rock and Refúgio dos Anjos, located in São Mateus (East São Paulo, SP), Itaquera (East São Paulo, SP)<sup>3</sup> and Guamá (South Belém, PA)<sup>4</sup>, respectively.

1 I maintained the word (homo)sexuality with the prefix in brackets, because in the contexts analysed, its meanings and significations correspond less to aprioristic conceptions related to sexuality, since orientations are not only directed to sexual practices, but also to behaviours that signal contingent approximation and distancing.

2 It is worth emphasising that “periphery” and its derivatives are used in quotation marks for two reasons: this research traverses different places and spaces and therefore understands the non-reification of the use of that term; and in dealing with the dynamics of centrality and marginality, the very notion of “periphery” is contextual and temporal (Frúgoli Jr., 2000; Facchini, 2008; Simões and Carmo, 2009; Simões *et al.*, 2010; Feltran, 2011; França, 2012; Puccinelli, 2013, 2015, 2017; Rocha, 2013; Aderaldo, 2017; Reis, 2014a, 2015a, 2016). In this sense, the category of analysis “periphery” should be understood as a place that is not watertight in relation to people, mobilities and narratives. Therefore, I do not support certain isomorphic logics and reflections that attach identities to spaces/places.

3 São Mateus and Itaquera are what is known as the “consolidated periphery” of the city of São Paulo (see Saraiva, 2008). As Gabriel Feltran (2011: 54) states: “it is a zone of transition between the central districts of the metropolis, where the population is in regression, and the farthest periphery, where the population still grows at a high rate”. In these two regions, one of the indicators of change in the quality of life is supported by the provision of consumer and leisure infrastructure, such as shopping malls and large supermarket chains.

4 Guamá has a socio-spatial geography that interconnects the river and the city, the “centre” and the “periphery”. José Dias Jr. (2009) conducted a historical recovery of popular culture in Guamá, in which he explained the place that the neighbourhood had/has in the process of urbanization in Belém. The structural progress that the neighbourhood underwent from the 1950s onwards, due to the remnants of the rubber economy and, for example, the construction of the university campus of the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) in this area of the city, increased its demographics and, consequently, opened up roads/passages/streets, as well as enabling the construction of commercial establishments and residences.

In recent years in Brazil, the debate on “periphery” and (homo)sexuality articulated to the social production of the differences constituted in certain spaces and urban contexts has narrowed, generating potential analytical perspectives on the city and its facilities (Reis, 2016). Although these theoretical articulations are tributaries for specific fields of knowledge, that of urban studies and of studies on gender and sexuality, several of the thematic dismemberments of this debate are based on pioneering research, and here I specifically speak of two of the greatest exponents on the process of the formation of Brazilian urban anthropology (read: the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro), Gilberto Velho (1981) and José Guilherme Magnani (1984).

It is not the intention of this article to trace the genealogy of the process in the formation of the field of Brazilian urban anthropology here. However, it is worth mentioning that from the 1970s to the 1980s, the city of São Paulo experienced a direct dialogue with Marxist conceptions of analysis, strongly linked to the concept of “urban spoliation” (Kowarick, 1979) directly disposed to a conflict of classes; whereas in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the debate on city and urbanism was focussed on concerns about the complexity of urban dynamics that generate social inequalities.

At that time, in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, forms of urban anthropology were being practiced that sought to articulate an autonomous field of reflection and research, albeit with minor internal differentiations. As a form of accounting of this production in the late 1970s, Velho and Viveiros de Castro (1978) highlighted the need to understand so-called “complex societies” – a concept now revised and criticised (Goldman, 1999 [1995]) –, through understanding a variety of social actors in the city – based on individuals who may play distinct social roles –, marked by a strong social division of labour, diversified networks and institutions, and multiple foci of symbolic production. In this article, they already indicated the need to differentiate between culture (a distinct concept in anthropology) and ideology (in the Marxist tradition, referring to aspects of political domination derived from conflicts and class, wherein the former is of a broader dimension, though less precise, than the latter) (Frúgoli Jr., 2005: 140-141).

Regarding the complexity of the processes of urban formation in northern Brazil, Raymundo Maués (1999) observed that the context of the “national integration” of Belém and the call for a “developmentalist” project for the North region had two important phases: the so-called “Pombaline era” in the eighteenth century; and the promotion of regional “economic development” from the 1950s onwards. The first phase corresponds to a structural reformulation instituted by the then governor Marquês de Pombal, who brokered treaties and decreed laws from 1750 onwards, especially those of commercial interest (envisioning Belém as the gateway to the Amazon), which in addition to boosting local growth, encouraged the substitution of indigenous labour for the work of black slaves<sup>5</sup>. The second phase co-ordinated the market, consumption and export as a key that contemplated a direct path to “development” involving aspects of the regional economy (e.g. gastronomy and, more timidly, tourism). On the one hand, this “need” to expand consumer and labour markets synthesised state actions based on two fundamental points, agricultural and industrial enterprises, while on the other, it left the region at the mercy of “major projects”, such as roads and hydroelectric plants.

Since the onset of this research, I was aware of how original and indispensable the proposition I were pursuing was. During reviews of the literature, a certain lacuna in the works became evident, especially among theses and dissertations, that discussed the thematic relationship between (homo)sexuality and “periphery”, suburbia or *favela*: three theses (Facchini, 2008; Lacombe, 2010; França, 2012) and six dissertations (Lacombe, 2005; Medeiros, 2006; Oliveira, 2006; Aguião, 2007; Lopes, 2011; Villani, 2015) make

<sup>5</sup> It is important to emphasise that since the beginning of the foundation of Belém in 1616, “Indians and *caboclos*, mestizos and blacks constituted the largest portion of the economically active labour force of Amazonia, in the numerous agricultural and extractive activities in the region” (Rodrigues, 2008: 71).

up this body of work. Combining these works to form a kind of axis of analysis necessarily considers the distinct processes of urbanisation that certain urban contexts are subject to, and where these pieces of research were developed.

Besides this more direct relationship between “periphery” and (homo)sexuality, it is worth remembering that a large contingent of these works comes from the Southeast region – again, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, principally due to the pioneering work of these capitals in research on urban anthropology in Brazil, notwithstanding the distinctions in focus. In the North region, for example, the low volume of studies on the subject of homosexual sociabilities (Oliveira, 2009; Ribeiro, 2012; Reis, 2012), or on the relationship between “periphery” and (homo)sexuality (practically non-existent) reveals an as yet underdeveloped facet of knowledge production in urban anthropology<sup>6</sup>.

