

Street Declined in Masculine: Sexualities, Real Estate Market and Masculinities in São Paulo Downtown (Brazil)

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Abstract

This article addresses, theoretically, empirical data about the production of centers and peripheries in downtown São Paulo, taking as vectors gender and sexuality-based assumptions of differences. Such a thematic and epistemological approach comes from produced data which discusses the existence of a “gay street” in São Paulo: the Frei Caneca Street. Contrastingly, República region appears as carrier of a type of homosexuality less legitimate, poorer, darker, dirtier and sicker, and therefore, a less interesting masculine-feminized homosexuality. This article is based in two São Paulo city districts, located in the central region of São Paulo, República and Consolação. Such districts congregate most options for night leisure, shopping and meetings between homosexuals. A considerable amount of streets and sets of streets in this region are generically called “gay”, although the presence of identity-defined audiences is complex and variable. Their identities vary among lesbians, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals and queer people, and those who don’t have a well-marked identification. But what kind of space is gendered here? And how does this process impact space, city and people?

Key words: gender • sexuality • space • Brazil

Summary

In Portuguese, the term *rua* (street) is feminine. There is no neutral gender in Portuguese, either something is masculine or it is feminine, the closest possibility to an equitable genre declension in this language are the so-called *comum de dois* (two common) adjectives, as it happens to *poeta* (poet), a term used for both men and women. But in common parlance, things are either *ela* (she) or *ele* (he). Just like many other everyday objects, such as *cadeira* (chair), *mesa* (table) or *colher* (spoon), *rua* (street) is a gendered thing. This kind of qualification of an object, which attributes gender difference through inflection of certain terms that alludes to the noun in question, is commonplace in Portuguese and in other akin Latin-originated languages such as

Spanish, French and Italian. *Cidade* (city), for example, is a feminine noun in the four mentioned languages: *a cidade* (Pt.), *la ciudad* (Es.), *la ville* (Fr.), *la città* (It). In all these cases, the word *city* is a feminine noun, *the city* is a woman.

From its water runoff properties to the traffic area at towns, one could say that the street -“woman” is passage and stasis to men, is a place of change through the masculine. Social scientists show how the separation between the house and the street, for example, segregates *public* and *private*, *masculine* and *feminine*, *political* and *apolitical* as distinct dimensions in social life. *Rua*, a feminine noun, is transformed through the action of masculine collectives composed by men who work and interfere in the most important decisional fields, in the present and in its future. The street, therefore, inflects to masculine.

This article addresses theoretically empirical data about the production of centers and peripheries in downtown São Paulo, taking as vectors gender and a sexuality-based difference assumption. On the one hand, such a thematic and epistemological approach comes from produced data which discuss the existence of a “gay street” in São Paulo: the Frei Caneca Street. On the other hand, the República region appears as carrier of a type of homosexuality less legitimate, poorer, darker, dirtier and sicker, and therefore, a less interesting masculine-feminized homosexuality. This article is inspired from two São Paulo city districts, located in the central region of São Paulo, República and Consolação. Such districts congregate most options for night leisure, shopping and meeting among homosexually behaving people. A considerable amount of streets and sets of streets in this region are generically called “gay”, although presence of identity-defined audiences is complex and variable. Their identities vary among lesbians, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals and *queer* people, and those who don’t have a well-marked identification. But what kind of space is gendered here? And how does this process impact space, city and people?

Introduction

In Portuguese, the term *rua* (street) is feminine. There is no neutral gender in Portuguese, either something is masculine, or feminine, the closest possibility to an equitable genre attribution in this language are the so-called *comum de dois* (*two common*) adjectives, as it happens to *poeta* (poet), a term used for both men and women. But in common parlance, things are either *ela* (she) or *ele* (he). Just like many other

everyday objects, such as *cadeira* (chair), *mesa* (table) or *colher* (spoon), *rua* (street) is a gendered thing. This sort of qualification of an object, which attributes gender difference through inflection of certain terms that alludes to the noun in question, is commonplace in Portuguese and in other akin Latin-originated languages such as Spanish, French and Italian. *Cidade* (city), for example, is a feminine noun in the three mentioned languages: *a cidade* (Pt.), *la ciudad* (Es.), *la ville* (Fr.), *la città* (It.). In all these cases, the word *city* is a feminine noun, *the city* is a woman.

