

Between Alienation and Revolution. Incursions into Collectives of Soirees in Metropolitan Public Spaces in Belo Horizonte, Brazil

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Abstract

Following the tracks of the soiree collectives in the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte, this article aims at analysing the role of the dimension of everyday life, which according to Lefebvre means the constant movement between the tendency to repeat and the capacity for social transformation, the constant movement between routine and invention. These collectives are formed by young people, most of them residents of peripheral areas who have revealed themselves to be holders of a new subjectivity capable of explaining their place in the world and justifying their existence drawing from the pride of being peripheral, which results in a new way of political action. The daily life lived, perceived, and conceived in the context of their social and symbolic place occupied by the peripheries and their social actors has been reframed in the face of a set of social transformations and, consequently, it produces new public spheres and new ways of expression of emancipatory struggles. The ethnography carried out seeks to apprehend the intertwining of poetry, performance, and the occupation of public space. The critique of everyday life reveals those patterns of behaviour, organization strategies of groups and subgroups, networks of relationships and networks of meanings, as well as systems of material and symbolic exchanges. Indeed, such collectives are expressions of everyday resistance, manifested in poetry, in bodily expressions, in the way activities are organized and performed. In these soirees, critical and political reflections are collectively created, making the creative and liberating capacity emerge.

Keywords: everyday life, public space, collectives, youth, soiree

To cite this article:

Almeida, R. de C. and Knierbein, S. (2023) "Between Alienation and Revolution: Incursions into Collectives of Soirees in Metropolitan Public Spaces in Belo Horizonte, Brazil", *The Journal of Public Space*, 8(3), pp. 27-44, doi: 10.32891/jps.v8i3.1417.

This article has been double blind peer reviewed and accepted for publication in *The Journal of Public Space*.



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“The Coletivoz soiree was a bit of a soiree that we used to go to, we crashed, me, Kadu, the guys from the hangout, who enjoyed this thing of poetry and words. This thing about the marginal soiree proposal, I think Coletivoz is a reference for everyone here in the city”
(Reis, apud Felix, 2016, p. 34, own translation)

In Brazil, the “Jornadas de Junho”, series of street protests and demonstrations led by the youth initially against the increase in public transportation fares, reveal practices intended to face the crisis caused by neoliberalism (Caldeira, 2013; Georges and Rizek, 2016; Harvey, 2014). This context highlighted the youth collectives and their constant presence occupying public spaces, with varied socio-spatial practices, in major cities because it results in new ways of political action, indispensable to the exercise of democracy (Gohn, 2013; Frugoli Jr, 2018). These processes bring important and historical research themes to the Social Sciences: youth (Mannheim, 1968; Pais, 1990, 1993), public space (Madanipour et. al. 2014, Knierbein and Dominguez, 2014; Joseph, 1999), and everyday life (Lefebvre, 2014; Knierbein, 2020).

Since the early 21st century, in the wake of urban cultural phenomena such as rap, a movement or a new practice of collective action (Gohn, 2018a) has been observed, produced by young people from peripheral areas that occupy public spaces for recitation and poetic performance. This kind of gathering is called soiree, referring to the early hours of the evening¹. This movement “is forming an independent “literary system” marked by the practice of recitation and the performative dimension of literature” (Salom, 2014, p. 235)². These collectives are based on self-management, autonomy, and mutual help, not resulting from a government-led program (Paula, 2016) and without mainstream market’s editorial support (Salom, 2014; Paula, 2016). Their voices, predominantly autobiographical, echo in the public space and reveal the everyday dimensions of the lived space, the result of the socio-spatial construction of a brutally unequal, embarrassing, violent, and coercive city. From São Paulo, these practices quickly spread to other capitals of Brazilian Federal States, such as Belo Horizonte (Rena, 2016; Felix, 2018), Fortaleza (Silva and Freitas, 2020), Porto Alegre (Fontoura et al., 2016), Rio de Janeiro (Bustos, 2020), and Salvador (Santos, 2019). Indeed, this finding reveals that this everyday life goes beyond the limits of geographic space and is interconnected with other everyday lives, of young people from other large Brazilian cities who exchange with one another and shout for recognition. It is in this context that the soiree arises as an instigating object of investigation since the critique of everyday life allows to identify the way in which individuals reflexively construct their ways of conceiving-perceiving-experiencing socio-spatial inequalities.