It seems that the articulation of the two fields in question progresses slowly, whether due to a kind of macrostructural constraint that still overlays some positions concerning how cities are divided, in reference to the recurrent potential of the binomial “centre-periphery” and vice versa, or due to certain refractory and academic inclinations that insist on linking gender and sexuality studies to the sexual orientation of the researchers.

In several ethnographic situations, the category “centre” appeared synonymous with city, while “periphery” was the counterpoint to city space, and it was not for nothing that one of the interlocutors in São Paulo, Tarcísio (37 years old, gay patron of Guingas’ bar) complained that *the city doesn’t relate to the periphery*. What Tarcísio questioned was the effect of the “centre-periphery” binomial, which more often separated spaces/places rather than bringing them together, a factor that has been losing momentum over the last few decades (see Caldeira, 2000). The urban “peripheries” in both São Paulo and Belém have moved from places exclusively of absence and precariousness to those of the production of social relations through violence and criminality (Marra, 2008; Biondi, 2010; Feltran, 2011), leisure (Magnani, 1984; Costa, 2009a), cultural expressions (Guasco, 2001; Nascimento, 2006, 2011; Costa, 2007; Rodrigues, 2008; Dias Jr., 2009; Aderaldo, 2017) and sociability among homosexual women (Medeiros, 2006; Facchini, 2008) and homosexual men (França, 2012; Reis, 2015b, 2016).

This movement between city (“centre”) and “non-city” (“periphery”) was undoubtedly the key point for the intersection of urban studies with gender and sexuality studies, problematising dichotomous logics of spatial representation, or that which Doreen Massey (2013) called “imaginative geographies”, the conformation of discursive representations legitimised by the production of geographic/cartographic archetypes.

Aside from the urban question, two other points were fundamental to put the cities of São Paulo and Belém in perspective: the ground-breaking research by Peter Fry (1982) developed in the *terreiros* of religions of the African matrix within the “peripheries” of Belém, which constitute identification processes among homosexual men based on notions of sexual and gender roles and serve as sociocultural constructs for the production of terminologies and classifications that had an impact throughout Brazil<sup>7</sup>; and the academic-institutional articulation between the University of São Paulo (USP) and the Federal University

6 Regarding the production of knowledge in urban anthropology in Pará, see: Maurício Costa (2009b). Concerning a review of anthropological production in Pará, regarding the decade from 1994 to 2004, see: Jane Beltrão (2006).

7 Encouraged by previous research in Umbanda *terreiros* in Campinas, while tutoring Anaíza Vergolino e Silva’s (2015 [1976]) Masters research on “Batuque” – popular and non-Catholic religious experience – in which the analysis focused on the UMBANDA FEDERATION AND THE AFRO-BRAZILIAN CULTOS OF PARÁ and the writings of Mary McIntosh (1998 [1968]) regarding a sociology of homosexuality, enveloped by specific labels and behaviours, Peter Fry’s research, developed around 1974, revealed that the relationships established between homosexual men in the *terreiros* not only extended beyond the physical structure of these spaces, but also constituted identity representations directly intersected by class, gender and sexuality. Indeed, it was possible to devise identifications shaped by a system of classification of masculine sexuality and of masculine sexual identities (“bicha”, “homosexual”, “entendido”, “gay”) based on the relationship between place of residence, psychological and biomedical knowledges and sexual practices. In this sense, the further the author moved away from small towns and towards the large Brazilian metropolises, this system of classification modified, as if there was a kind of hygienisation during this process.

of Pará (UFPA) through a Programme of Academic Cooperation (PROCAD) – “Raça, etnicidade, sexualidade e gênero em perspectiva comparada” [Race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender in comparative perspective], funded by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), from 2008 to 2011<sup>8</sup>.

At this point, I invite the reader to move with me, in the text, around distinct “peripheries” marked by peculiar urban appropriations.

### ***Making out with the city***

Make out with and move through are terms and practices that dialogue with each other through the following conjunctions: movement-stop, distance-proximity, people-spaces, structure-agency, “centre-periphery”. Although such terms and practices are not the same thing, the rhythmic cadence of their effects requires movement.

When I heard the expression *making out with the city*, at an event called *Periferia Trans*<sup>9</sup> [Trans Periphery], in Grajaú – the farthest reaches of South São Paulo –, I sought to condense my observations in the ethnographies conducted in the bars, which will be presented in the following sections, and remember that the movement and desire exercised therein showed not only the volition to transform the city into a political-corporal stage, but a certain need to occupy the locality itself, attributes that possessed a connection with the aforementioned speech of Tarcísio (a patron of Guingas’ bar) – *the city doesn’t relate to the periphery*. Such mediations and perceptions brought us closer to what Doreen Massey (2013) called “situational mapping”: contingent occupation of urban space not exactly by resorting to a map, but by the power of the effect of moving around and (re)creating strategies of action and belonging. As the research progressed, I began to observe that it was not only about searching for the right to the city, but an exercise that proposed “city-making” (Agier, 2011, 2015). This is also why I consider it opportune to argue in favour of what I call movement-action, a descriptive allusion and/or category of analysis that signifies a direct counterpoint to the pragmatism underlying the effect of moving.

Although it was an event mostly attended by *peripheral black bichas* [queens, fags/faggots], as they identified themselves, around 30% of those present were women who self-identified as *lesbians* or *entendidas* [lit. *in the know*; feminine pronoun]. I heard no mention of the term *non-binary*<sup>10</sup>, though several times the expression *queer periphery* was reiterated. Thus, these young women and men, approximately 15 to 30 years of age, were signalling that while they used classificatory terminologies to present themselves, they were proposing ways to blur such identifications.

8 According to Cancela, Moutinho and Simões (2015: 13): “The purpose was to explore the dynamics of classification according to colour/race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, in São Paulo and Belém, and to refine the articulated understanding of these markers of difference in the configuration of complex social hierarchies, which frequently operate in a tense and contradictory manner, constituting crucial dimensions of collective identity, subjectivity, bodies and relationships”.

9 On June 28, 2015, a round table on “periphery” and sexuality took place in Grajaú (São Paulo, SP, Brazil). The event formed part of the programme of the first edition of *Periferia Trans*. “My body is political” was the theme of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of *Periferia Trans*, a festival held between March 6 and 28 at Humbala Culture Point. The event brought together a special programme that involved LGBTQ themes articulated around rap shows, theatre, dance, performance, debates, a dance workshop, exhibition of video and even the show that launched Shanawaara, the queer diva of the internet. Information taken from the site <<https://catracalivre.com.br/sp/agenda/gratis/1a-edicao-do-periferia-trans-agita-o-grajau/>>, accessed on March 14, 2016.