Let us go back to the term *rua* (street), from this city outlook. Etymologically, *rua* is a “feminine noun”, derived from the Latin word *ruga*, which, in its turn, means groove-shaped skin fold. This shape that names the street-thing refers to a half-cone, opened to the flow of water. *Rua*, in this case, comes from this L-shape, groovy shape; but the *rua* synonyms, *vala* (ditch) and *sarjeta* (gutter) – also feminine nouns – refer to filthy and degraded spaces. *Vala* can also refer in Portuguese to the place where we bury the dead, whilst *sarjeta* is the spot where drunkards and the dying can be found. In the *sarjeta* (gutter) are those who fell down; in the *vala* (ditch), those who are already gone.

From its water runoff qualities to its existence as traffic territory in cities, one could say that the street -“woman” is passage and stasis to men, is a place of change through the masculine. Social scientists¹ shows how the separation between the house and the street, for example, segregates *public* and *private*, *masculine* and *feminine*, *political* and *apolitical* as distinct dimensions of the social life. *Rua*, a feminine noun, is transformed by the action of masculine collectives, composed by men who work and interfere in its most important decisions, in its present and in its future. The street, therefore, inflects to masculine.

I would like to point out this phenomenon as a good manner of reflecting how spaces of a big city are gendered and I assume that streets can only be understood in their complexity if this dimension is considered essential to the production of sense, difference and discrimination. They are shapes through which spaces and subjects are characterized as feminine or masculine. This article addresses theoretically my ongoing PhD empirical data about the production of centers and peripheries in downtown São Paulo, taking as vectors gender and sexuality-based assumptions of differences. Such thematic and epistemological approaches come from produced data that discuss the

¹ See, for example: Souza, *O Espírito das Roupas*; Massey, *For Space*; DaMatta, *A Casa & A Rua*; and Rose, *Feminism and Geographical Knowledge*.

existence of a “gay street” in São Paulo. Frei Caneca Street, the so-called city’s “gay street”, exists in a legitimate way as a possibility to masculine homosexuality, fluxes following determined gender standards. Conversely, República region appears as carrier of a type of homosexuality less legitimate, poorer, darker, dirtier and sicker, and therefore, a less interesting masculine-feminized homosexuality.

Empirical data come from two São Paulo city districts, located in the central region of São Paulo, República and Consolação. Such districts congregate most options for night leisure, shopping and homosexual meetings. A considerable amount of streets and sets of streets in this area are generically called “gay”, although presence of identity-defined audiences is complex and variable. Audience identities can vary from lesbians, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals and *queer* people to those who don’t have a well-marked identification.

In this article, I intend to demonstrate how sexual identities’ definitions are contextually produced inside determined situations. I shall follow Brah’s (1996) approach to the production of difference - something also spotted by Hall et al. (1996) and Agier (2009) in his research concerning urban space. The city is not something meant to be taken for granted. I also employ Rose (1993) and Massey (2005) proposals on the feminist geography debate, which contests not only the gendered-space status in subject, but also the way it helps men in Academia to reproduce knowledge. Regarding this matter, and in a more incisive way, Butler (1990) gives evidence about how such an outline conducts to the naturalization of a gendered space. But what kind of space is gendered here? And how does this process impact space, city and people?

Gentrification and gendering: where streets, gender and cities interfere on urban planning

Binnie & Skeggs (2004) show how a region in downtown Manchester, historically known for its working class presence and housing, gradually acquired new characteristics. In the 2000’s, due to cheaper building plots, some pubs and restaurants targeting masculine homosexual audiences were settled in a certain set of streets, changing the outline of the area. The authors show how this process reveals the transformation of that place in the town, previously acknowledged as a Manchester-like place, into an internationally well-known location offering “sophisticated” and bold services. According to the authors, this region was compared to other areas with services targeting gay audiences such as areas in cities like Amsterdam and Barcelona,

making it less English and more cosmopolitan. Little by little, the gay presence made the space safer to women who defined themselves as heterosexuals, since they could walk around this place without being harassed. One could say that this process enabled the central zone of Manchester to become more feminine than gay, inside a cosmopolitanism logic that allows an expression of homosexual masculinity and disallows invasive and aggressive heterosexual masculinities at the same time. This course of events has also raised building plots prices, making these spaces of meeting, leisure and consumption prohibitive to the working class that used to be part of this region before the gentrification and gendering process.