¹ The Portuguese equivalent of soiree is *sarau*, which comes from *serão*, the word originating from *seranus*, in Latin.

² It is important to emphasize that soirees are at the heart of a set of socio-spatial and political-cultural practices that are articulated around soirees, slams, poetry workshops, fairs, production of fanzines and books, added to certain forms of activism and virtual communication (Muniz Jr. and Oliveira, 2015).

Following the tracks of these peripheral youths and their ways of expressing, participating, and belonging that we take on the assumption, stated by Lefebvre, that space is a socially, historically, and relationally produced. Indeed, we let ourselves be guided by “human beings in their corporeality and sensuality, their sensitivity and imagination, their thoughts and their ideologies stand out; human beings who enter into relationships with each other through their activities and practices” (Schmid, 2012, p. 91, own translation) in order to capture the dialectical tensions between the tendency to repeat and the capacity for social transformation.

This research was carried out in the city of Belo Horizonte, whose name literally means “beautiful horizon”; horizon that can gain new contours when seen from the periphery. Empirical data was gathered by realizing participant observation in different soirees, and some informal conversations, the contents of the poems recited at soirees, and poems recently published in books edited by active members of such collectives. Therefore, anchored on the ethnographic method, the analysis takes an “up close and from within” perspective, seeking to apprehend action patterns that relate to multiple and heterogeneous, groups and subgroups, networks of relationships and networks of meanings, as well as systems of material and symbolic exchanges (Agier, 2011). As follows, we present a discussion about the urban periphery, considering its structural transformations and more emphatically the symbolic reconfigurations of the last decades. Next, a summarized history of how the soiree collectives were formed in the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte is presented. Finally, the voices and spaces of resistance are discussed in order to foster reflexive notes on these processes.

The dialectical process of reconfiguring the periphery

In Brazil, the periphery is a historical object of interdisciplinary research revealing the marks that characterize such physical-geographic spaces, the peculiar forms of sociability and the way in which forms of urban struggles are configured at the margins. Since the 1990s, in the face of a set of social policies undertaken in recent years, technological changes and worldwide economic restructuring (Duram, 2010; Georges and Rizek, 2016), there has been an inflection in the social and symbolic space occupied by the peripheries and by their social actors, both individual and collective, resulting in new forms of expression, political action and new subjectivities (Kopper and Richmond, 2020).

In this article, periphery is understood, in addition to its geographical meaning, as a realm which is both a relational-material space and assumes a perspective that such spaces tend to be translated and to be configured from an interpretative position, a position that reveals distinctions, distances and exclusions, permanent or temporary. Thus, the phenomenon of reconfiguring the periphery from the point of view of analysing urban form establishes a dialectical relationship with the reconfiguration of social space, obviously in tension with the other relational-material positions present within Brazilian society. As Bourdieu (1997; 2013) indicated, the concrete urban margins context can affect the representation that the agents have of their position in the social space and, therefore, their own practice. The perception that people have of their location within the wider urban context is inseparable from the perception they have of the dialectical relationship between that space and the other relational-material spaces that make up society, at that historic moment and in its historicity.

In general, in depicting the urbanization of large Brazilian cities, two historical cycles can be highlighted: The first, from the 1950s to 1980s, relates to a phase of industrialization and the rise of precarious neighbourhoods distant from the city centre, the so-called “peripheral urbanization” (Caldeira, 2015). These are spaces characterized by: a) the joint efforts to gradually build houses in which land and construction had not yet been legalized, b) by scarce infrastructure and public services, c) by the instable conditions of land ownership, d) by the ambiguous presence of the State, whose practices are essentially clientelistic, e) and by stigmatization and discrimination. These communities experience daily vulnerability, violence, including State’s violence, and difficulties in accessing housing, health, education, and work. Indeed, in this period, the relative morphological uniformity and social segregation appear to favour the development of similar patterns of sociability, leisure, consumption, labour market evaluation and particular forms of perceiving society (Durham, 2000).