10 According to Marilyn Roxie (2013:17): “‘Non-binary’ refers to gender that is not binary (not man or woman) and has overlap with the term genderqueer, while they are not to be used interchangeably. While genderqueer can include those who are non-binary (except for in the case of referring to expression/performance exclusively), not all non-binary identified people consider themselves genderqueer.” Translation and comments by Juno, from Coletivo Safira de Salvador (Bahia), available at: <https://we.riseup.net/assets/138108/O%20que%20é%20gênero%20queer.pdf> accessed on April 14, 2016; original available at: <http://genderqueerid.com/what-is-gq>, accessed on 30 Nov, 2017.

Given these emic contingencies, it is important to point out the impact of the term *queer*, in Brazil. In 2003, the first edition of the National University Conference on Sexual Diversity (ENUDS) was held in Belo Horizonte, following the initiative of the CELLOS Group (Centre for the Struggle for Free Sexual Orientation). CELLOS is composed mostly of university students who took the initial steps, which Regina Facchini *et al* (2013: 166) highlighted as the “emergence and capillarisation of a pro-diversity sexual movement organised by students in their universities”. For more than a decade, ENUDS has sought to “question the rigidity of a mainly white, elitist, academic discourse that, for some of its organisers, seemed to obscure the fluidity and blurring of borders between genders and sexualities” (Puccinelli *et al*, 2014: 31).

Indeed, Sérgio Carrara and Júlio Simões (2007) emphasised that the arrival of what has become known as queer theory in Brazil are direct reflections of the Brazilian field of studies on gender and sexuality since the 1970s. In a later article, both argued that

[...] These problems were not beyond the reach of anthropological concerns, with classifications and classificatory systems, in terms of the distinction between the logics that articulate categories and identity attributions and the processes by which individuals become subjects and social actors, appropriating for themselves – or being led to recognise themselves in – certain identities [...] However, it is not uncommon that queer appears as a means of designating yet another intriguing new category of identity, much like the serpent swallowing its own tail (Simões and Carrara, 2014: 90).

Concerning *Periferia Trans*, it should be noted that the use of the word *queer* in conjunction with “periphery” was much more than a mark of identity, it was a *modus operandi* that sought to articulate notions of identity fluency and urban space, above all between the *black bichas* and *entendidas* who resided in “peripheral” regions.

To a certain extent I managed to understand that *queer periphery* has a direct relation to queer theory, but I still did not understand why they did not use *bicha periphery* rather than *queer periphery*, after all, the word queer in Brazilian Portuguese means *bicha*, *queen*, *faggot*. I assume that a potential linking of the words “periphery” and *bicha* perhaps meant the term was doubly negative. Another hypothesis concerned the fact that not all those present were residents of “peripheral” regions, there were university students and did not self-identify as *peripheral black bichas* or *entendidas/os* [in the know; feminine/masculine pronouns], so it seemed to make sense to use the word queer in their social circles. The fact is that everyone appeared to agree with the use of the term *queer periphery*.

This consensus functioned more as a rhetorical effect to address certain questions and reflections that were put to the test: the almost non-existent presence of *bichas* and women in rap (this claim was not exclusively dependent on the distinctions between “centre” and “periphery”); why circulate towards the “centre”? What strategies can be used to popularise the LGBTQI issue in the “periphery”? How do you create a pedagogical relationship regarding the construction of knowledge? And, finally, how to find other meanings for *transa*?

Thus, the meaning that was assigned to *transa* (*deal*, *scheme*, *casual sex*) and the effect of *transar* (*planning*, *scheming*, *making out*) referred to both sexual and spatial practices, or even better, a sexualisation of urban space. Initially, I could not help but remember the work of Néstor Perlongher (2008 [1987]) on virile prostitution in the “old centre” of São Paulo. In one of the last chapters of the book, he argues that the *transa* (libidinal flow) is more than a simple erotic desire, it is also a “business” that intensifies or mitigates powers and exchanges according to territorial and sexual codes. In his terms:



The mechanism of production of this fruition travels pathways sufficiently removed from the arcadic image of pleasure to be consummated. However, the interesting thing is precisely this path of desire. In the business of “young male prostitution”, the desire seems to pass through (negotiate) all the issues: age issues, class issues, race issues and gender issues. It invents, exacerbates, pretends, simulates the differences between the partners, exalts them – and permanently plays with their dissolution, with their confusion, between passion and death (Perlongher, 2008 [1987]: 226).

Perlongher showed that it is not possible to understand the effect of desire without paying attention to the negotiable component of relationships between male prostitutes and clients. The constitution of desire is much more than the incessant pursuit of pleasure; it is not simply an erotic, sexual wandering. The commercial and sexual exchanges that are imbued in the author’s analysis affirm that one of the requirements for understanding the city is the possibility of reflecting on mobility (“transit”). Far from reifying the effect of this practice, his analytical intent marked points in the city where “decadent” representation was extremely moralised via sexuality and territoriality, and it is this movement in search of pleasure, though not solely, which provides an ingenious analysis regarding the meanders of virile prostitution in the “old centre” of São Paulo.

Understanding this “urban actuating as movement and desire” (Agier, 2015), I consider it opportune to approach the reading of Perlongher with its movements-actions exercised during the *Periferia Trans* event and the manoeuvres of access and desire within each bar, ensuring that points of output from each perception have distinct meanings. Perlongher was preoccupied with reflections on virile prostitution; analysis of mobility was not his principal focus, at least not in the same way it is elaborated here. The participants of *Periferia Trans* were interested in the uses that are made of the city: ultimately, who does it serve? What does the “centre-periphery” binomial say about their daily lives? While the bar patrons, as we shall see, use the production of sociabilities to articulate visibilities, disputes and *resistances*.

Following the clues left by Michel Agier (2015), whose method was “to think about the universality of the city outside of any normative pretension, according to a conception simultaneously epistemological and political” (ibid.: 483). This methodology voices precisely what I propose: to reflect on sexualities and socio-spatial disputes, rather than corroborate with isomorphic conceptions; ultimately, urban “peripheries” are not the same as spaces and times transform, nor are spaces and times of transformation equivalent. Therefore, describing and understanding the “permanent movement of urban transformation in time and space may constitute the contribution of the anthropological gaze on the city” (ibid.: 484). It is in this movement-action that “city-making” is constructed, like a “horizon that allows us to find something of the city that we observe in the concrete experiences of space” (ibid.: 484).

