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# On the narratives of the joys and aporias of individuation: the approximation of youth practices in the Brazilian popular neighborhoods

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- 1 When analyzing the production of leisure practices in Western contemporary history, Groppo (2002) affirmed its dialectic imbrication with youth action, as the latter is a structuring part of the configurations taken by the former in different periods. So today, with an established cultural and informational industry, sometimes with various interpellations toward youth consumption, other times propagating youth as an existential reference, the participation of young people could be interpreted based on this hybridization, transgressions and/or resistances.
- 2 However, in the interlocutions with young people in popular urban areas, we have noticed that the disputes at stake did not consider the possibilities of fruition and expression in a tense articulation with the obliterations of precariousness, violence, and stigmatization, mainly among black young people. A situation worsened in the last years by a context of instability engendered by the economic and sanitary crises and the weakening of rights and public services due to the political sphere (Betim, 2020; Perez & Luz, 2019). However, as we want to highlight, we can interpret youth experiences not only through the vulnerability of possibilities, but by an intense action observed amidst the actors.
- 3 Our incursions took place in neighborhoods in Porto Alegre, in the south of Brazil, together with groups of young people connected with mass- accessed consumption and production activities: soccer and funk. Following the activities of our interlocutors from 2017 to 2019, through ethnographic observations and complementary narrative interviews, we question the ways these practices were accessed and/or produced. We

aim to understand the relation between participation and processes of individuation. To do so, we sought inspiration from the contributions of Danilo Martuccelli (2006, 2007, 2010, 2010a).

- 4 Generally, we interacted with young people whose everyday lives are closer to the experiences approached by other researchers on the youth of popular groups in Brazil. (Corrochano, 2016; Jesus & Dayrell, 2016), regarding the dismay with school and work, though this last appears as an imperative to attend the needs and, when possible, to enjoy their youth. In this sense, cultural practices in public spaces represent an alternative of sociable sharing and recognition between peers, and a relative distance from the adult and institutional responsibilities (Pinheiro, 2015).
- 5 We believe it is important to narrate the configuration of youth practices in this context, as it leads to the analysis of situations of contextual inconsistencies faced by young people, diffracted in the circumstances established by common markers of social inequality in the country. Thus, we take each activity aforementioned, considering its broad dissemination among young people in popular neighborhoods and problematizing them in elements of daily consumption and production. However, before approaching them, we summarize our theoretical-methodological references.

## Research references

- 6 The debate on youth in Brazil has pointed out the diversity of experiences built by this young people, showing peer practices as part of the socialization processes co-produced by individuals, and outlining biographical itineraries established in different social spaces and with various potential belongings (Dayrell, 2002; Leão & Carrano, 2013; Tella, 2020). In this sense, the approximation to the contributions of Danilo Martuccelli seeks theoretical-methodological inspirations that allow us to work in this scenario, questioning the actions developed by young people during the individuation process.
- 7 Martuccelli (2007) proposes to focus on the investigation of what actors experience, as a way to recognize their singular daily challenges and how they to answer these challenges. It is not an inventory of biographies or individual actions, but a heuristic resource to resume the structural analyses on individuation, historically and socially produced in a certain context. Thus, the author insists on the need to combine macro-analytical knowledge and the deepening of experience narratives, in order to understand how structural questions are diffracted to the scale of the individuals.
- 8 In his attempt, the author presents, at least, two key categories: “social proof” and “supports”. The first guides us to what mobilizes the work of individuals so that they can see themselves as such in the society, articulating challenges of experiences and structural provocations in a certain socio-historical context (Martuccelli, 2007).<sup>1</sup>
- 9 Thus, on its turn, the notion of “supports” plays a complementary interpretative role, guided to the bases that support the existence of social actor. The author aims to delineate the set of resources and supports appropriate to the process of individuation. He emphasizes that this is not an inventory of available conditions and capitals depending on the social position, but the recognition of what is inscribed in the network of effective interdependencies of individuals stories, supporting individuals to consider themselves as such (Martuccelli, 2007).

