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Black, LGBT and from the Favelas: an Ethnographic Account on Disidentificatory Performances of an Activist Group in Brazil

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Abstract

In this article, we address the processes of the production of places, identities, and cultures through analysing performances of activists from Aos Brados, in their political activities throughout Campinas, a 1 million inhabitants city located in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. Aos Brados is an activist group formed by Black LGBT people from the favelas whose main activities in the last ten years have been cultural activities. Focusing on the activities made by Aos Brados members in cultural centres and public spaces throughout Campinas, we discuss how, in such presentations, the group disputes meanings associated with the places and cultures that these places claim to represent. We sustain that it can be seen as a process of disidentification in which Aos Brados reshapes meanings associated with places and cultures, producing Black LGBT Culture from the favelas. The discussion results from shared questions in two different research concerning the effects of the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality on the political identity of Black LGBT activists and on the performances of young drag queens. The methodology employed congregated participant-observation and in-depth interviews.

Keywords: Disidentification, Culture, Space, Drag Queens, LGBTQ Activism, Intersectionality, Brazil.

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Introduction

The sun was setting when Jane[1], a young Black drag queen, was called to the improvised stage in Fazenda Roseira (Roseira Farm), an Afro-Brazilian cultural centre of Campinas, Brazil. The crowd was waiting to see what Aos Brados' drag queens had prepared for the 2015 "Fejuka[2] da Diversidade". Fejuka is a slang for feijoada, an important ritual dish for Afro-Brazilian religions, that was later appropriated as national symbol (Fry 1982). Parallel to the artistic presentations, the day-long event consisted of preparing and serving feijoada as a form of reconnecting Black LGBT with their Afro-Brazilian roots.

Jane stepped up, dressed in a white rounded dress with a turban covering the top of her head, dancing in a ritual manner. Her introductory piece started with a tribute to a spiritual entity worshiped in Umbanda[3]. At a certain point, the music changed to the fast pace of axé rhythm, and Jane started to dance samba, making fast movements like a samba school dancer.

This kind of performance has become a signature of the cultural activities of Aos Brados', an LGBT[4] organization founded in 1998 in Campinas, Brazil. The term "cultural activities" is used by Aos Brados to define the group's main repertoire of action in the present. According to Charles Tilly,

> the word repertoire identifies a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice. Repertoires are learned cultural creations, but they do not descend from abstract philosophy or take shape as a result of political propaganda; they emerge from struggle. (Tilly 1993: 264)

The idea of "cultural activities" is inspired by the name given by Black cultural activists to their own activities. In Aos Brados' case, these activities usually composed by a variety of artistic presentations, mainly performed by LGBT artists[5], including – but not limited to – drag performances. In this article, we focus on drag performances in these cultural activities, because these artists are shown by the group as living examples of what they understand as a Black LGBT culture from the favela. In other words, the drag performances mobilize signs of what is broadly understood as LGBT, Black, and Favela culture.

The name of the group, Aos Brados, can be translated to English as shouting. During the interviews, the members stated that they chose this name because, as LGBT people from the favelas, they had to shout in order to be heard in the mainstream LGBT movement. In its early days, Aos Brados' members identified themselves as LGBT people from the favelas; having as their main political actions what they called social activities. More recently, since 2008, when the group established relationships with cultural organizations of the Black movement in Campinas and

started to organize cultural activities throughout the city, blackness became a central aspect of their political identity, turning Aos Brados into a Black LGBT organization from the favelas. One of its main goals is to create more opportunities for Black LGBT artists in the local and regional entertainment scene, as well as to fight sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and class-based discrimination through its cultural activities.

Brazil's fourteenth largest city, Campinas has one million inhabitants and is located in the state of Sao Paulo, in the Southeast. The city is the centre of the Metropolitan Region of Campinas, composed of twenty municipalities with a population of more than 3 million inhabitants. Although some of the most well-known "gay cities" in Brazil are Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Campinas has achieved relevance in the national scene for a few reasons. It is a pioneer city in terms of public policies for LGBT, hosting Brazil's first LGBT Reference Centre (Zanoli, 2015; Zanoli, Falcão, 2015). Also, back in the early 1990's, it was the birthplace of one of the country's first activist transgender group, the Transsexual Movement of Campinas (Carvalho & Carrara 2013).