Although, in his analyses, Agier favours the precariousness of working class neighbourhoods or “invasions”, temporary establishments of migrants and refugee camps in Africa, Latin America and Europe, I corroborate his arguments from the point where he observes the “margin”

[...] not as a social, geographical or cultural fact, but as an epistemological and political position: apprehending the limit of that which exists – and that exists beneath the official affirmed appearance of the realised, established, ordered, central and dominant – allows us to perceive the dialectic of the void and the full and describe what, based on almost nothing or on a seemingly chaotic state, makes the city (Agier, 2015: 487).

It is this “city-making” that allows us to approach the following conceptions of appropriation of urban space developed during the event: *transa*, *making out with the city*, *the city as a space of transaction*, *transit*, *transience*. I feel such exercises refer us to the mobile and erotic perspectives with which these young people appropriated the city, which were, without doubt, powerful insights for us reflect on the fact that it was not merely about pragmatism regarding mobility. The meaning assigned to *transa* (*deal*, *scheme*, *casual sex*)

and the effect of *transar* (*planning, scheming, making out*) were concomitantly related to sexual and spatial practices. For example, they spoke of a movement-action that sought to expound certain questions: what is the city? Who does it serve? What are “centre”/“periphery”? How are these places enjoyed, accessed and desired?

We shall see how such questions reverberated in the scene of the bars investigated and the impacts of the exercise of *making out with the city* in each ethnography.

### ***We're in the centre of the periphery: visibility strategies***

The expression *we're in the centre of the periphery*, uttered by Ailton (54 years old, *homosexual*, owner of Guingas bar) was an important key to understanding the intricacies of the existence of this space. Initially, this expression seemed to erase (Hall, 2005) places, while on the other hand, it indicated paths that approximated a strategic market view. This affirmation both blurred and delimited what is “centre”/“central” and “periphery”/“peripheral” and highlighted this place under a vision engendered by past and present temporalities aimed at producing local homosexual sociabilities, also constituted by exogenous connectivities. We shall see, for example, that in this “peripheral” context, the approach to the movement-action of *making out with the city* has given way to complex endogenous and exogenous connectivities to compete for space and visibility in the scenario of homosexual sociability of the city of São Paulo.

In the wake of these blurrings, delimitations and connectivities, Teresa Caldeira (2000) shows us how the advent of industrialisation directly interfered in the urban construction of the capital of São Paulo from the 1930s onwards. The installation of factories located near residential areas encouraged a socio-spatial mapping model that gradually increased the level of population segregation according to social class and race/colour: the rich and white occupying “central” regions and in the “peripheries”, an expressive contingent of poor, of blacks and of north and northeastern migrants. This segmented gap ended up exacerbating the identity affirmations among the majority of the inhabitants of the “peripheries” of the state capital, São Paulo. In these places, it was all too common to hear the term *quebrada* [broken] as a sign of belonging, something that is related to both the place of residence, notwithstanding the daily difficulties, and recognition among peers. It is used frequently among rappers (see Pereira, 2005) in their synergistic vocabularies. Indeed, from 1940 to 1980, a process of “peripheral” expansion is notable that “affected not only the city of São Paulo, but also the 38 surrounding municipalities that formed a conurbation constituting its metropolitan region” (Caldeira, 2000: 223).

It seems, therefore, it is not for nothing that the expression used by Ailton sought strategically to mark an idea of “peripheral” centrality, the processes of identity affirmation in São Paulo’s “peripheries” articulated to market vectors do not deny how critical it is to be well positioned/located to continue existing and *resisting*. In this sense, at Guingas, the notion of *equality* functioned as a business card to connect publics whose age and generational differences were expressive. The aspect that most attracted my attention was observing the existence of two environments in the same space – a nightclub and a karaoke bar – with distinct representation, which “separated”, by a wall and a door, girls and boys from 18 to 25 years old and women and men from 30 to 60 years old, respectively. The bar has been in existence for 23 years (counting from the day it opened, with its unofficial reminiscences), runs from Wednesday to Sunday and is located above a butcher’s shop at 13,780 Sapopemba Avenue, less than five minutes’ walk from the São Mateus bus terminal, which is easily accessible because, according to Ailton, it is in the *centre of the periphery*.

*It's not that we're better, it's just that we're at a strategic point, that's what's cool. If we were in Itaquera or in Guaianases, not to be mean, but I think hardly anyone would come, because it's São Mateus...for you to get somewhere you have to pass through São Mateus. So we're right downtown, despite being on the periphery. We're in the centre of the periphery [laughs].*

Ailton took advantage of the proximity to the São Mateus bus terminal to outline connective points with the city. The *centre of the periphery* that he referred to is a place serviced by a bus terminal, commercial establishments and banking agencies, a scenario that connects the “periphery” and the “centre”, and vice versa, through several mobility exercises; a nodal point where São Mateus *does not sleep*. He further emphasised that it is a place of passage for those who move to contiguous “peripheries”, such as Itaquera and Guaianases. Between the lines of his argumentative construction, it is not the level of structural quality that is at stake in these “peripheries”, rather the distance and the speed of access to each of them, for example, those who come from the “central” regions of São Paulo to Guingás arrive faster than if the bar were located in Itaquera and Guaianases. It should be noted that this “peripheral centralisation” (appropriation of the *centre of the periphery*) directly interferes with the way in which sexualities and their agencies are spatialised, marking social places and points of convergence.

Taking into account the above argument and reversing the order of the words, it is possible to consider, depending on the point of reference, an urban composition of an order that is understood as “central peripheralisation”. Some studies (Facchini, 2008; Simões *et al.*, 2010, França, 2012; Reis, 2012a; Puccinelli, 2013, 2015, 2017) have emphasised that the relationship between gender and sexuality studies and urban studies, based on the centre-periphery binomial, showing disparate gender and sociosexual levels in the key of what is accessed and desired, principally by gays and lesbians in “central” urban regions. Bruno Puccinelli (2015: 117) is emphatic in stating that: if, on the one hand, power maps are legitimised that “construct an idea of a centre that moves, in relation to what would be the official centre of the city, making it more desirable, on the other, they produce a desirable network of sexuality drawn on the maps of that centre”. This mode of constructing access and desires serves as the basis for the significations of “decadence” and “revitalisation” of areas considered inhospitable and uninhabitable due to the presence of residents from “peripheral” regions. This movement-action is exactly what stresses the need to look at territorialities as social markers of differences and stimulate reflections committed to the urban space and its fissures.