There are similarities and differences between central zones of São Paulo and the Manchester case, especially concerning appropriation and acknowledgement of some streets as “gay”, investments in new options for night leisure and housing market investments over the past ten years. This also impacts people’s understanding of São Paulo’s center, and how it is characterized and valued. Two examples of presentation of Consolação and República in different media help in understanding the ways gendering the city leads to gentrification: new housing market advertising brochures and guidebooks featuring maps directing foreign gay tourists to places of interest in the city. On the one hand, both media build up an idea of *center* that displaces the official Center of the city, making it, therefore, more desirable. On the other hand, they design a desirable sexuality network on the map of the Center. In general, places such as pubs, restaurants and night clubs in the region which include Frei Caneca and Augusta streets gain centrality in terms of options offered to tourists, while spaces like the República Square and Arouche Square, historically known for their gay attendance spots, become invisible. In order to make the explanation clearer, I will briefly highlight some points that enlighten and shape zones, streets, neighborhoods and cities arisen from assumptions of sexualities as a definition mark. These spaces are located inside the República and Consolação districts, contiguous spaces in downtown São Paulo.

These two districts are among the most populated of São Paulo and their occupancy and urbanization started in the second half of the XIX Century - early occupancy, considering the city’s development. These districts include neighborhoods filled up with shops, bars, restaurants, residential buildings, hotels, office buildings, cultural options and offers of urban equipments such as hospitals, bus stations, subway lines etc. In these districts, for example, one can find the city’s Municipal Theatre and

part of the Paulista Avenue, two main São Paulo symbols. In spite of a greater presence of middle class and upper-middle class residents in Consolação than República district, home to people with lower incomes, there are streets that don't fit in these regions' outline. Furthermore, the gendered-gentrification process mentioned above has been altering sensibly this outline, leading to rapid socio-economic profile changes in both districts. Before moving on to the understanding of present actions and contexts, it's necessary to go back a few decades to locate the homosexuality question in the city and in the two regions and also to comprehend how differences produced in the relation between the two regions impact the understanding of each region's identity.

República, the oldest district, also includes the earliest public gay occupancy in São Paulo. Data stating this region as a space of meeting and leisure for homosexual audiences reaches back to the 1950s, in one of the first Sociological researches on the theme in Brazil¹. Posterior to this date, there's Néstor Perlongher's (2008) work of impact about masculine prostitution in this region. His oeuvre allows a broader outlook of República in terms of class, ethnicity and gender in interface with its urban occupancy in the 1980s. In this work, there is already information on drug dealing and drug consumers, one of the features that stigmatizes central region of São Paulo nowadays as dangerous, dirty and poor. This profile is in plain change. To the purposes of this article, I will consider especially República Square, Vieira de Carvalho Avenue and Arouche Square triad as the region of "República".

The Consolação district arose a little later than República, when the city's urbanization trailed to the route now known as Paulista Avenue. In comparison to the República, the presence of homosexual audiences in Consolação is of a more recent date, as well as research reports on the theme providing data on Consolação. As remarkable records there are the works of França (2006), Vega (2008) and Rocha (2013). These works show the 2000s as the turning point for the spatial change in this region: leisure spaces targeting gay audience's moves from southern region of Paulista Avenue to its avenue's central region, taking mainly Augusta and Frei Caneca streets. Puccinelli (2013) shows the transformations undergone by the region, focusing on Frei Caneca Street, to which a gay identity is assigned. A mark of this attributed identity was the Mall and Convention Center Frei Caneca opening in 2001, sued two years later for the actions

¹ "Homossexualismo em São Paulo", José Fábio da Silva's thesis, defended in the University of São Paulo and lost during the military regime. James Green and Ronaldo Trindade's work on its recovery has allowed its publication in 2005.

of a security guard, who cashed out a couple of boys who were exchanging in affectionate gestures inside the mall. The place was already known by nicknames which alluded to its customer's homosexuality, and the removal, together with the prosecution on the place, helped disseminate such identification even internationally.