As regards the 1970s and 1980s, a second period can be framed: the authoritarian military dictatorship in which social movements and organizations emerged. Supported by the progressive sectors, e.g. the Catholic Church, they fostered the so-called “insurgent citizenship” (Holston, 2013) in the peripheries, with strong participation of women due to the significant role they played in the struggles for housing and infrastructure facilities. These movements contributed to the achievement of several social rights that gave rise to the Federal Constitution of 1988 (Gohn, 2018b) and, in the following decade, to the Statute of Cities (Fernandes, 2007). Even if in a very uneven way, these spaces started to have more services and equipment, although of low quality. Such transformations carried potential to cause a diversification of the peripheral territories, both from the intra-metropolitan perspective, and especially seen from the marginalized perspective of the peripheries of the Brazilian metropolises (Torres et al., 2003, Ribeiro, 2016).

Starting in the 1990s, the second cycle showed phenomena such as: the forces to restructure production including technological transformations; the presence of neo-Pentecostal religions (Souza, 2009), new forms of cultural production (Kowarick, and Frúgoli Jr., 2016), and its social and spatial repercussions. First, the improvement of living conditions with the access of this population to urban public services was identified: pavement, street lighting, running water, garbage collection and sewage systems, health centres and schools were installed or upgraded, and more frequent and accessible public transportation (Durham, 2000) was established. At the same time, if, on the one hand, the new public policies and democratic and participative management practices, in the three spheres of government, were minimizing clientelistic practices from previous periods, on the other hand, they also made the social movements cool down. This period is marked by the emergence of more institutionalized forms of popular organization, such as the National Forums of Struggle for Housing, Urban Reform, the National Forum for Popular Participation, Participatory Budgets and Sectorial Councils (Gohn, 2018b). Finally, but not least, this period witnessed a considerable increase of violence and deaths, which framed the emergence of the new youth cultures of the peripheries where hip-hop and funk were its first expressions (Caldeira, 2015; Diógenes, 1988; Herschmann, 1997; Vianna, 1988). As explains D’Andrea (2020, p. 23, own translation): “The main targets of the genocide were (are) black male bodies. That is why the enunciation of the periphery carried out in the 1990s

started from this social sector, seeking mainly three objectives: to denounce social conditions, to re-unite areas that had been broken up during the war, and to pacify these territories”.

It is important to draw attention to the fact that, in Brazil, violent deaths have followed a gruesome pattern over the last years: in 75.5% of the total homicides, victims are young, male, and black (Brasil, 2019). That is why the term genocide has been used widely, from the media to scientific researchers, reflecting the brutal mortal rates (Alvarenga et al, 2021). This is an outstanding aspect since all this violence is experienced by those who participate in the soirees and are the authors of the poems. Indeed, D’Andrea (2013), by covering the peripheries of the metropolitan area of São Paulo, records that from the 1990s, the term periphery gains a sense of power: a space full of possibilities and forces. However, this sense of power is quite ambivalent: while it bears the hallmark of the emancipation from its historical subordination, it is also a place tagged with stigmatization: of the poor classes and of violent disavowal. The fact is that, at that moment, "the periphery claimed the word periphery to be their own, beginning a historical process of changing its meanings" (D’Andrea, 2020, p. 21, own translation). In effect, resuming Bourdieu (2013), this change in the perception of the social place occupied by the periphery, accompanied by its “use in a political way by the natives” (Magnani, apud D’Andrea, 2020, p. 21, own translation), observed by the critique of everyday life, can reveal “(...) the possible and the impossible, the random and the certain, the achieved and the potential. The real can only be grasped and appreciated via potentiality, and what has been achieved through what has not been achieved (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 340).

In the late 2000s, young people from the periphery were growing up in a democratic context, when there was a constant presence of NGOs; they had reasonable access to education and work while there was an increased availability of goods, especially communication devices that keep them connected to global networks. This is when potent cultural production emerges (Dayrell, 2005; Libânio, 2016). The peripheries then start to be the place of rap music and marginal literature, graffiti, tagging, skateboarding, and parcs, and all of them “soon articulated the idea that the city as a whole should be their site of intervention and that they had the right to move around and enjoy the city beyond the frontiers of their own neighbourhoods” (Caldeira, 2015, p. 131).