In terms of distance, speed and geographical location, it is worth noting that mobility and its connective effects enter into the analysis as important vectors involving materiality, meaning and mobile practice (Cresswell, 2006, 2009), aimed at providing the basis of what I understand as movement-action: the politics of connectivity that contrasts with *mainstream* power mapping, consubstantiating strategies of visibility and dispute (see Massey, 2013)<sup>11</sup>.

All of Ailton's strategies inevitably guarantee visibility for the bar. What was a small establishment in 2005, with only a karaoke bar, and publicity that was predominantly through word of mouth, the change in address at different spots on Sapopemba Avenue, gave life to a renovated space, which combines a dance floor – with a DJ booth and a stage for shows – and a karaoke bar. In his words: *the idea was always...from the time we first opened in another place, to have separate environments, because we have the karaoke group and the clubbers.*

Regarding the spatial distinction raised, in several forays, from the younger public I heard expressions like: *karaoke makes me sleepy, I prefer to hang out on the dance floor; I come to Guingás because of the nightclub and the Drag shows; over in the karaoke bar they're all old; the songs in the karaoke bar really aren't that cool.* Likewise,

<sup>11</sup> It is important to highlight that this process of mobility does not have the same meanings as the expressive gay and lesbian migration of the 1970s and 1980s to cities like San Francisco in the United States (Weston, 1995).

some of the conversations I heard in karaoke bar clarified that, due to musical tastes or lack of affinity, the nightclub no longer reflected the *moment* which the older men and women were living in: *I'm not into that music anymore, now I prefer to go bars; I like the karaoke bar because it's a quieter space, you can talk. I like to come to Guingás to sing, meet friends, have a beer and, every once in a while, I go to the nightclub to watch the Drag shows.* The evident difference in public in the two environments, particularly in age/generation, mark temporalities that blend past and present, locality and exteriority<sup>12</sup>.

Even though the owner says that he does not *fly the flag*, from the moment that the bar changed address its public has been mainly *homosexual*. In this sense, what became evident was that Guingás patrons do not share the idea that Ailton is an opportunist, but rather that his persona is closer to what could be understood as a spokesperson for a kind of local LGBTQI militancy, even though it is not part of any LGBTQI movement. Thus, Ailton's spatial layout, between the nightclub and karaoke bar, means he glimpses points of connection, above all between *homosexuals* and *Drag Queens*, widening the bar's sphere of action.

It is worth remembering that Guingás won broad recognition in the "gay nightlife" of São Paulo after winning the category "LGBT Performance Venue" during the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Papo Mix Diversity Prize, held on May 20, 2014 in the city of São Paulo. Before that, in 2013, with the launch of the Tô Ke Tô project organised by Drag Queen Ioiô Vieira de Carvalho, the bar began to gain notoriety, especially after several famous Drag Queens performed on their stage, to name a few: Silvetty Montilla, Michelly Summer, Léo Aquila, Gretta Star, Márcia Pantera. The project cited takes place every Friday and aims to *bring together all styles of music in a single night*. In addition, the inclusion of the bar in the Gay Guide to São Paulo, in 2015, situated the space on a spectrum of information that sheds light on homosexual sociability produced in São Paulo's "periphery".

Thus, the bar gained visibility due to local strategies that involved disputes around spatialities and geographical location, aspects that reaffirmed confidence and allowed for people from other regions of the city to come. Of note, its pioneering spirit and the strategic vision of the owner provided credibility and recognition in a region marked socially and historically by segregation, precariousness and the absence of urban facilities and, let me say, the virtual nonexistence of spaces of homosexual sociability.

### ***At Plast, cola de tudo [anything goes]: affinities and disputes***

Still in São Paulo, I made incursions at the Plasticine party, a fortnightly event held since 2010, at the Luar Rock bar, in Itaquera, in José Bonifácio's neighbourhood. Recognised as a *venue* by the organiser, Ramires (24 years old, *gay*), and as a *club* by its patrons, the history of the event has references to the São Paulo rock and punk scene dating back to the 1980s, when the mixture of publics, musical styles and genres served as a stimulus for the attendance of people considered *alternative*, in *clubs* in the "central" region of the city (see Palomino, 1999)<sup>13</sup>. The idea of an *alternative underground* in relation to Plast, as the party is popularly known, bears direct similarities to this scenario, although Ramires does not resort to such references. Their mobilities ended up constructing bridges with the city and with groups of people,

<sup>12</sup> These age and generational markers articulated to spaces and places approach the idea of temporal fluidity present in Guilherme Passamani's (2015) research on aging, memory and homosexual behaviours in two cities, one small and medium-sized, in the Pantanal region of Mato Grosso do Sul. From the author's perspective, time is a signal used to define the place of memory in narratives, as well as indicating ruptures and permanence in the way sexual orientations and gender identities are constituted in the past and present of the interlocutors and the researcher himself.

<sup>13</sup> Retreating into the history of the São Paulo musical and fashion scene, during the 1990s, as recounted by Erika Palomino (1999), the constitution of an *underground* scene in São Paulo goes back to the concept of a club that began in the 1990s, but which had remnants of the discos of the 1970s and dance clubs of the 1980s in "central" places in this city (Bela Vista, Consolação, the streets Marquês de Itu and Frederico Steidel). It is important to understand how the meaning of the word *underground* in the context of the time was immersed in atmospheres that mixed publics and musical genres. Palomino showed that the bars and nightclubs of this period constituted a direct connection with the diversity of people. Thus, I note that triggering the act of using the term *underground* is premised on the approximation between *heterosexuals* and *homosexuals* in contexts of sociability.

in which age and musical affinities contributed to assign meaning to the party: part of the public that frequents the place, girls and boys between 15 and 25 years old, like listening to rock and sharing space with others of the same age group and who are fans of singers like Lady Gaga, Beyoncé, Rihanna and Britney Spears.

The first time I went to Plasticine, I noticed a profusion of identifications related to gender and sexuality, such as: *straight, homosexual, gay, depends on the moment, fag, lesbian, racha, boy, dyke, bi*. I deemed it appropriate not to form a glossary of each terminology, but rather to understand what Ramires thought about it.

Researcher: Who currently makes up the public at Plasticine?