Meanwhile, the real estate market expansion in Brazil and São Paulo turned to this region as construction site for new residential buildings. Once Consolação district urbanization is relatively old, there were no free or cheap construction plots for these real estate projects. Moreover, the decreasing presence of prostitutes on Augusta Street helped valuing the projects and multiply the buying options. Data gathered on the region, from real estate brokers, account for the dissemination of the idea of a gay presence in the region as an appeal to the arrival of new buyers and residents of these new housing projects. Also the valuation of the idea of living in the center of the city, a cosmopolitan and open minded space, aims to draw buyers by locating the center in this region. This occurred initially on the Frei Caneca Street, the city's "gay street", following, more intensively, on the Augusta Street, reaching Paim Street¹. This context resembles changes analyzed by Binnie & Skeggs, besides the fact that the region hasn't become safer to some segments of its goers². As already mentioned, this region includes the Frei Caneca, Augusta and Paim streets, in addition to Paulista Avenue. In order to simplify the explanation, I will be calling it "Augusta".



(The two regions, República and Augusta. Google Maps, 2014.)

Since 2013, the real estate housing market started to migrate to República region, where nowadays there are five real estate projects scattered on different streets. In spite of the

¹ The Paim street is a Frei Caneca street by street, which for a long time was known as home for poor, northeastern migrants (that suffer origin discrimination in the city of São Paulo and in other states from Southeast and South regions of the country), drug dealers' work, and home for prostitutes and transvestites. As great part of the housings were tenements, little by little the construction enterprises began to buy these housings for low prices, and opening the path for seven residential buildings in an area of five hundred meters, drastically affecting the housing profile of the street.

² During the process of Frei Caneca Street "gay" identity attribution and the profile change on Augusta Street, violence towards LGBT people became clearer and issued on broad circulation media. That is partially related to a larger expression of social media complaints in Brazil, but also for the fact that the region has become a reference point of LGBT presence, which makes hate crimes more frequent.

República region being almost neglected by traveling guidebooks directed to foreign gay-audiences, it starts fitting into an interesting central housing idea, also because of its gay presence. But the masculine homosexuality mentioned as an appeal on these distinct marketing contexts doesn't occur on the same way, neither does the market look for reaching every and any gay person. The term itself, *gay*, generically used, hides specificities of the people in flux thus classified, especially concerning a positively or negatively gendered space definition. It corresponds to a symbolic valuation of streets and city spaces, taking a presence as the exclusive attribute of this street that can interest future buyers. Similarly to what Binnie & Skeggs describe in their study, the use of the term *gay* helps creating real estate speculation to new housing and business for what it can congregate of masculine and buying power to this generic homosexual person. Brah (1996), in this sense, allows us to reflect upon how alterity is built in context: the homosexual *gay* person produced in Augusta values this region whilst homosexual *bicha* (fag) person produced in República devalues this district. Here, processes of spatial gentrification are intricately connected to processes of homosexuality valuation through a greatly normative masculinity. The street, as the city, in order to be valuable, must be inflected to masculine.

Hereafter, I approach the speech of two research interlocutors who shed light on the way in which gay street/space/city arises from the process here contextualized.

Two equidistant points: Adriano, Fernando and Eliel

In 2013 I talked more closely to people populating the leisure spaces on Augusta region, especially with clusters formed at a corner bar on Frei Caneca Street. My intention was to understand the dynamics of street spaces occupancy and how those who occupied them to have fun having understood the idea of hanging out on a "gay street". In a complementary way, I talked to region residents, some businessmen, and followed the real estate market expansion, observant to how these different dimensions complemented themselves in the comprehension of what was the homosexuality of the street. To a great extent, what is printed in the different speeches is a strong idea of (homo) sexuality legitimated by gender performance of who speaks in contrast to whom is spoken of. The interlocutors built a "me" and an "other", on which the latter was always disqualified by their more feminine expressions. It's important to notice that defining oneself as being gay, in this case, necessarily included defining oneself

masculine and, therefore, desirable. Therefore, the one who speaks is in the center, whilst the one whom is spoken of is in the periphery.