In this article we pursue narratives and performances that inform how perceptions of the city and its places, in relation to activism, are disputed, produced, and changed through Aos Brados' activities. Thus, by following the process through which Aos Brados produces what the group understands as Black LGBT Culture from the favelas, we observe which elements are taken as part of the culture Aos Brados aims to produce and how they are related to specific spaces and to the formation of the members' political identities.

Using the concept and notion of "culture" (Abu-Lughod 1991, Handler 1984), we do not seek a definite definition, instead we discuss how "culture" is given meaning when appropriated by social movements as part of their repertoire of actions. In this sense, rather than defining what the mobilized cultures stated above are, we aim to understand how some symbols are taken as representatives of these cultures and how they are being produced whilst being elaborated and performed.

This article is based on shared results from two different research projects, both concerned with gender, sexuality, race and politics among LGBT in Campinas, Brazil. The former (Mascarenhas Neto 2018), conducted between 2015 and 2018, focused on displacements and careers of young drag queens in Campinas, paying special attention to the role played by local LGBT organizations[6]. The latter is an ongoing study started in 2015, aiming to comprehend the circulation of vocabularies, categories, and repertoires of actions amongst social movements and how this circulation impacts the production of political subjects through coalitions between social movements[7]. The study follows the activists' networks formed by Aos Brados. The methodologies in both studies are qualitative congregating participant-observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The

fieldwork focused on the group's meetings and cultural activities, of which drag queens play a central role.

This article is divided into three sections. In the first, we present the theoretical background of the relationship between identity, culture, and place. Since the production of the group's main repertoire of action is the result of its relationships with the LGBT movement and the Black movement, the second section recovers the history of these proximities and estrangements, understanding the foundation of Aos Brados as a result of a broader process named by Brazilian literature as specification of social movements. Inspired by Muñoz's (1999) work on disidentification, the third section is dedicated to analyse two cultural activities observing the process of production of Black LGBT culture from the peripheries, whilst looking to the formation of political alliances between social movements in Campinas.

Identity, culture, and place

To analyse how Aos Brados produces what the group comprehends as Black, LGBT, and favela culture, we approach the culture performed and produced as a process of disidentification (Muñoz 1999). According to Muñoz, the theory of disidentification "is meant to contribute to an understanding of the ways queer of color identify with ethnos or queerness despite the phobic charges in both fields" (Muñoz 1999: 11). Disidentification would be a third mode of dealing with dominant ideologies, since it is never a simple process of identification or counteridenfication with the dominant ideology. Disidentification processes aim to transform cultural knowledge from within or in Munoz's words, "disidentification is about recycling and rethinking encoded meaning" (Muñoz 1999: 31).

One of the examples of a disidentificatory process presented by Munõz is the creation of the Black Latina punk-rock drag queen Vaginal Creme Davis. When asked the reason why she chose to be called Vaginal Davis, she responded that the inspiration came from Angela Davis. She explains the idea of using Davis's last name as a result of her immersion in the 1960's and 1970's militant Black era. For Munõz, by selecting to identify with Angela (Davis) and not the Panthers in her drag persona, (Vaginal Creme) Davis disidentified with masculinist and homophobic characteristics of the early Black movement, using "parody and pastiche to remake Black Power, opening it up to a self that is simultaneously black and queer" (Muñoz 1999: 99). Not only her name, but her performances are examples of disidentificatory processes. In her punk-rock performances she tends to emphasize the lack of black and queer representation in punk-rock scene. In other projects, such as her group ¡Cholita!, she disidentifies with Latino popular culture by taking on another character. "As Graciela Grejalva, she is not an oversexed songstress, but instead a teenage Latina singing sappy bubblegum pop" (ibid).

In regards to identity, we follow Avtar Brah's (1996) proposition. In her formulation, subjects and experiences are always thought of as processes. She also remarks the need for differentiation between individual and collective identity. For her, even though the individual identity of a person can reverberate in the group's identity, the individual personal experiences are not a simple reflex of the group identity, nor vice-versa. Therefore, she proposes that in the formation processes of collective identities, individual experiences around different axes of differentiation – such as race, gender or class, for instance – are invested with particular meaning.