Thus, despite the differences between peripheries and peripheral subjects that were established since the 1980s due to an unequal distribution of infrastructure and resources, these will be suspended in favour of the collective struggles. The striking characteristics are activated to represent the collective, the peripheral communities, and to give voice to the struggles for rights. In fact, territoriality emerges as a category of space analysis of neoliberal processes, which brings together the local and the global, when it is constructed and deconstructed by power relations. They involve a very wide range of actors whose actions over time can be observed through *horizontality* (organized by social interaction and territorial contiguity) and *verticality* (formed by points distant from each other, connected by all forms and social processes that configure networks) in the sense of Santos (1979; 1994). The Brazilian urban peripheries are articulated horizontally, within each space, and vertically, among the peripheral’s territoriality of each city and among cities. This perspective unfolds in the

fact that political agency is inseparable from the city's spatial configuration and reflects its changing patterns of spatial segregation and social inequality (Caldeira, 2015).

This the context where the “peripheral subject” appears, described by D'Andrea (2013) as: the individual with a new subjectivity capable of explaining his or her place in the world and anchoring their existence on the pride of being peripheral, giving rise to new ways of acting politically. Corroborating these assumptions, Caldeira (2013), when addressing the media coverage of “*Jornadas de Junho*”, draws attention to: “(...) an image that went viral juxtaposed two photographs: on one side, a middle-class young man held a poster with the words ‘The people woke up’; on the other side, a bus burning somewhere in the periphery with the saying ‘I’ll tell you a secret: the periphery has never slept’” (Caldeira, 2013, p. sp). The dialectical process of reconfiguring the periphery shows the ambivalent condition of being and living on the margins, enhancing society's new possibilities for self-organization and social mobilization. These collectives, their forms of occupation of space and their voices and bodies resonate with their socio-spatial context and these territories recognize each other, in similar conditions.

On the margins of Belo Horizonte: Soiree practices and broken everyday life

In 2010, the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area comprised a population of around 5.5 million people, out of which 450,000 live in informal settlements. There are over 200 areas irregularly occupied (Libânio, 2018) which would fall into our understanding of peripheries. The city was planned under Hausmannian inspirations which is why it has been, since its beginnings, elitist and exclusive with strong socio-spatial cleavages (Harvey, 2006). Urban space was produced by following patterns of precarious urbanization.

Since the mid-2000's, the city of Belo Horizonte has witnessed cultural production growths in these informal settlements. And since the moment when these practices were mapped, the presence of an “invisible cultural network” has been revealed (Libânio, 2004), till then unknown by residents as well as ignored by the municipal and state authorities. In the “Cultural Guide of Shanty and Slums” (*Guia Cultural de Vilas e Favelas*), as part of a research project conducted by the NGO *This is slum (Favela é isto aí)*, data collected between 2002-2003 shows 7,000 people participating in 740 cultural groups, including professional and newbie artists. Most of these initiatives were free and had no institutional support or funding. Regarding infrastructure, 53% of the peripheries had no cultural facilities, even though in the other areas one may find 145 venues available for cultural practices, such as libraries, community centres, cultural centres, and adapted spaces (Libânio, 2004).

This mapping enabled to identify these practices, as well as their participants and promoters. Then people were able to get to know each other internally and externally, and as a result, the voices of the community got enhanced and amplified. As Libânio (2018) emphasizes, residents of the periphery, growing weary of waiting for changes, found new (-their own-) ways of responding to the challenges brought about unconventional forms of action and participation, navigating between resistance and resilience, using culture as an arena to build spaces for enacting their rights. Such practices even go beyond the cultural dimension and have an impact on the production

of space, since the condition of emergency lived in the peripheral territories “causes a sum of actions, political engagement, and activism to take place outside the technical, academic and institutional spaces – a sum of insurgent energies” (Velloso, 2020, p. 153, own translation).