This production of differences includes other markers triggered with performances of gender, ethnicity, social class and place of origin in the city. Moreover, the contrast between undesirable profiles and places became clearer during the conversation with people like Adriano¹, for example. Tall, white, light eyes and hair, athletic, self-defined as gay, Adriano is 26 years-old and graduated Journalism at a private University. Nowadays, he is dedicated to Dramatics, working as an actor and producer, but also episodically works as model, photos being available on his personal Facebook page. Adriano was introduced to me by a friend who knew my research interests and knew about his former attendance on Frei Caneca Street, an attendance which has ceased recently. He lives with his parents, both physicians, in Paraíso, southeastern region of the city.

I chose fragments of this conversation with Adriano because it is illustrative for a large part of speeches about the “gay street” and its region, in contrast to the República region, although he has only been in República for a short period of time. It’s important to note that this contrast is spatial, and focused on undesirable people only a few meters away from Adriano, in other words, theoretically we would all be on the same region, but that’s not exactly how it is.

For our discussion, I suggested going to the mall or to a corner pub which becomes quite crowded on evenings and weekends, the “bar d’A Lôca”². However, Adriano suggested the pub Frey Café & Coisinhas³, quite close to the Frei Caneca Mall, since it was “*mais arrumado*” (neater): “the Bar d’A Lôca is also gay, but it’s very ‘*cagado*’ (shitty).”

Adriano relates purchasing power to a higher tolerance, information and “culture”. According to him, people in the region Augusta and at the mall had less purchasing power and, therefore, less information and education:

“People with lower purchasing power are more ignorant, have more prejudice, are very *tafinhas, cagadinhas* (*poor thing!, shitty*). But even so, I think there are

¹ All names have been changed.

² The “bar d’A Lôca” is a common pub that acquired this name for being next to the “A Lôca” night club, whose gay attendance is massive on some weekdays. Its official name is “To-Zé”, but almost none of its customers calls it that. Most of the people who consume at this pub stand on the sidewalk, even if there’s space to sit inside the pub.

³ The “Frey Café & Coisinhas” pub offers a more “sophisticated” and expansive menu, has a concernwithspaces decoration and the attendance of DJs.

more open minded people with low purchasing power on Frei Caneca. But in my opinion a person with more money, a family person, is more O.K. with being gay, with oneself being gay. In fact, the mall has become a 'gay hole', but that's good, because people can greet with kisses, exchange affection without having problems. At the beginning, I thought it was a normal mall and later I came to realize how things stood, because of two flirting moves. One took place in the mall's toilet. I was at the urinal and the guy next to me began to show his hard dick, trying to grab me, I left and realized that this kind of thing happened a lot there [laughs]. I don't come here to walk around. Because, you know, everything is related to money, to purchasing power. As lower the social class, more *PCO* fag, *poc-poc* fag¹, lower education and culture. Because there are niminy-piminy gays and men gays, but the latter are hard to acknowledge as gays"

Me: "And how would you define the Frei Caneca Street, where is it located in town?"

Adriano: "The street is in the Center, on the old Augusta, on the low Augusta, theoretically poorer. Augusta has a Center's atmosphere, it has beggars, whores, it frightens people because of robbery, there, on the lower part. Yet Frei Caneca is gay, so if you go down the street you're not so scared because gay people are not violent, you feel at home. The street is placid even if it's crowded. The Frei Caneca is welcoming, you feel at ease. Even the commercial employees here have a more open mind from seeing so much gay and the street has become a way to the gay having their space, every city has a gay space, in São Paulo, the most famous, is here, the Frei Caneca. In Center there was a gay street before the Frei Caneca, I don't recall its name, but now the gay street is here, because in Center this is minority, the gay are much marginalized and the Frei Caneca is the best option."