The Brazilian anthropological discussion on gender, sexuality, and space has been intimately influenced by urban anthropology and sociology, namely the Chicago school of social research. As França, Facchini, and Gregori (2017) demonstrate, seminal works in the early days of Gender and Sexuality studies in Brazil have elaborated interesting and original contributions through the observations of sexuality in urban spaces. One of the most relevant is Nestor Perlongher's (1987) study on male prostitution. Influenced by the Chicago school, as well as by the works of Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, Perlongher inaugurated an original cartography of desire by observing the multiplicity of sexual identities performed by male prostitutes and their clients in 1980's downtown São Paulo. He observed how such identities were negotiated in relation to the space where they offered their services. Perlongher paved the way for further investigations on the relationships between space, identity, and sexuality in Brazilian urban anthropology.

Another important influence on Brazilian urban anthropology comes from the work of Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson in 1992. They criticise the lack of discussion at the time, on the issue of space in anthropological theory, calling for attention to processes that form space, instead of taking space for granted as a background for human action. Gupta and Ferguson proposed the notion of "imagined places", claiming that places are constantly being discursively (re)created from a series of social and political elements. They suggested a distinction between "spaces" and "places", where spaces become places when they are invested with specific meanings, such as a portion of land turning into a nation, as well as a street, or a village, being associated with a specific identity, such as gay villages or Jewish neighbourhoods (Gupta & Ferguson 1992).

Following a similar approach, Rogério Proença Leite (2007) analyses the production of public space in Recife, Brazil, through its usages and counter-usages. He defines public space as a place of dispute constituted through a relationship that simultaneously produces its attendees as well as the space itself. According to Leite, the appropriation of space is a political process in which the right to occupy and belong to certain spaces is disputed. His approach though, does not consider sexuality in the discussion of the appropriation of places.

Isadora Lins França (2012) draws inspiration from both Perlongher and Gupta & Ferguson in her study of the gay oriented market in São Paulo. Giving special attention to the "intricate processes of differentiation and subjectivation related to consumption and homosexuality (França 2012: 17)" she aims to understand how consumption shapes "subjectivities, identity categories and styles related to homosexuality in the context of market segmentation (ibid)". In this sense, França proposes that consumption not only happens *in* specific places, but the places themselves can be consumed, too. Hence, places are not simple backgrounds, they

> act in the constitutions of subjectivities at the same time they are constituted by its attendees; on the other hand, they work also as contexts that reveal and enable specific uses of goods or, circulate information on its respect, stimulating, or not, the interest for objects or specific consumption practices (França 2012:19)[8].

Inspired by this theoretical background we aim to explore how Aos Brados' activities produce what they understand as Black LGBT culture from the favela. We will do so by approaching their activities as processes of disidentifications where they dispute or challenge meanings and narratives related to cultures and places commonly associated with specific histories or social movements.

Proximities and estrangements

In order to contextualise the strategic cultural and political activities enforced by Aos Brados, we present here how alliances between different social movements have been part of a long history of proximities and estrangements between the LGBT movement and the Black movement in Brazil.

The literature on the LGBT movement in Brazil highlights the foundation of the organization Somos of São Paulo and the newspaper Lampião da Esquina as historical marks of the emergence of the Brazilian Homosexual Movement (MacRae 1990; Facchini & França 2013). Somos was founded in 1978, in the final years of the Brazilian civilian-military Dictatorship (1964-1985) – a reflourishing period for social movements in Brazil (Green 2018). At that time, some of its members were involved with the publication of Lampião da Esquina, edited by and for homosexuals, inspired by San Francisco's Gay Sunshine (Simões & Facchini 2008). In contrast to Brazilian periodicals published prior to it, Lampião was distributed nationally and had renowned journalists, intellectuals and artists on its editorial board.