- 10 Still on the contributions of this author, we can briefly talk about his theses on the contemporary processes of individuation in Latin America, as propensities to reflect in our analytical course. On one hand, Martuccelli (2010) reflects on the hypothesis of existing “hyper-actors” in Latin-American societies, considering that individuation would not be built in a fiction of a social contract between pre-conceived individuals, produced by organizations and institutional programs, as in Europe. It would be built from the practices and abilities of the people that, to be part of society, need, above all, to act and guarantee their existence and recognition. A condition explained, in part, by the way power is established in our countries. Something that indicates, if not completely enacts, as a law that is always followed, which varies in the circumstances, often with the use of violence. Therefore, the social actor, faced by the weak working of institutions or the arbitrary power, needs the other to survive. As the modern impersonal apparatus are not a guarantee, the maintenance of social bonds becomes fundamental to the organization of the experience, wherein, historically, strongly delimited networks would support the subjects’ trajectories in their daily lives, and not only institutional programs.
- 11 On the other hand, Martuccelli (2006, 2010a) affirms the existence of a structural process of singularization. Though the analyses of the author in this case are mainly regarding France, he also refers to the context of our continent. We can consider ‘singularization’ a form of individuation through which the ideal for individuals consists of being recognized by others as different, by their ordinary and concrete incomparability. The valuing of the ‘singular’ would become a way to relate with the ‘common’, as subjected to power relations as other forms of individuation. Among the main factors (in a non-comprehensive list), the author analyzes: the customization and diversification of production and consumption; the personalization of service and institutional demands; the individual accountability, mainly in the job market; the interactive content (and less statutory) of the sociability relations.

## Field work

- 12 As aforementioned, our arrival in youth groups took place through practices of massive consumption, considering the theoretical-methodological potentialities. As stated by Abrantes (2011), “with their own materials, symbols, and protocols, social practices have an ‘internal logic’, cemented through time and which connects the action of the subjects to the social structures” (p. 125). Therefore, the consideration of participation forms, associated to the knowledge of concerned literature, supported an interpretation based on the youth daily lives and their interpenetration with structural challenges.
- 13 Thus, our participation started through contacts with community activists who introduced us to these places, through incursions in the territory and/or by long conversations on the living conditions and cultural activities in those contexts. After around four months of our presence in each *locus*, we asked specifically about the common activities of young people (in Brazil, people between 15 and 29 years old), and discovered about the collectives whose stories connected local organization and insertions in circuits of municipal practices. So, we started the observation and note fields. In the case of soccer, they took place where the young people met to train, in the

region of Cruzeiro (Center-South region of the city), and during some games, in a central park of the city.

- 14 With the interlocutors in funk, we went to a space where there are classes of *Escola de MCs* (School of MCs),<sup>2</sup> in the space of *Baile da Tuka*, in Campo da Tuka (East region of the city), a reference space on this type of music in Porto Alegre.
- 15 The configuration of these groups matched our basic ethnographic purposes, by developing a social practice enjoyed in the place (according to our early informants) and the massive consumption among the young people in urban outskirts.<sup>3</sup> Thus, our direction was guided to those who performed the positions of ‘player’ and/or ‘musicians’, bringing nuances to the actions in their contexts of action. We tried to narrate the agencies operated aiming to enable their favorite activities, what led us to consider the actions of those young people in the conformation of experiences.
- 16 Such an effort was finally made possible with complementary narrative individual interviews (Jovchelovitch, 2002), conducted in the second semester of 2019, culminating the dialogues. With individualized narrations, we aimed to know their life itineraries and, from there, compare the senses young people give to their practices, as consumers and producers, considering the articulations with the alluded individuation dynamics. We conducted four in-depth interviews, two of each practice, with interlocutors experienced and beginners in soccer and funk.
- 17 The result of this effort of immersion, the dialogue, and the recording of the field experience is, besides an ensemble of interpretations circumscribed by a discipline, a narrative exercise from which the author gives agency to facts, subjects, and times aiming a referenced intelligibility (Colombo & Pinheiro, 2020). It is a configuration of researchers’ temporality between their experiences in the field and the elaboration of their field notes (Rocha & Eckert, 1998, 2008). We seek to present here part of this significant effort, in a provocative approximation to the notion of “joy”, as presented by Espinosa (1983), to refer to young people’s moments of potential, corporal investments, and affection in dispute for their everyday lives and itineraries.
- 18 We believe that considering practices massively partaken by young people was a methodological strategy to understand their participation in individuation processes disseminated in outskirts. In a way, the activities focused, mostly informal, bring possibilities to youth expression, relatively distant from institutional controls, circumscribing their protagonism in interactive micro cosmos. However, this does not exempt historical embarrassments and socially legitimized provocations. As we will try to make explicit later on, if the challenges imposed to these young people in their free-time practices do not exclusively encapsulate structural proofs, they can evoke them figuratively and/or create supports to experiences.