In the above excerpts of Adriano's speech, the Frei Caneca Street that arises is identified, positively, with some places, such as Frey, chosen by him for the conversation, but negatively when it comes to other spaces, such as the "bar d'A Lôca". It's Center is Augusta, and has in itself - a flow of people with lower purchasing power,

¹ Both "ploc-ploc" and "poc-poc" are adjectives which emphasize the effeminacy of a fag, making reference to the high heels' sound. "PCO" is na abbreviation to "*pão com ovo*" (egg sandwich), an expression which refers to poverty and this kind of food as only feeding option.

more “ignorant”, “*tadinhas*” (*poor girls!*). But, still, there’s something positive about this less desirable occupancy. Nevertheless, Adriano says he doesn’t wish to live there, he prefers the traditional neighborhoods in town, such as Paraíso and Jardim Europa.

It’s important to pay attention to the terms Adriano uses while referring to the lower purchasing power people have, always on the feminine. They are expressions that altogether help us think about class and ethnicity, since Adriano relates such “fag” (and not gay) people to assumed material and formation poverty, and spots examples amongst darker people relating to their color. The street is gay, he is gay and the place where he’s in is gay, but not the “others”. “His” street is masculine.

A few months later, I invited Adriano to go to a night club on the República region, and he accepted. I waited for him at a pub on the surrounding area and, in spite of being able to move to the region by subway, he preferred going by car. When he arrived at the bar, he made sure that I got in the car so we could search for a parking lot even though we were two hundred meters from the night club. On the way, he made comments about the people who walked through the region, emphasizing the danger and the dirt of the streets and the people, something that seemed to grab his attention.

A similar idea was presented by Fernando, even more emphatic in his Center definition as Frei Caneca’s location and, therefore, of undesirable people. I met Fernando through colleagues’ indication, for his frequent attendance to Frei Caneca, mainly to the “Bar d’A Lôca” and to A Lôca itself. With 24 years-old, self-identified as gay, Nipponese descendant, Fernando lived on Penha, a neighborhood of eastern São Paulo, and worked at the Paulista avenue. By his suggestion, we went to the Shopping Center 3¹, which to him represents the same space about which I intended to talk, Augusta region. I asked him what the Frei Caneca was:

“For me, it’s all about the mall. Bar d’A Lôca is exclusive for meeting friends, I don’t like it there. I prefer the Barão da Itararé pub, which is calmer, you can go there with your boyfriend, and there is a different audience. At the bar d’A Loca, there are many *ploc-ploc*, I think all this “*bichice*” (faggotry) is unnecessary”

Fernando says that the mall has a gay history and even people from the inner side of the state knew this, without even going to the place: “there are many *gayzinho* (faggies), but

¹ The Center 3 is a mall localized on the Paulista Avenue, on the block between Augusta and Frei Caneca streets.

it is an open place. At the mall, I always meet friends, but I don't go walking there. It's kind of shameless, you go to the bathroom and see some people at the urinal".

He said he went to A Lôca only twice:

"A Lôca is full of *calopsitas*¹ (cockatiels), people with colorful hair. But what I really like is going to The Week² when the Gambiarra party is held. There's difference between the audiences of one place to another, on The Week the economical class is higher, which is noticeable by the conversations, as well as by people's formation. To tell the truth, of all the gay clubs on Frei, I only know A Lôca. There's the Bofetada, but it's a pub, there's a cool, relaxed climate, the audience is different than the A Lôca's, less exaggerated. As for gay pubs, for me there's only the bar d'A Lôca."

Me: And does the Frei Caneca differ much from Augusta?

"Very Much! Frei Caneca is gay, has more clubbing options and prettier things, the street is more beautiful. The Augusta is more of an underworld, *darker*, with older building. There circulates a more... *indie*, rock, *over*, exaggerated people. But people of both streets walk through them. But it's impossible not to know that Frei Caneca is gay, that's in traveling guidebooks. Here is the gay region of São Paulo. Here is the Southern Zone, the Paulista is Southern Zone, but Frei Caneca is more central. I live in Penha, here is much more elite than there, and I would live well here, I mean, I only live on my neighborhood, I don't do anything there, I go out mainly here. Further from here, there are gay people also on Centro-República, over *there there's a concentration of dirty gay*, if you talk to them for a long time you might even get a disease, Aids, for example. There, people dress in a more flashy, more colorful way, are less educated, there are very lean people, with a kind of sick face. In República, it's also crowded with transvestites and male escorts, things you don't see here on Paulista"

Eliel speaks from another point of view and helps us understand the city's flows, the two highlighted regions, the discrimination and the masculinity expressions triggered by

¹ Fernando refers to the white bird with yellowed feathers on the top of its head, comparing it to people who have bleached or dyed hair with flashy colors, who go to A Lôca's.