The year of 1978 is not only central in the LGBT movement history, it is also the foundational year of a key organization of the Black movement in Brazil: the

MNU - Unified Black Movement (Movimento Negro Unificado) (Covin 2006; Gonzalez 1982). According to Domingues (2007), the MNU had amongst its' international influences the fight for civil rights in the United States and the fight against colonial dominations in Africa. As an important national influence, he cites the Trotskyist organization Socialist Convergence. As he points out, this organization was "the school of political and ideological formation for a great number of leaders of this period of the Black Movement" (Domingues 2007:112). Consequently, for the majority of members of the MNU, it was not possible to fight racism without addressing social inequalities resulting from capitalism.

The homosexual movement and the MNU had further connections. MacRae (1990) highlights that MNU was a significant ally to Somos, reminding that the first public appearance of Somos at a protest was at an event organized by the Black organization, in 1979. According to MacRae, there were two reasons for the connections between the two organizations. First, the influence of Lampião on Somos and its politics of alliances, since the newspaper – despite being centred on gays and lesbian themes – had published a lot of material on feminism, the Black movement, sexism, and racism. Second, members of the Socialist Convergence were present in both Somos and the MNU, thus the influence of the Trotskyist group had a connective effect. Third, there was active participation of members from both organizations in each other's activities.

With the end of Somos and Lampião da Esquina, the mid-80's marks the beginning of another phase of the movement (Facchini 2005; Facchini & França 2013), characterized by the numerical reduction of groups and the fight against HIV epidemics. One of the most important organization of this period is Triângulo Rosa (Pink Triangle), famous for leading the campaign to include guarantees against discrimination based on sexual orientation into the 1988 Constitution of Brazil, being drafted at the time. Despite the effort, Triângulo Rosa did not succeed in convincing the majority of the lawmakers (Câmara 2002).

The number of LGBT groups and organizations began to rise again in the 1990's. In this new phase, influenced by the policies targeting the HIV epidemics, most of the organizations became NGO's and started to engage in proposals, executions and evaluations of HIV policies. The period is also marked by the multiplication and specification of the political identities of the movement. This is illustrated by the metaphor of the "alphabet soup" (Facchini 2005), referring to the process of adding letters to the acronyms (such as LGBT), where each letter represented "new" gender identities and sexual orientations that became part of the movement. On the other hand, what Facchini (2005) has named as specification, is connected to debates on intersectionality and to the claims that gender identities and sexual orientations were not sufficient to represent how people experience their life, taking other social axes of difference, such as race and class, as central

to subjects' experiences. This process is marked by the emergence of groups and networks acting at the intersection between social movements.

It is important to highlight that this process named specification (Facchini, 2005) is not restricted to the LGBT movement. An extensive research on social movements and social participation in Brazil, coordinated by Lopes and Heredia (2014), points to processes of learning and exchange among social movements. They found that "universalist movements", such as workers' unions or rural workers organizations, have been opening up space for debates on sexual and racial inequality, for instance. Furthermore, activists' organizations often claim to fight against "all inequalities".

Despite the rise of all these groups and networks, few academic works have been produced on the Black LGBT movement in Brazil. Some of the works mention the schisms that originated in the organizations; however, just one of these works, Santos's (2015) on the Rede Afro-LGBT, analyses the political trajectories and repertoires of action of a Black LGBT organization. Moreover, even though it is possible to cite a great number of works focused on the intersections of race and sexuality in Brazil, most of them focus on sociability, desire, consumption, and sexual practices.

It is in this context, marked by conflicts and a plurality of political and social identities, that Aos Brados was founded as a dissident from an earlier organization – Identidade (the second LGBT organization of Campinas). According to its older members, the creation of Aos Brados was due to the lack of space and voice for LGBT from the peripheries in the Identidade meetings[9]. When Identidade decided to set up an e-mail list in order to keep in contact with regional, national, and international organizations and networks, the future founders of Aos Brados were very critical to the usage of the internet, since internet access was limited and expensive in the late 1990's. Therefore, they created the newspaper Jornal Aos Brados to reach people from the peripheries. Later that year, due to increasing disputes, they decided to leave Identidade to found their own organisation while keeping the journals' name.

As we pointed before, more recently, the group has gone through some changes; shifting from actions they called social activities to what they call cultural activities. The main goal of these activities is to fight homophobic, racist, and classist behaviour through performances that connects what the group understand as Favela culture, LGBT culture, and Black culture. The two main cultural activities organised by the group are Pedala Bich@ and Fejuka da Diversidade, both being given special attention in the next section.