## The narratives of joy: potency and arts of the possible

Joy is an affection of the body by which the body's potency of acting is increased or diminished

Espinosa (1983, p. 399)

- 19 We selected the two places of the study (Campo da Tuka and Cruzeiro) based on at least three markers of social inequality: educational indexes, highlighting the average levels of schooling; income conditions, focusing on the average income of the household head; and the housing satiation, considering the incidence of subnormal housing

(following the terms of *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* – IBGE). Besides this, comparatively, these are also neighborhoods with a high number of people self-declared black or mixed race in Porto Alegre.

## 2.1 Young people in várzea<sup>4</sup> soccer

[...] I already missed family birthday parties, and my daughter's baby shower to play soccer. It's where I find peace, where I feel good, I forget the problems.

[...] My style is provocative and fierce; I incentivize the team to the max, I speak, shout

[...] I like to pace the game my way.

[...] There was a memorable game, which was very sad for us, we had a friend of ours that lived here, and his mother was a big supporter, you know: She was always supporting the project. Then, she ended up passing away. Then, that game, it was the semifinal at Rendenção, we played for her. We went there, I played a fantastic game. (Alex,<sup>5</sup> Nov/2017)

- 20 The strong mobilization around the games exists for many years in popular spaces in the city of Porto Alegre, and tends to mix, on one hand, the playfulness and sociability and, on the other, seriousness and obstinacy. Such situations could remind us of the associations of Damatta (1982) between soccer and Brazilian culture. When taking it as a ritual dramatization and show peculiarities of the appropriation we did of soccer, the author highlights that the expression “soccer game” would indicate that our relation with the practice transcends the sport, when interposing themes such as ‘luck’ and ‘destiny’, foretelling what requires tactics (such as life, supposedly) and that, besides this, establishes itself as an important and serious subject in the everyday life (and not a mere frivolous). Arguing on the capacity of improvisation and technique, normally celebrated in Brazilian soccer, would represent the possibility of individuation and a certain experience of relational horizontality in a historically unequal and hierarchical society, DaMatta (1982) ends up integrating a narrative that assumes the cultural precedence of a national sport.
- 21 In a way, the cunning alluded to in the characterization of Brazilian soccer evokes the figure of the “*malandro*”, historically situated between the 1930s and 1940s, when Brazilian urbanization and industrialization emerged (Gastaldo, 2005). However, leaning on the processes and dynamics of producing social practices, we have to refer to the dissonances of such a narrative when soccer develops as a globalized domain of action, given the articulation of professional and consumption markets, of corporate media production and the formation of players. According to Soares *et al.* (2011), the hiring of Brazilian players abroad has increased in the last three decades, contrary to the income inequalities of a precarious work environment for most athletes in the country.
- 22 At least since the 1980s, soccer has been establishing structures of formation and selection of athletes associated with managerial logics and media spectacles. The emergence of soccer schools, franchises of brands of professional clubs, legislations and sporting public policies and/or administrative-financial transactions managed by economic conglomerates create a sport global market and, in articulation, start to use of requirements related to players' performances, while also instigating a set of expectations regarding the careers in sports (Damo, 2007a; Pimenta, 2006). In this sense, Pimenta (2006, 2008) comments on the effect of media and corporation

discursive production in the creation of expectations and subjectivities amidst young beginners in soccer.