² A big night club which defines itself as gay, localized on the Lapa neighborhood, Western Zone, and known for the presence of higher purchasing power customers. França (2012) has an interesting comparative analysis between different parties and night clubs in São Paulo, which includes detailing on The Week.

Adriano and Fernando. Eliel has a medium height, a skin considered brown or indigenous, dark and narrowed eyes and lives with his parents in Jardim Miriam, south peripheral region of São Paulo city. At the age of 27, Eliel works as a commercial agent of a food enterprise and defines himself as “jovem da periferia” (periphery young man) or “jovem LGBT da periferia” (periphery LGBT young man). Regarding his sexuality, Eliel defines himself as “gay”, but this word is not the most triggered as a presentation. He’d rather use a form of personal presentation which emphasizes his places of “origin”: coming from a region far from the Center and the LGBT militancy. Eliel is quite articulated with the municipal politics engaging LGBT people and that influences his speeches, but his transits helps us to comprehend the city’s self characterization in terms of legitimated sexuality.

Almost every Sunday Eliel is with his boyfriend and a group of friends on Arouche Square, which they call “Vieira” making reference to an avenue next to the place. The Arouche is next to the República Square and it’s part of the República region, being one of the places of highest numeric attendance of homosexual audiences, mainly on Sundays. On a brief look, comes to view a significant amount of people that could be classified regarding color/ethnicity as dark or brown, on clear contrast with the massive presence of white people on the Augusta region. Part of the clothing and hairstyles also denote a more popular, of lower purchasing power audience, similar to the one described by Adriano and Fernando. This similarity, in spite of being punctual, registers a more generalized understanding of the profiles of people who attend each region. But are Eliel and his friends confined to the República?

There are at least three places that are inside a preferential circuit in the routes of Eliel and his friends: the Ibirapuera Park (southern zone), a square in Tatuapé (eastern zone) and the Augusta (he makes reference to the Peixoto Gomide Street, in the patch that connects Augusta and Frei Caneca streets). It’s interesting to consider this last place, the Augusta, as part of Eliel’s, which he uses mainly on the Friday and Saturday dawns.

The streets’ days and periods of occupancy are punctual and determine larger or lesser appreciation for the space. The Eliel’s “Augusta” is not as good as the “Vieira” and, on that, the three speeches, his Adriano’s and Fernando’s joined: “There’s a bunch of people who go to the ‘Augusta’ get drugs and speak low of ‘Vieira’, but also go to ‘Vieira’. Many of them think that being on the ‘Augusta’ means being superior. There are only

junkies, 'A Lôca' is famous because there's only drugs". The emphasis, in this case, is the discrimination of República done by people who circulate in Augusta, including people who are always in República. The places occupied in Augusta would have power to make someone superior for their mere attendance, including a masculine superiority between subjective performances and the rating of other people as desirable.

Conclusion

This article's title and also its main argument might entail that this is a located explanation, of a very particular context which doesn't necessarily support itself in other definitions of the city's spaces or that it would be impossible to compare this article to those definitions. That is partially true. But the way through which Brazilians and those who live in São Paulo gender things, limited by language, doesn't reproduce the way every person genders space. This becomes clearer with a closer look at Doreen Massey's writing about space gendering and the political shapes this process implies. Thinking about English, a language which includes a neutral gender for things, but doesn't have neutrality in the gendered definition, the geographer makes relevant comments about how, in general, space is feminine. This becomes clearer when Massey discusses how great narrations give time power to change, to modify, to produce speeches whilst space can only be related to immobility, passivity and acceptance. The use of these poles to distinguish what is masculine, powerful, public and political, from what is feminine, powerless, domestic, apolitical is not new. It's not recent that several feminist social movements have contested the idea of political as a masculine property and the idea of domestic as something apart from politics.