Ramires: *I'm not sure. Generally, I define it as alternative. When I say alternative people understand, it's an alternative public: gay is cool, lesbian is cool, straight is cool, cola de tudo [anything goes]. So, there's been a lot who've come out of the closet at Plast. I don't know if it's because it's my party and because the people already know that I'm gay, so, it's because it's Ramires' party, it's a GLS party. But we didn't begin with the intention of being a gay party, or GLS, but it's because I have a lot of gay friends, and they end up coming; so in the end everyone comes, because it's Ramires' party and it'll be cool, but the intention was for a straight public, so much so that we made it VIP for women up to one in the morning, and have some tequila guy pouring drinks down the guys' throats. At first, we didn't want it to be a GLS party. Not that I mind, I don't care, but the guys, not that they mind, but it's not the main focus, but of course, gay is cool, straight, it's Plasticine!*

The first point of analysis concerns Ramires' self-identification as *gay* and the possible relationship that this identity affirmation has in the construction of affinities and the attendance of mainly gays and lesbians at the party. I pointed out that I had observed a large presence of these publics at the parties he organised, emphasising that my intention was not to suggest an idea of community, but to inquiry as to what made these subjects begin expressively occupying the bar after the inauguration of Plasticine. He commented that many of them were already *out of the closet*, without going into details. In addition, he insinuated that the presence, in this case, of *gays* was because most of his *gay* friends understood the party as a GLS space. The sense of the party is thus as much an individual construction, which comes from a specific identity affirmation, as it is a collective production that somehow moves elective affinities and spatial disputes between *homosexuals* and *heterosexuals*. Thus, in this context, the movement-action of *making out with the city* underlies approximations and distancings as certain genders and sexualities intersect, that is, it is not a sexualisation of the urban space exclusively for erotic-affective purposes, rather of how such social productions of difference are marked by identity processes, relationships, experiences and subjectivities (Brah, 2006) that may or may not be shared.

Intrigued by the expression *cola de tudo* [anything goes], and reflecting on possible disputes over space, I asked Ramires if he had ever witnessed any kind of tension between *homosexuals* and *heterosexuals* within the party. He commented:

*It's happened, but there's no real reason for it. I heard about one time, there was a gay couple kissing, two boys, and a skinhead saw them and didn't like it. So, he began demanding satisfaction, since he knew the place wasn't GLS, but anything goes: straight, gay, bi; anything goes! So, it stirred things up: he head-butted a guy in the mouth who was wearing braces, his mouth got stuck to the braces, about two years ago. This happened during the first year of the party. The boy was about 13, he hung out with the older skinheads and felt entitled to attack someone, but after what happened he never came back to Luar.*

What I observed is that expression *anything goes* is a kind of situational force that serves as a stimulus to make the tensions between *heterosexuals* and *homosexuals* less problematic.

Another point worth mentioning is the use of the term GLS by Ramires: *we didn't start out with the intention it being a gay party, er... GLS; in principle, we don't want it to be a GLS party*. Although these contingencies, at certain moments, force the party towards a broad sense of diversity, they also suggest that even a party where *cola de tudo* [anything goes], due to the non-fixation of identity, has to consider such an assertion by relating it to specific demands that mark a deliberate retreat, that of not intending to promote a GLS party, but rather an *alternative* party. This does not mean solely and exclusively that this positioning reflects the mixture of publics so recurrent in the words of Ramires, however, this the same idea of mixing, sometimes subdues the *homosexual* public and makes it an appendix or identification that the *heterosexual* public does not share. Although he retreats from the idea of GLS, it is interesting to note that its use is as ambiguous as the expression *cola de tudo* [anything goes].

According to Regina Facchini (2005):

The acronym GLS does not imply the idea of “everyone” or “any person”, but rather creates a new classification logic of individuals, opening up the possibility of being gay, lesbian, sympathiser or non-sympathiser. The “non-sympathisers” are excluded from this new group delimited by the GLS acronym and the idea of “tolerance”, creating instead a new distinction between homosexuals, those who maintain a relation of tolerance/sympathy towards them and those who do not maintain such a relationship. This classificatory logic seems to be deeply rooted in the idea that differences exist and must be preserved, or at least tolerated, which has intensified in Brazil with the introduction of “political correctness” and the expansion of ideals of human rights (Facchini, 2005: 177).

This time, by relating the expressions *cola de tudo* [anything goes] and *alternative underground*, it is possible to observe that their uses simultaneously denote a premise of tolerance and a potential momentary identification of the party as GLS. This ends up causing discomfort, principally for the public of *heterosexual* men, after all they do not identify with any of the letters of the acronym. Thus, *cola de tudo* [anything goes] and *alternative underground*, besides being designations that “alleviate” a certain stigma underlying the emic meaning of GLS – *Ah, you're going to that faggoty, GLS club* –, are tenuous lines that erect distinctions according to specific conveniences and previous temporal markers of subjects that preceded the creation of Plasticine and helped shape the former meaning of the bar as a mostly *heterosexual* space and the rock genre. Although Plasticine's current public has been renewed, this is a way of marking tensions and ruptures in this “peripheral” scene.

Plasticine's youthful force, engendered by mobilities and social markings, exerted a profitable counterpoint to Guingás and, hence, to our notion of “periphery” in São Paulo. Indeed, there is no single strategy that supports practices and representations in the “peripheries” of this capital (see Facchini, 2008). This ingenious articulation between mobile processes and social markings, allowed me to pursue the notion of movement-action, above all because it was not only about the establishment of arrival and departure points, but how these points address urban references to compose “new” scenarios of agency and experience. I reiterate, therefore, that this movement-action should not only be understood as an object of exchange, but also as an articulation that glances at genders, sexualities, territorialities, regionalities, social classes, colours, ages, generations, desires, intentions, volitions, spatial-temporal transformations. The effort, even when specific, to reflect on mobility is important because it has three elements proposed by Tim Cresswell (2009):

Mobility is an entanglement of physical movement, of meaning and practice. Each of these elements of mobility is, in my view, political. Mobility is also social movement. It combines the movement (of people, of things, of ideas) with the meanings and narratives that surround them. It also recognizes the fact that mobilities are produced within social systems which, in turn, help to shape them. Mobilities cannot be understood without recognizing that they exist in interrelationship and in relation to various forms of fixity (Cresswell, 2009: 25).