- 23 Furthermore, the engendering of apparatus to prepare young players (for a national or international market) allows popular families to adopt soccer as a project of upward mobility. More specifically, considering that the enrollment in soccer schools, the costs, and even that salaries can be superior to the earnings of parents, often creates not only a projection, but a space of immediate paid work (Soares *et al.*, 2011).
- 24 This way, using the arguments of Toledo (2002), soccer establishes itself as a massive consumption from a total of movements daily updated, through the production of representations from different positions, relatively interchangeable, which the author analytically summarizes into three: supporters, professionals, and specialists. The *várzea* gathers organizational elements of professional sport, though with no professional players. The young people with whom we talked, practice aficionados, expressed in their narratives the position of amateurs or, more specifically, those that, in a way, raise the expectation for a career. On other occasions, they were also supporters and, among peers, mimicked specialists. Such transit between action and representation forms, in our understanding, will compose the process of youth individuation in the outskirts, be it by alluding to adult socialization,<sup>6</sup> or by drawing a micro cosmos of protagonism among peers.
- 25 At the time of our incursions, the municipal championship of *várzea* soccer took place in Porto Alegre, following the annual calendar of games, involving around 300 men's teams in two categories (free and seniors). Due to the games, an action space and a dispositive of circulation through different parts of the city established itself, involving not only players, but also managers and community supporters (Myskiw, 2014). Characterization wise, we are closer to a community matrix of soccer, as analyzed by Damo (2007a), in an intermediary position between the spheres of spectacle and bricolage (in Brazilian Portuguese, the *peladas*, extremely informal games).
- 26 Youth practices with whom we dialogued in our incursions emerged from a social project established by a volunteer physical education teacher. It started as a soccer school for children and teenagers and, by the demand of older participants who would no longer enjoy their get-togethers and games, became a soccer team in the 'free' category of the municipal *várzea* championship. In general, we perceived a bit more than 15 players present in each weekly training session and, among them, there was a group with more stable attendance of approximately 10 young men. In most cases, they lived in the region, declared themselves black, from poor families and uneven schooling; some were still in high school or even elementary school, in the modality of Youth and Adult Education (YAE).
- 27 The training sessions took place in a public space in the surrounding of neighborhood. The field, with no grass, with decaying fences, did not have one of the goal posts and, in one of the sides, there was an improvised wooden bench used by those waiting to play. The sessions happened there by an informal agreement between the coach and the keepers of the space. There was an approximate routine for the training sessions, with warm-up exercises and physical preparation, followed by games. Before they started, the coach would give them some general guidelines. When closer to the championship games, or after those, she would also gather them in the field for some minutes, with tactical, motivation, or appreciation comments.



- 28 In this scenario, the situation of being previously a coordinator of a social project to, now, becoming the coach of an amateur team seemed *sui generis* and indicated the ways of participation. As a woman and graduate teacher, as well as not living in an outskirts, Larissa needed to act from a set of tactics. The conversations held with her indicated a systematic agency of relationships. She told us she would let people of different teams and communities in the training sessions of her group, because this would guarantee her an easier circulation in different territories. She tried only to avoid contacts with the leaders of drug traffic, so she would not be compromised and have her mobility limited. In this sense, it was not rare for young people to mention the need to “have knowledge”, meaning that they needed to be recognized in the communities, so that the maintenance of bonds allowed their practices and was a factor of daily power.<sup>7</sup>
- 29 The educator said she did not mind the intermittence of attendance in the training sessions. There were cases of players that, after months with no attendance, were welcomed by her with satisfaction when returning. She was aware of the risk of having students involved with drug trafficking, but only demanded that, in that group, they brought no elements of illicit activities (guns, drugs, etc.). Ultimately, she had the intuition that an intransigent position would not have a positive effect on their permanence and that, on the other hand, the good results on the championships and the experiences made possible by soccer (such as trips to other cities) could also stimulate a connection.
- 30 The teacher was there to advocate a type of knowledge and try to establish times, disciplines, and a learning condition to her players. The members of the team respected her and seemed to like the way she treated them. However, though not verbally and directly contradicting her, they would eventually mock her and not always obey. In moments dedicated to physical preparation, it was possible to see that young people created ways to take the ball and exchange passes, intercalating the recommended exercises. During the games, it was possible to see that the games were permeated by hostile acts, opposing the teacher. And, during the championship, this would not necessarily be displayed as a simple unrestrained aggression; it was taken as a tactic to manage the spirits of the adversaries.
- 31 The conversations and sociable narrations could be considered here, based on the agencies they communicated and the contextual limits imposed to them. For example, during one of the championships our interlocutors took part was the subject of many conversations. The narratives started with the final result, lost by penalties. Then they mentioned that the referee “robbed them”, taking away one of their goals, which only later they perceived. They mentioned they played very well, having reached the finals. They detailed the sequence of kicks, defenses, and kicks to goals. Then came the comments about who had lost the penalties, the longer part of the conversation: one would playfully comment on the mistake of the other, another time the player himself would narrate what he had planned and what actually took place. This conversation happened every time new players arrived.
- 32 The interactive narration reminded them of their own feats and was loaded with emotions, normally shared by the colleagues, enthusiastically intercalating complement elements to the narratives. The individual versions gave details and almost role-played the feats. The young men tried to explain why they made mistakes and mentioned how they felt. This ‘being together’ was a celebration, in itself a way of agency, reminding the “arts of saying” stated by Certeau (2011). The narration brought



drama and aesthetic sharing of what was considered a challenge and performance, common commitment and individual meanings. The mnemonic fruition was not an accessory to the facts, it was itself a way to produce practice and the connection during time.