Binnie & Skeggs, aforementioned, also demonstrate how a masculine, working class space, becomes acknowledged as gay to, later, start being recognized as a safe place for women. Perlongher (2008), Argentinean anthropologist settled in Brazil, shows how occupancy of the central São Paulo streets by male prostitutes can, at first, assign a masculine spectrum to such places; the work as a hustler, however, might bring them closer to women who sell their bodies and feminize them as people who have sex with men; still, money mediation reassigns their masculinity, and justifies sex as an objective profit vehicle; the sexual use, public performances and client-targeting appearance reinforces the male spectrum which perhaps hangs in the balance and, acting as virility marks and libidinal tensors, become male powers. This particular aspect interests us for its way to handle social markers of difference which print more or less masculinity to

subjects and spaces: the social dynamics, in the case of the prostitutes described by Perlongher, produce spaces such as corners, parts of streets and urban areas that are more masculine than others. There are masculine declined streets.

Facchini (2008), Salamanca (2010) and Puccinelli (2013) in different historical, spatial and national contexts, show similar processes of masculinity attribution to streets, neighborhoods and cities that work as part of the definition of oneself and others as sexually attractive, socially legitimate or at potential risk of contagion. It is not by accident that the idea of a “disease” arises in some speeches as property of the subjects recognized as homosexuals, but feminine, poor and with the risk of having “aids”. Here the disease overlaps the virus which causes it and gains an agency inexistent to its transmission: the possibility of contraction through a conversation or being close to these subjects, these *fags*. Such process impacts even the fact that specific actions for disease prevention take place in locations known as spots of homosexual men sociability in São Paulo, with almost full coverage to the República region. But in what does the described and analyzed data relate to the city’s real estate market?

Great part of the investment in new residential buildings in downtown São Paulo occurs in the Augusta region, as previously stated, with main focus on Augusta, Frei Caneca and Paim streets. The second, Frei Caneca, was the first to receive such buildings. While one could argue for the low price of these construction plots when compared to vicinity, it’s a fact that identification with gay audience helped guaranteeing the plot choice, the unities’ definition of profile and the targeting of advertising campaigns. Because of the restricted space of this article, I won’t be able to deepen this topic; however, it suffices to know that in all advertising brochures there are references to the region as “cosmopolitan”, as a space of experiences and exchanges linked to other city experiences, such as New York and London, for example. The existence of a gay attendance certainly made possible the achievement of this region’s internationalized status.

On the other hand, it is not any type of gay that can move around Frei Caneca Street. The previously highlighted speeches show how this region idealized gay is white, has greater buying power, which also gives him a variety of educational and cultural tools, he also has sophisticated taste and, mainly, is male. To understand oneself as male homosexual, as gay, is to move away from those understood as effeminate, fags, even if both occupy the same space, not over a few meters apart. A boy understood as fag, on

the presented terms, even if he's on a bar beside the one who defines himself as gay, will be allocated to the República. Not only that, but this República region boy won't be on the center of interests of one who defines himself as gay, and therefore the Augusta region. Such interests include, to some extent, living on the downtown, even if the highlighted speeches don't bring that on. However, the new buildings advertisements emphasize the benefits and sophistication of living on this center and its quick sales show that this speech is supported. The fags, effeminate homosexuals are considered poor, dark and potentially sick - they aren't on the center, they are located on the periphery.

It's interesting to notice how many difference markers are triggered and compete on the gendered definition of a space in the city. McClintock (1995) study about Massa's journals on the XIX Century and the obsession with the London working women shows how these women, who lived on the periphery of the city, were bestialized, masculinized and compared to racist ideas which considered Africa a place of savages. In our analysis, the more feminine a street is, the more negative. What values the address, in different senses, is the masculine inflection. That way, center and periphery, male and female join and produce people and spaces sexually desirable and unveil other senses of interest. The street, when infected in feminine, declines.

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