The Cultural Activities

Campinas, where Aos Brados' actions take place, has a historical significance regarding slavery. The city was known for the cruelty of slave-owners, the refusal to accept the Abolition, and for severe restrictions of the presence of enslaved and Black people in public spaces (Martins 2016, Giesbrecht 2011)[10]. Moreover, Giesbrecht (2011) and Martins (2016) highlight that urban transformations in downtown Campinas are marked by the relocation of poor and Black people from the city centre to the outskirts. On the other hand, Campinas was a place where part of the Brazilian Black Press[11] was being organized, sowing seeds to new forms of Black Associationism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Aiming to rescue fragments of the memories of Campinas' Black and slavery history, in 2011, Aos Brados created Pedala Bich@. The name alludes to a central activity in the event, a bicycle ride. Bicha is a slang used to describe male homosexuals. Pedala is the imperative form of the verb to pedal (pedalar in Portuguese). Thus, the name is an invitation to ride with the group.

The event, which happened usually on Sundays, consisted of two parts: a bicycle ride throughout Campinas' downtown arriving in Largo do Rosário (an important square for public demonstrations) where a variety show took place. The ride was planned to cover streets of historical importance regarding racial segregation, with prohibition and social restrictions of attendance by Black people. Martins (2016) and Giesbrecht (2011) observed that even though the legal restrictions ended with 1888's slavery Abolition, the social restriction remained up to the 1940's.

As the riders arrived in Largo do Rosário, they were welcomed by the variety show hostess Grace, a black lesbian woman and founder of Aos Brados. In the 2015's edition, while cycling around the audience, she welcomed everyone. In the opening speech, she reminded that Black and poor people have not always been welcomed in public spaces and central neighbourhoods, remarking Campinas' spatial segregation and relocation policies. Adding that LGBT people share this exclusion, due to the fear of psychological and physical violence, and recalling that Brazil is the deadliest country for LGBT people in the world[12], Grace stressed the importance of being part of events like Pedala Bich@, as a response to the historical segregation imposed on Black, poor, and LGBT people in Campinas. She also addressed the whitening and gentrification processes of downtown Campinas, remembering that contemporary upper middle-class central neighbourhoods were formerly Black neighbourhoods and that these Black communities were dismantled and evicted in the second half of 20th Century.

Taking into consideration Leite's (2007) discussion on urban transformation and segregation in Recife, it is possible to understand Pedala Bich@ as a form of counter-usage of public space, and of history as well. For Leite, although gentrifi-

cation results in urban segregation, it cannot prevent the emergence of new forms of appropriation of the space named as counter-usages. Following the same logic, although racism, classism and LGBTphobia work intricately to erase and segregate people from public spaces, the segregation itself can be responded to by appropriations of the space such as the activities organized by Aos Brados. The narratives and history of segregation and slavery are central to Aos Brados' actions of empowering Black LGBT from the peripheries of Campinas. It is through retelling and rescuing these fragments of history that Aos Brados disputes and challenges meanings attributed to those spaces. Thus, when the activists cycle through streets and organize a variety show with a cast of Black and LGBT artists, they effectively propose a counter-usage of the space, appropriating, occupying, and claiming their right to use it.

In 2016, the last time Aos Brados organized Pedala Bich@, Grace introduced the cast of the variety show, this time an ensemble of drag queens and "partners" such as samba and hip-hop groups. In every edition of Pedala Bich@, Grace presented the origins of each member of the ensemble, usually from the peripheries of the city, by naming each neighbourhood. She also reminded the audience that most Black LGBT artists were excluded from the gay segmented entertainment market, especially if the artists chose to perform songs and rhythms associated with "Black culture" in a broader sense.

That same year, due to lack of municipal support, Aos Brados had to find a new venue, since the municipal administration would not offer a stage, nor authorize the use of the square, due to a restauration of one of the streets used in the event. Fearing they would lose the event, Aos Brados accepted to go to Central Station Cultural Centre, a municipal project in a deactivated downtown train station. As a part of the Secretariat for Culture of Campinas, the Station is the home of cultural and artistic projects and events in the city, most of them free of charge. The place has an extensive range of activities organised by local community groups. For example, the hip-hop movement of Campinas uses the Station as its headquarters, for rehearsing and performing.