- 33 Taken together with the interviews, the narrations seemed to compose representations of argute movements and a persistent individuality when facing adversities, from which the word “overcoming”, often spoken in the testimonies, seemed to be a sign. This way, a certain sense of potency was experienced by the collective sharing that the games and the being-together promoted, in the shape of a community of cultural cultivation, but also by the expansion of the presence in meaningful contextualization.
- 34 This way, we understand that that project-team, and the practice of soccer in a broader sense, established a place to the transfigure expression of proofs and the engendering of concerning existential supports. It would be hard to take soccer practice as only leisure, due to its socio-contextual pertinenc, it becomes a potency arena associated with expertise, to a certain protagonism, and to the recognition it can allow. There, they integrated capitals to act in their places, be it by their cultural knowledge, related to the games, the dispositions to face adversities, or the social network among “acquaintances”.

*2.2 Funk: uses and consumption among young people*

*Tô com a mente embaçada/ I'm with a blurred mind*

*Pensamento voa alto/ Thoughts flying high*

*Que saudade da infância/ I miss my childhood*

*Quando eu olho pro lado/ When I look to my side*

*Dos amigos que se foram/ The friends that left*

*E dos que estão privado/ And those in jail*

[...]

*Quando eu lembro da antiga/ When I remember the past*

*Chego a ficar abalado/ I'm shaken*

*Dos rolê de bicicleta/ The bike rides*

*Ou do futebol na praça/ Or soccer at the square*

*Eu quero Deus os tenha/ I wish God takes them*

*E que a saudade passa/ And this longing passes*

[...]

*Queria ser jogador/ I wanted to be a player*

*Mas Deus não abençoou/ But God didn't bless me*

*Ele falou pra mim/ He told me*

*Que eu ia ser cantor/ I had to be a singer*

(Excerpt from the lyrics ‘Saudade da infância’ – MC Ouro Branco)

- 35 It is not rare to find in the literature analysis associating funk, violence, and criminality, a common discourse in mass media in Brazil. The creation of stigmas in this sense would take back to the 1990s in Rio de Janeiro, also resonating in Porto Alegre, particularly the discrimination of black people (Amaral, 2017; Arruda *et al.*, 2010). On the other hand, against the stigmatization of funk, there is an appeal for a creative economy, so as to highlight its relevance (as a protection against criminality or a type of work produced locally), which Muniz (2016) criticizes as a “convenient use of culture”. Moral justifications would support the existence of the practice.
- 36 We could suggest that the disputes by funk enunciation indicate, in a way, the political effervescence that the practice establishes, through its lyrics, balls, or even the different gestures and clothes. Observing the explicit and teleological mobilizing emphasis, as the references to territorialization and black diaspora in the 1990s and

beginning of 2000s (Lopes, 2000), or, even before, the political adoption of *soul* in the black balls in the 1970s (Vianna, 1987), we can see that there are periods in which such inclinations lose centrality, keeping the aesthetic tensions and highlighting the displacements of moral order.

- 37 According to different researchers (Reguillo, 2012; Tella, 2020) the disputes that pervade this practice continue in the sphere of cultural and ethnic enunciation in critical and/or self-affirmation performances, as in other youth expressions. However, we should also consider the process of aestheticization engendered during the history of capitalism, which would integrate artistic expressions and instrumental rationality in urban routines (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2015). This condition seems to be diffracted in the possibilities and enunciative and aesthetic conflicts produced by young people, immersed in the enlargement of cultural consumption and technological supports, attentive to their fruitions and identifications.
- 38 Here, we should point out that the practices produced in funk, often raised to the level of work in the outskirts, are managed not only in the intensive appropriation of visuals and aesthetic signs or in generalized uses of communication technology. The ephemerality of what is produced results from a phonographic market that highlights expendability, besides the precariousness of work possibilities, pervaded by flexible and temporary jobs that, furthermore, demand individuals to multitask, a situation closer to what is discussed by Canclini (2012).
- 39 Interpreting the imbrications between individuation and the uses and consumption of funk, though hybrid and ephemeral, demands that we refer to the configuration of youth experiences. That is, we should situate the practice in the framework of a set of interactive marks and belongings which inscribes individuals in a network of circulations, sociabilities, and identifications due to their youth condition and, thus, the experiences as subjects in certain periods of their itineraries, as affirmed by Dayrell (2002).