In this sense, the effort to organise a party outside the standards of that reality was perhaps one of the ingredients of its success, and this was due to the insistence on moving forward with an expressive local product that could connect as an equal to references from the “centre” of the city. On this aspect, I finish the section with the following speech by a Plasticine patron, Augusto (23 years old, *straight*): *I’ve been to several clubs in the city centre and now I’ve begun to hang out at Plast. What I realise is that what goes on here [at Plasticine] is not that much different from what goes on there [at clubs in the “centre”], the only difference is that Plast is in the periphery.*

### **Together and intermingled? Homogeneities, heterogeneities and slippages**

On the air shuttle for the city of Belém, I inquired into the oldest space of homosexual sociability, still in operation, the Refúgio dos Anjos bar. Located in the Guamá neighbourhood (in the heart of Guamá), at 659 Barão de Igarapé-Miri Avenue, known for its intense traffic and intense daytime business, in 2017 the bar turned 21. Popularly known as Ângela’s bar, a direct allusion to the owner’s name, the space has a history that is directly related to its trajectory. The older visitors recognise it as an emblematic figure of the neighbourhood.

Regarding the urban scenario of Belém, a demographic growth *pari passu* to the expansion of the “peripheral” districts of the city is evident. Some neighbourhoods on the “periphery” of Belém, generally those that are flanked by the river, such as Guamá, Terra Firme, Jurunas and Condor, are known as the *baixada* [lowlands] or “areas of the *baixada*” (see Marra, 2008), because they were built on floodplain terrain. Technically, “this terminology is linked to the low altitude in these areas. In this case, in addition to the question of altitude, these neighbourhoods are located in a low, flat area, inserted along Tucunduba canal, close to the River Guamá” (Santana, 2014: 2582). Concerning this demographic expansion, Thomas Mitschein (2006) stated that “the most significant population growth in Belém took place between 1960 and 1980. At that time, during which the resident population went from 399,222 people to almost 1 million, the peripheral neighbourhoods of the city expanded significantly” (*ibid.*: 12). According to the author, there was an intense migratory flow of populations from the interior of Pará during this period, from neighbouring micro-regions – Bragantina, Baixo Tocantins, Salgado, Ilha do Marajó, Guajará, Tomé-Açu etc. – to the “peripheries” of Belém.

Thus, the urban expansion of Belém, related to the successive growth of real estate and commercial developments in the following decades, was one of the factors that corroborates the representation of the urban landscape of the city traversed by inhomogeneity and by strengthening “centre-periphery” opposition (even though there is social inequality). Caldeira (2000) called this “functional heterogeneity” to explain a “new pattern of spatial organisation”, which mixes rich and poor on the one hand, and residence and work on the other. This does not mean that Belém and São Paulo are similar in this sense, rather it identifies how the ideal representation of “centre” and “periphery” in the capital of Pará is much more diluted and less segmented than in São Paulo.

This urban imagery in Belém has allowed me to understand that in this urban context a certain border concept exists that moves relationships and spaces with a view to establishing connections. If, as Maués (1999) affirms, the “Amazon” can be considered a frontier region, it is my understanding that certain

“periphery” neighbourhoods, like those mentioned above, due to the confluence between the river and the city and the intense migration process, can be conceived as frontier places, due not only to territorial demarcations, but also to blurred geographical imaginations that do not shy away from going beyond mobile pragmatisms. The movement-action of *making out with the city* in this last ethnographic approach directly prioritised the tenuous lines between what purposively conformed to socio-spatial, sexual, and gender conventions and what escaped the same.

Concerning the disposition of individuals in the bar, the captive public is divided into two days of the week: on Saturdays, women self-identified as lesbian or *entendidas*, between 25 and 50 years old, make up most of the patrons; on Sundays the space is dominated by men self-identified as *gay* or *homosexual*, from 18 to 50 years old. I could not fail to notice that among the older patrons, called *barrocas* [lit: *baroque*], a nostalgic discourse exists that recalls the initial years of the bar’s operation, about how the public has changed as its recognition increased. Another important point concerns the stigma underlying the geographical location of the bar, that it is *worthless*, *only attracts ugly people*, is *dirty*. Even though these are hierarchical, dichotomous and accusatory postures, it is due to the resignification of these stigmas, together with local dissent in the face of police raids and the everyday *resistance* that the bar continues to exist.

According to Reginaldo (46 years old, *gay*):

*In Ângela’s bar there is an identity, for the most part, of people who are assumed homosexuals, and I believe that the majority of people who go to Ângela, when they come out as homosexuals they’re not only out of the first closet, they’re already out of other closets, they’ve already opened up to the freedom of telling their family, of being out at work. Inside the bar, for example, there’s segmentation that shows that some individuals aren’t from the neighbourhood, this means they have contacts inside and outside the bar. There are groups of homosexuals from a certain street, for example, who are there drinking together, or who share the same profession, like hairdressing. You can also see 50-year-olds mingling with others 40 or younger, you have the more macho bichas, together with the flaming queens. So you sense that within this supposedly homosexual homogeneity, there is a heterogeneity that not only touches on the issues of colour, profession, class, but also of gender; it’s very visible because I see a lot of homosexuals saying: ‘I can’t stand being with the dykes because they make such a scandal and such...’ On Saturday, for example, 99% are lesbians. So, I perceive these demarcations. Now I don’t know if these are the only criteria, there may be others that circulate among all the groups.*

The positions assumed by the subjects, contrary to that imagined, are not pre-existent to them, but produced socially (Brah, 2006). In Reginaldo’s speech, from start to finish the supposed unitary character of identity is diluted and blurred by the distinct experiences of each subject. Initially, he emphasises identity as multiple, locating it on his social map, based on what each group/individual brings with them. In this sense, identity is never a totality, but one or more points; it is elusive. When Reginaldo reflects on heterogeneity, as opposed to what he calls *homosexual homogeneity*, I recalled the narrative of another of the bar’s patrons, Vicente (23 years old, *homosexual*).

In the conversations with Vicente, the heterogeneity raised by Reginaldo was one of the precedents for understanding that Vicente’s experiences are not limited to the composition of networks of *gay* friends and/or in spaces of sociability mostly occupied by *gays*.

*Vicente: People ask me why I don’t like places where lots of gays go... I don’t have many gay friends because I believe that many of them... the experiences I had with gays weren’t good, they were phoney with me, you know? It seems that one is trying to steal the other’s boyfriend, one of them bad mouths another behind their back, and in the nightclubs, they keep checking you out from head to toe. People don’t go out to feel at ease, to feel good, to have fun. People go out so they can show themselves off, it’s about status: they want to wear the best gear, the best sneakers, it’s all about aesthetics.*



Researcher: This doesn't happen at "Ângela's" bar?