The members of Aos Brados did not see the change of venue to the Station as a major problem. At one meeting, Grace recalled that the Station is "the home of the hip-hop movement of Campinas", a key partner of the group. For Grace, the change had to be followed by an alteration in the variety show, suggesting a dialogue with hip-hop and rap in their performances, to appeal to a wider audience that would now potentially attend the event. This suggestion was not made without political discussions amongst Aos Brados' activists. Hip-hop as a culture is often seen as straight and masculinist[13]. Therefore, Grace proposed that the move to the Station could be regarded as a kind of occupation of the home of the hip-hop movement, to demonstrate that LGBT people can also be part of hip-hop

and favela culture. In other words, the move to the Station and bringing LGBT and feminist artists to perform hip-hop can be seen as a disidentificatory deterritorialization as proposed by Muñoz (1999), since it occupies a space often seen straight and masculinist, with LGBT bodies.

In addition to Pedala Bich@, Aos Brados organizes Fejuka da Diversidade. Fejuka is part of the recent efforts of the group to act in the intersection between the LGBT Movement and the Black Movement through cultural activities. Moreover, it is also an event in which the group has been disputing not only meanings associated with Black and Afro-Brazilian culture, but also the ones associated with Fazenda Roseira (an Afro-Brazilian cultural centre and Jongo reference centre) as a site of African-Brazilian tradition. In Fejuka da Diversidade, Aos Brados works to show that spaces of African-Brazilian tradition are also spaces for Afro-Brazilian LGBT people, and can also be performed and produced by LGBT.

The Fazenda Roseira cultural centre – or Roseira – is located in Jardim Roseira, West Campinas, close to a previously poor neighbourhood that recently went through a process of gentrification. The premises are formed by an old colonial manor and two annex buildings. The estate, closed in 2007, was squatted by Dito Ribeiro Jongo Community and other local Afro-Brazilian cultural and religious movements, and re-opened in 2009, as a cultural centre. Since then, Roseira has been a site of celebration and protection of Afro-Brazilian traditions. Nowadays, the community holds the legal possession of the place.

In the opening section of this article, we described Jane's performance at a Fejuka da Diversidade event. Alluding to Afro-Brazilian religion Umbanda, she dressed and danced in a ritual manner and lip-synched songs with Afro-Brazilian influences from the Brazilian singer Daniela Mercury. Her presentation is an example of blending LGBT culture with Afro-Brazilian traditions. The mashup she delivered combined symbols seen as part of Black culture. Its genre, axé, is a musical rhythm from Brazilian Northeast with Afro-Brazilian influence. Axé is rooted in Afro-Brazilian musical movements from Salvador de Bahia and is strongly linked to Afro-Brazilian religious movements[14]. In addition, the song is a tribute to Ilê Ayê, an important Black cultural organization of Bahia. Moreover, if axé symbolizes Afro-Brazilian culture, Daniela Mercury[15], as a lesbian singer, is also taken as a representative of LGBT culture, since she came out publicly, which gave her some publicity in media.

However, not all members of Aos Brados that do drag are Black, but most of them come from poor backgrounds and live in the peripheries of the city. Claire is one of the few white drag queens that has been actively participating in Aos Brados meetings and activities. In 2016, she was the hostesses of Fejuka. By the end of the event she made a small speech:

> First of all, I would like to thank Fazenda Roseira for receiving Aos Brados again this year. As you might know, it has been a pleasure to work with you. I would like to say that this space here is very important for us. Not that I am criticizing the clubs where I work, the ones that pay my salaries, but here we have the right to create, we are free to dialogue with our traditions, to perform Brazilian songs and artists and to celebrate Afro-Brazilian Culture. (Fieldnotes, September 2016)

What Claire stresses in her speech is an aesthetic shift from the nightclubs where she works, to spaces such as Fazenda Roseira, where she performs as an activist. The performances of young drag queens, like Claire and Jane, are a vital part of the events organised by Aos Brados, taking a considerable time to arrange. When they are singing and lip-synching, the songs should preferably be samba, axé or Brazilian popular music – rhythms strongly associated with Black culture in Brazil. When the songs are in English, the group prefers the ones performed by Black artists, and rhythms associated with African-American culture, such as R&B or hip-hop.