### **In the field with funk: the balls, the MCs and the young people**

- 40 Funk in Porto Alegre did not have the same collective expression of rap, neither had a time of connotations with territorialized daily life, as happened in Rio de Janeiro, for example (Lopes, 2000). Its massive fruition and production emerged in the end of the 2000s, first with the *bondes*.<sup>8</sup> The *Baile da Tuka* established itself as the main reference, a *locus* inherited from the decades of balls in the space, with an expressive attendance of the black community.
- 41 In the community of *Campo da Tuka*, where the ball is held, there is an articulation, or even a blur, between political-community representation, promotion of *várzea* soccer, and musical and party productions. Some of the main political leaders founded soccer teams and, besides this, they were responsible to create the ball. We could say, in this sense, that the history of this place shows itself as a black territory (Rosa, 2016).
- 42 Let us consider then the fruition of funk balls. Such parties, described by young people as “just fun”, can be spaces of relaxing from the daily “seriousness” and, thus, the exceeding of their limits. The study conducted by Vianna (1987) already pointed out how the literature emphasized the dichotomy between “serious life” and fun regarding festive moments, so that they could experience a certain “mass feeling”, breaking away current distances between the self and the other/world. Thus, those who felt

constrained by norms of social individuation could feel, in certain moments, the widening of their potency in the trance created by the ecstasy of corporeal and gestural communion.

- 43 Taken ritualistically, the party would be, simultaneously, the intersection of liberation and the reinforcement of collective identity. However, for urban and differentiated contemporaneity we live, it would maybe be more fruitful to consider them an existential support when facing routine, a way to experience the common without needing to submit the singularity to socio-normative regimes, while relaxing the “seriousness of life”. In this sense, as stated by Vianna (1987), the same ephemerality related to the musical genre can be the motto of regularity in attending the balls.
- 44 On one hand, the observation of the balls in *Tuka* made us consider that, if there are moments of collective effervescence, there is also a time to observe who is present, to foresee potential relations, or the intrusion in photos and selfies. On the other hand, the possibility of ecstasies is managed by the DJ, who tries to control the mood and the attendance of the balls. So, the festivities seem to be situated today in a game of ludicity, ecstasies, and instrumentality. Our interlocutors who attended the balls affirmed they liked other music styles, tried to diversify their consumption (among *pagodes*, *sambas*, and country music), and attend different places, the eclecticism indicated a non-stable filiation or a lasting obligation, except in the cases of producers and aficionados.
- 45 Besides this, funk would mix aspects of other genres and, with no formal demand of knowledge, would end up becoming an accessible inventive alternative, aiming for a certain protagonism and peer recognition, perhaps even job expectations, similar to what happens with soccer in outskirt areas. It was common for our interlocutors to seek MC work as a way to express themselves, but also mentioned the support to family survival and public recognition.
- 46 The genre itself, discussed as a sign of ephemerality and hybridism, was liable to a somewhat pragmatic use, or at least less cunning, as a “capture in flight” (Certeau, 2011). Frequently, young MCs mentioned that funk was one of the options among their different musical tastes. They had been incentivized by friends and families to post videos in social networks, singing their compositions. Thus, what would condense some expectation of visibility, but not necessarily an anticipation of fame, would be converted in a production recognized by views and likes. Therefore, the approximation of local producers and the stimulus to stay in the market of publications and concerts was possible and appropriate.
- 47 Another aspect to highlight was the support of family members, joining the expectations of success and financial gains. A situation that we do not see as projects strictly related to social mobility. Though hopes were built, the priority was, first, the support for the young person to find ways to be independent. So, the initiative received a relative investment, amidst other alternatives presented in the space of possibilities.
- 48 The trajectory of Sabha, educator responsible for the *Escola de MCs* during our incursions, illustrates what we have mentioned above. A former wannabe soccer player, decided to dedicate himself to funk after a knee injury. The successful experience in composing lyrics in a school activity allowed him to see funk as an alternative for personal projection. He was incentivized by the musical producer connected to the *Baile da Tuka* to raise resources to invest in his careers, then he initially sold *pasteís*. He reached State fame and made many concerts, but would have lost space in the market

for other composers. During our conversations, besides the volunteer formation of new MCs, Sabha tried to work selling food by delivery, supported a candidate for the municipal council, but was not successful in any of these initiatives.