Vicente: *I don't get a sense of that. I can tell people are there to have fun, to drink, they don't care about whether people are scoping, what they're thinking, you know? So much so that if you were to pay attention, people are dressed like... easy going. There's not so much of this thing of trying to dress up for others, more for yourself, socialising with the people who are there.*

Reginaldo and Vicente elaborate their repertoires, carefully scrutinising processes of social differentiation. The foundation for Reginaldo probably includes the accumulation of experiences that he has lived through since the bar opened up to the present. In Vicente's case, his experiences are challenged by the lack of approximation to groups formed by *gays* and by the inescapable supposition of the distinction between bar patrons and clubbers. Another significant point is that, unlike Reginaldo, Vicente's friendships are almost all composed of *homosexual* and *heterosexual* women. It is worth emphasising that this social production of difference does not seek to elucidate the totality, they are not trying to explain all the details and, in passing, the reflections I present do not seek a holistic understanding of the realities presented.

Continuing with the narratives of Reginaldo and Vicente, it is significant to observe how they articulate imageries from inside and outside, which approaches what Roberto Marques (2015) named as "identity as gotcha". In his doctoral thesis on the electronic forró festivities, located in the Crato Agricultural Exhibition Park – Expocrato –, a micro-region south of Ceará, Marques analyses the musical aspect not as originating from or typical of the "region", but as an identity and classificatory mobiliser.

Forró, therefore, does not help me characterise a local identity, but to imagine/visualise how the experience of saturation and multiplicity, strongly present in the forró party, reveals a local form of thought that is difficult to achieve by limiting the analysis to its most frequently visited identity signs (Marques, 2015: 30).

The author makes the reader perceive that in these "territories of light and shadow" of forró parties – similar to the internal viscosity of a nightclub – bodies and musical genre resemble slippages and non-definitions of meaning, respectively. The forró concerts that Marques observed recall the scenario of the sound system parties in the "peripheries" of Belém, in which it is possible to perceive multiple compositions of apparel within spaces predominantly of versions of pop music, funk, reggae and forró hits, all in the rhythm of *tecnobrega*, accompanied by immense sound systems and paraphernalia that involves lasers, light cannons and lots of pyrotechnics with structures that move on stage, symbolising objects (ships, weapons, precious stones) and animals (reptiles, birds). Added to this is the continuous citation by DJs, of forró concerts and sound system parties, the names of forró bands or sound systems and *galeras*<sup>14</sup> (groups of girls and boys, residents of the "peripheries" of Belém, based on the cult of an object or sound system and linked to their place of residence/place of birth) and the commercialisation of modestly priced CDs recorded during the parties.

Looking at the context that I observed, based on my reading of Marques, the ideas of bodies in slippage aligned with musical genres with no definitions of meaning are promising. Even though we are dealing with specific urban and festive contexts.

Indeed, in the three bars where ethnographies were conducted, the slippage of identities, sexualities and the absence of a single sense of homosexual sociability were important factors. Even at Guingás and Refúgio dos Anjos (Ângela's), where sexual orientation was verbalised loud and clear, the power of homosexual subjectivities enabled us to look more carefully at established social relations. This

<sup>14</sup> On the sound system (*aparelhagem*) parties in Belém and the *galeras* (crews) that form part of these parties, see: Antônio Mauricio Costa (2007) and Ana Paula Vilhena (2012).

dynamism of identity, in particular, appears not as a way of reifying sexualities and agencies, but to emphasise that their constitution processes take place in a manner both reciprocal and mobile, which, in most cases, promote mutual affections traversed by resignifications of terms and/or jargons (Strauss, 1999). As Isadora Lins França (2013: 16) would say: “The relation between the production of places – the attribution of meanings to spaces – and the people who transit in them is of mutual constitution: at the same time that they produce difference and inequality based on these transits and of different positions of subject, they also produce senses of place”.

## Final considerations

The opposing reading of the official discourse on “margin” was what motivated me to research the “periphery”, though not exactly as an isolated composite, rather the constitution of (homo)sexualities and socio-spatial disputes that emerged from this place. Ever since I raised the possibility of working with this theme, the question-problem I have pursued concerned questioning a certain erasure of the relationship between “periphery” and (homo)sexuality. In principle, I could not understand why most of the bars and nightclubs I surveyed that were located in the “peripheries” remained “invisible”, despite their local expressiveness, or were occasionally incorporated into the *mainstream* leisure and entertainment scene of each capital.

Considering the historical contextualisation surrounding the urbanisation processes of São Paulo and Belém, I noted that the vertiginous “peripheral” expansion that began in the city of São Paulo between 1940 and 1980, and in Belém between 1960 and 1980, besides having expelled the poor populations from the “centres” of these capitals (migrants from the northeastern and northern states, in São Paulo, and migrants from the interior of Pará, in Belém), had established spaces and emblematic places in the urban network, seen as such due to their complete withdrawal from the “periphery”.

Through this panorama, I perceived that the “invisibility” of spaces of homosexual sociability located in the “peripheries” of São Paulo and Belém was partly justified by the way space/places were constituted, their “imaginative geographies” (Massey, 2013) did not allow them to stand out beyond the obvious. In the interpretive key scrutinised here, such observed “peripheries” functioned as species of residualities (not exactly fluidity), precisely because the meanings ascribed to them and the ways in which the accesses and desires that occurred are contingent. On a larger scale, it is possible to contemplate that “periphery” and “centre” do not contain a complete city framework.

In conclusion, the privilege of having made contact with certain “peripheries” of São Paulo and Belém at diverse moments was a breath of fresh air. Not that I was exempt from bringing with me more problems or perceiving more forays and analytical confusions when I was in the field, but the oxygen that I received from the bars was fundamental for me to look at these cities with greater awareness, above all, to look at these urban “peripheries” with greater sensitivity. The highlighted data allowed us to understand the existence and *resistance* of the bars Guingas, Luar Rock and Refúgio dos Anjos as spaces that make individuals, objects and representations circulate within games of accusation and resignification, in which “they also allow people to become recognised and explore different possibilities of action and performance” (Simões, 2011: 171-172). These data are therefore facets of a broader and more complex range of issues; the idea is that they can open up lacunae to new reflections and the critical densification of urban studies and studies on gender and sexuality.

Paraphrasing Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (2009: 329): “there are many more regimes of knowledge and culture than our vain metropolitan imagination assumes”; in other words, there are many more regimes of knowledge and potential sociabilities, sexualities and disputes than our vain geographical/cartographic, dominant, and “central” imagination assumes.

Translated by Philip Sidney Pacheco Badiz

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