Claire's perception of Roseira as a place to exercise their creativity and freely dialogue with traditions of their own choice, suggest that among Afro-Brazilian movements, somehow, her drag art can be performed in more experimental ways. Jane's perception follows the same path. Even if she, at the time, balanced between Candomblé and evangelical Christianism, it was important to her to explore and honour the Afro-Brazilian roots celebrated in that place.

For instance, different from the whitening foundation used when performing in nightclubs, in Aos Brados's performances some drag queens prefer makeup that emphasizes their black skin; and instead of blond and straight wigs used in nightclubs, they choose big and curly black hair. Furthermore, their outfits usually vary from most common drag gowns to African motives, as well as white dresses and turbans, in reference to Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé and Umbanda. If nightclubs are usually the best place to do drag – for its structure, technical features and public – the sense of creativity is constricted by expectations from patrons and managers. Roseira, however, when opening its doors to drag artists, transforms the audience's perception of tradition by embracing different forms of experimenting with Afro-Brazilian culture.

If drag queens performing and reinterpreting "Afro-Brazilian Culture" in Roseira do not seem to be a problem nowadays, according to Grace, this is only possible due to her critical engagements – or disidentifications (Munõz 1999) – with Afro-Brazilian tradition. Since the late 2010's, she has been also a member of Dito Ribeiro Jongo Community, engaging in the activities around Jongo, an Afro-Brazilian cultural expression characteristic of Brazilian Southeast that congregates

percussion, circular dancing and magical-poetic elements. When performing, the participants of *roda de jongo* (circle of jongo) are disposed in a circular manner, where a couple dance in the centre while the others sing and play percussion instruments. According to Grace, when she started to participate in *rodas de jongo*, she wanted to dance with women. Her girlfriend at that time was also part of Dito Ribeiro Jongo Community, and, since traditionally yoyôs (men) dance with yayás (women) in a roda de jongo, it was not possible for her to dance with another woman. After some debate and time, she was able to convince the members of Dito Ribeiro that she could dance with other women without contradicting tradition. In order to do so, she begun to dress like a yoyô, switching the usual long skirts for trousers.

For Handler (1984), the production of an objectified culture goes through the selection of what elements can be seen as part of that culture. What we have tried to portray in this section, is which elements, symbols, and activities Aos Brados uses and performs as part of the culture that the group aims to produce and how they relate to specific spaces and cultures through processes of disidentifications.

Conclusion

We explored in this article the narratives and performances that inform how perceptions of the city and its places are disputed, produced, and changed by the activities of social movements, particularly by Aos Brados, a Black LGBT organization from the peripheries of Campinas, Brazil. By presenting Aos Brados and its activities, we discussed how the group disputes the meaning attributed to places by recovering the history of exclusion of Black, poor and LGBT people from the city centre and by "occupying" places seen as traditional for the Black movement and the hip-hop movement. In such disputes, as we addressed here, the group's presence and performances create "new" places for Black LGBT people from the peripheries. In other words, Aos Brados' cultural activities disrupt the established signifiers related to spaces not by contradicting them, but rather by intertwining them with other signifiers.

While disputing spaces through their presentations, the members of the group are also disputing what is understood to be Black, favela, and LGBT culture. The production of culture in Aos Brados' events is a complex process of bricolage that reflects the reality of the members, as people whose lives are crossed by several cultures and identities on an intertwined axis of differentiation (Brah 1996). By taking drag as a specific practice of LGBT culture, they are reproducing certain ideas associated with LGBT culture (which of course is not an uncontested, stable, or fixed culture). At the same time, when they perform songs related to what is understood to be Black or Afro-Brazilian culture, they challenge assumptions

of LGBT culture as white, middle class, and Americanised. With the same logic, when encouraging LGBT artists (especially drag queens) to perform songs and other cultural expressions considered Black or "from the favela", the group is also challenging assumptions that those cultures and traditions are heterosexual and cisgender[16].