- 49 Now, we discuss the activities of *Escola de MCs* and the group we researched. Part of the work was to guide and stimulate the authorship, the context in which the lyrics ended up commenting on their trajectories and, commonly, personal choices considered wrong, to which they contraposed verses of apology to the awareness experienced. Thus, we can consider a set of moral delimitations, connected to the so-called “good funk”, opposed to the one of ostentation or eroticism. The adherence to moral socialization and risk protection, through the control of youth time, were present.
- 50 Certainly, we could perceive competitive and individualist dynamics, especially related to the phonographic musical market and the expectations of success represented by the Ball. But the sharing between peers, the one produced through informal interactions or in the project we surveyed, also organized the affirmation of common tastes and the particular appropriations of each one. We could subtly see what Martuccelli (2010b) pointed out about the composition of consumption groups in a singular society. Otherwise, the way they established their presentations seemed to point a way to distinguish their belonging. Let us observe an example of performance. When invited to present themselves, each one briefly presented their origins and, after, asked to continue talking, but based on a letter they had composed. Then, one of the colleagues could join them and follow with some beatboxing. If there was some shared music expertise, there also seemed to have a common aesthetic in the momentary cooperation.
- 51 The singularization established by the “work of individuals” and, though not verbalized as such, was explicit in youth experimentation, making authorial creations a possible arena for singularity. We could wonder, in this case, if the precariousness of conditions and the intermittences at work and schooling would not end up creating individual efforts for survival, what, in the end, would propel individuation faced by instability. However, the possibility of having a singular trajectory was built in the connection of cultural production and the sharing of statements about themselves and their common conditions.
- 52 Finally, singularization, beyond a process of structural individuation in contemporaneity (when under objective social conditions of stimulus) is an existential challenge for the young people with whom we talked, which we understand as blended with the disputes over material precariousness and the stigmatization or normative homogenization of poor black young people. We would even say that singularization is part of the work of hyper-actors (young people) in the outskirts. The creation of lyrics and melodies, regardless of the criticisms against the genre of funk, seem contextually meaningful, so that it can become sentimental to young people.

## Final remarks: hypothesis to continue

- 53 During our writing, we considered the analysis of social practices, understanding that it was possible to indicate current processes of individuation among young people in popular neighborhoods in Brazilian cities. Despite their specificities, these are practices interconnected in the itinerary of the individuals and in the relations built in the places we visited. Soccer is maybe the one in which we could more clearly attribute the

exercise and symbolization of hyper-acting. Funk does not fail to present them or even present them in musical productions. However, the practices and discursive disputes in these cases also allow a work of enunciation of built singularity.

- 54 The practices we analyzed alluded to a set of structural proofs, in the shape of youth existential challenges, sometimes prohibited, other times strongly imbricated. We could rank the work (and the imperative of independence), the territory (and the coexistence with violence), racism (and the stigmatization of styles). More directly, it is possible to highlight the imbrication with the dimensions of social bond, in the relation with the collective, and with themselves. Our incursions point out a certain sense of community evoked from a circuit of action, composing, more specifically, the narrativization of individual feats together with collective ones that, in articulation, establish mnemonic inscriptions of a locally situated and interactional historicity. But beyond that, the narratives of joy told us about a certain existentiality of shared potency, indicating supports for a “self-proof”.
- 55 So, regarding the daily dynamics articulated in individuation, our incursions suggest that the experiences in soccer and funk carry some common aspects: *i*) an intensive use of agencies in the production of practices, under the tensions between instrumentality and expressiveness; *ii*) the co-creation of solidarity and reciprocity in the relation with the collective and the construction of historicity; and *iii*) the struggle to produce and recognize experiences of potency, of interactive and sociable content, indicating that, in popular neighborhoods, the opportunities of singularization are particular dependent on the work of individuals.
- 56 Observing more specifically our allusion to *potency*, we need to highlight that it was made possible in the field of common codes; the bonds established a possible arena of feelings of expansion and continuity of self, expressed in the peer-updated memories. In this sense, referring or articulating structural challenges, the experiences in cultural practices might transcend youth as symbolic supports. We understand that they deserve attention in future studies, from its imbrication with individuation dimensions and from the aporias interposed by capitalism mainly in popular neighborhoods, between instrumentality and aesthetic expression, precariousness and singularization, subsistence and recognitions. Elements that seem to pervade the meaning that “life is a struggle”, in which choices and belonging are frequently reoriented in the narrative of self. The provocative reference to Espinosa (1983) leads us to raise the hypothesis that potency and domination are developed in recursivity, together with the inscriptions of responsabilization (Martuccelli, 2007) facing the inconsistency of socio-urban outskirt contexts.
- 57 To be inspired in soccer or in funk could be a tactic and an existential support, despite (and in articulation with) the interpellations of the market and the attempts to stigmatize and regulate the practices of poor and black youth. There lies the drama and the iniquity of the experienced aporias.

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## NOTES

1. In *Forgé par l'épreuve*, the author analyzes a set of eight main structural challenges, organized into two groups: those related to social domains ("the school mark", "work", "the city streets", and "family lives"); and those concerning the dimensions of social bond ("the history between individuals", "the relation with the collective", "the maze of alterity", and the "self-proof") (Martuccelli, 2006).
  2. MC: master of ceremonies. Name given to funk music singers.
  3. We should clarify that the choice of such social practices also relied on the previous application of questionnaires about the use of free time among young students in public schools in each place, including those attended by part of our interlocutors. Thus, we had around 150 respondents per neighborhood; soccer and funk were their main free-time activities.
  4. Improvised soccer field with no grass, normally situated in empty lots or in the banks of rivers, used by amateur teams.
  5. The names used in the text are fictional.
  6. We should have in mind, in this sense, that the practice studied and the dynamics of male sociability they promote partake in the socialization a certain masculinity, connected to the necessary facing of precariousness and hostilities, the expression of courage and braveness, if needed, both connected to the street and amateur sport (Damo, 2007).
  7. On this aspect, it was possible to see that the practice of young people in the *várzea* was related to the hostilities of urban violence (Waiselfisz, 2015). There were plenty of reports on violence outside the field (including the carrying of weapons of rival supporters). In this type of testimony, soccer seemed to compose a threshold, taking place despite and together with the latent conflicts of drug trafficking: sometimes the "drug boss" would sponsor teams and games; other times, the dispute between territories would "enter in the field" and tried to stop the results.
  8. Groups of young dancers that performed funks at the time. In this period, there were basically no singers in the scene of Porto Alegre, just dancers (ROSA, 2016).
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## ABSTRACTS

The discussions proposed in this article are in the field of Sociology of Youth, narrating youth practices in popular neighborhoods, aiming for an analytical articulation with the processes of individuation in contexts daily pervaded by markers of social inequality. Thus, we have tried to understand how young people participate in the circuits of soccer and funk music, highlighting the ways they confront these structural challenges in their experiences. To do so, we use the contributions of Danilo Martuccelli as a central reference. In the research field, we used ethnographic observation and complementary narrative interviews, held in two socially vulnerable locations in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil. From our incursions, we believe that these mnemonic inclusions of joy, amidst the agentic individuations and singular performances, refer simultaneously to a local-interactional historicity and the existential aporias of "self-proof".

Les discussions proposées dans cet article se situent dans le cadre de la sociologie de la jeunesse et narrent des pratiques juvéniles dans des quartiers populaires, en vue de les articuler analytiquement à des processus d'individuation dans des contextes quotidiennement traversés

de marqueurs d'inégalité sociale. Nous cherchons ainsi à comprendre comment des jeunes participent au circuit du football et à celui de la musique funk brésilienne, en soulignant la manière dont ils font face aux défis structurels évoqués dans leurs expériences. Pour y parvenir, nous nous appuyons notamment sur les contributions de Danilo Martuccelli et recourons, sur le terrain, à l'observation ethnographique et à des entretiens narratifs complémentaires, réalisés dans deux territoires socialement vulnérables de la ville de Porto Alegre, au Brésil. À partir de nos incursions, nous considérons que les pratiques sur place engendrent des inscriptions mnémoniques de joie, au milieu d'individuations agentiques et de performances singularistes, renvoyant à la fois à l'historicité loco-interactionnelle et aux apories existentielles dans « l'épreuve de soi ».

## INDEX

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