More precisely, the production of black, LGBT, and favela culture, as well as the spatial disputes in the group's activities, are processes of disidentification and deterritorialization (Muñoz 1999). As Muñoz proposes, disidentifications can be produced *through* processes of deterritorialization. The aforementioned Vaginal Davis, by singing punk songs and occupying punk stages, is not only disidentifying with the elements of punk culture seen as white and straight, she is also reterritorializing punk stages, occupying them with a Black queer body. In the same way Aos Brados, by challenging assumptions that favela culture and Black culture are straight and masculine, reterritorializes spaces traditionally associated with these cultures, opening them up to LGBT bodies.

These processes are not only changing cultural codes from within, Aos Brados is also performatively writing and rewriting cultural meanings alongside spatial disputes. Taking into consideration what Gupta and Ferguson (1992) have elaborated, spaces turn into places and places into new places when they acquire different meanings. In the cases here discussed, when places are associated with an established practice or tradition, we have seen that social movements, through disidentificatory and deterritorializating practices and performances, have the capacity to change the meanings associated to places.

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Notes

[1]When referring to our interlocutors, we use pseudonyms in order to preserve their identities.

[2]In Candomblé, food is associated with specific deities (orixás). Preparing, serving and sharing with fellow religious people is a form of connection between humans and deities. Feijoada is a dish associated with the orixá Ogum (Lody 2004).

[3]Umbanda is an Afro-Brazilian religion from the beginning of the 20th Century (Prandi 1990).

[4]The usage of the "LGBT" acronym rather than "LGBTQ" is due to the fact that "queer" is not commonly used as a category of identity in Brazil. However, we understand that queer is a central notion for theoretical and political elaborations produced outside Brazil. So, in this article, when dialoguing with queer theory, we use the term queer as un umbrella category that refers to LGBT, as well as other sexual orientations and gender identities.

[5]In most of Aos Brados cultural activities, partner groups are invited to perform. Some of them are composed of non-LGBT artists, but all of their artistic presentations are recognized by Aos Brados as expressions of Black or Favela culture.

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[7]Research funded by the National Research and Technology Council (CNPQ) and São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), grant number: 2015/11134-3.

[8]Authors Translation from the original in Portuguese.

[9]In spite of Aos Brados founders' narrative, some of the members of Identidade that lived in the peripheries of the city remained in the group.

[10]According to Martins (2016), Campinas was known for being the last city to abolish slavery due to the reminiscences of slavery practices in the city after the abolition.

[11]According to Domingues (2018b), the Black Press consists of newspapers created by Afro-Brazilians and dedicated to discuss their issues.

[12]The LGBT organizations in Brazil tend to base this information on the annual reports produced by Grupo Gay da Bahia (Gay Group of Bahia). According to the latest report, launched in 2018, 445 LGBT were killed in 2017 in Brazil. This information is available at: https://homofobiamata.wordpress.com/2017-2/. Accessed in 22nd of August, 2018.

[13]We highlight the critics of mainstream hip-hop culture made by Luana Hansen, a renowned Brazilian feminist lesbian rapper and DJ. Luana had participated in many Aos Brados' activities. In her songs, as well as in public declarations, she remarks about the reproduction of sexism and LGBTphobia within hip-hop.

[14]The rhythm's name axé, comes from the word "asè" in Yoruba, that represents the vital spiritual energy that exists in all living beings.

[15]Liv Sovik (2009) makes some remarks on the controversial figure of Daniela Mercury in the axé music scene. Mercury was born in an Italian-Brazilian family in Bahia and become a major success in Brazil and abroad in the early 1990's with her songs mixing Afro-Brazilian influences learned from Salvador Afro-Brazilian cultural movements and groups. She was recognised as an Afro-Brazilian cultural pop icon, but the groups that inspired her didn't share her success. Sovik highlights the contradiction of such a situation, since it was a white woman dancing and singing songs with Afro-Brazilian

elements that reached success and became the symbol of Afro-Brazilian culture and music.

[16]Cisgender is a term emerged from transfeminism activist discussion, a cisgender person is someone whose gender identity is conformed with the one they were assigned at birth. It can be described as the opposite of transsexuality.

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