There are, therefore, several examples coming from the peripheries in the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area (BHMA) which are expressions of power relations; some are becoming the object of academic-scientific studies, such as: Hip Hop in the town of Ribeirão das Neves (Costa and Silva, 2018), the Duel of MCs³, at the Santa Teresa bridge-(Campos, 2016), the cultural activities held at the Centre for Unified Arts and Sports in the town of Vespasiano (Reis, 2018), the atlas of the soirees of the BHMA (Felix, 2018).

It is in this effervescent context that the soiree collectives emerge, taking as reference and important hallmark the Cultural Cooperative of the Periphery (Cooperifa), founded in 2001 in the city of São Paulo by Sérgio Vaz⁴. This experience was an inspiration for a group of young people in Belo Horizonte who, in 2008, in connection with their working-class roots, invited activists from a neighbourhood called Barreiro to create Coletivoz (a play of words in Portuguese meaning “collectivoice”), under the lead of Rogério Coelho and Eduardo DW. This collective became the core of a network currently formed by several groups across the BHMA.

In the same year in Belo Horizonte, there were movements taking place in public space in the central area, such as rap performances and duels, at the Santa Tereza bridge, and the Station Beach, held at Station Square. The Station Beach denotes the youth protests of 2010, initiated in response to a decree by then-mayor Márcio Lacerda. The decree banned any events at Station Square, a site traditionally known for political gatherings. In response, protesters transformed the area into a playful-political space, mimicking a beach with chairs, towels, umbrellas, bikinis, and swimwear (Migliano, 2013).

From 2011 on, a swarm of sparse soiree initiatives took place: in 2011, “Mongrel soiree⁵” (*Vira-lata*), in 2012, “Among letters and patchworks” (*Entre letras e retalhos*), “Vagabond Soiree” (*Sarau dos Vagal*), “Brook Soiree” (*Sarau do Ribeirão*), in 2013, “Active Head” (*Cabeça ativa*) and “NoPoem” (*Apoema*), in 2014, “Soiree Common” (*Sarau Comum*). Between 2013 and 2016, a total of 12 new soiree collectives were created. Such collectives are in general organized according to their location, or as regards social demands, e.g. relating to feminist issues (*Manas* [neologism that means sisters], *das Cachorras* [bitches]), racism, environmental aspects, and others.

The central focus of this article is on the participant observation of the Common Soiree and on recent publications produced by *Coletivoz* (Machado and Oliveira, 2018) and by a

³ It is a battle rap, so MC means master of ceremonies or mic controller. It is an expression used for rapper, but the term is not limited to rap or hip hop and is being used in soirees, referring to the organizer.

⁴ This collective informally added amateur and professional artists from different areas who used to get together weekly in a small bar in the Jardim Guarujá neighbourhood, in the south of São Paulo. The objective was to publicise art, especially poetry, without the support or visibility given by the mainstream media (Nascimento, 2011).

⁵ Mongrel means a dog of no definable type or breed.

group of young female black writers (Oliveira, 2018). In a rich fieldwork, the Common Soiree stands out for being held in a neighbourhood in the Centre-South part of Belo Horizonte and for the fact that it organizes regular monthly meetings. *Coletivo*, despite being the pioneer, did not meet regularly throughout 2017 and 2018, which made it impossible to conduct field research⁶. However, the group's first collection brings together texts by poets who became a reference for all the active young people participating in soirees in the BHMA. In addition, many of these authors occasionally participate in the Common Soiree.

As follows, our analysis as regards the use and occupation of public space and the way socio-spatial inequalities in the BHMA are expressed in the poems recited and published will be presented by taking into consideration basic conceptual aspects of Lefebvre's theorization of the social production of space (Knierbein and Dominguez, 2014). This analysis combines research perspectives into the spaces of everyday life – spaces of repetitive *praxis* and innovative *praxis* (Velloso, 2020) –, which are full of plural meanings that coexist, crossed by clear physical and symbolic limits. Making the point of view of temporality, daily life, on the one hand, via a 24-hour cycle denotes the character of repetition and unites us with the dynamics of nature; and, on the other hand, it reveals itself framed by a given historical time, which belongs to a historical development (Wall and Knierbein, 2022). The critical perspective of everyday life is capable of synthesizing lived time – in contrast to the hegemonic framework of Social Sciences that tended to fragment everyday into different areas of study and research – the intersection of the spheres of family, study, work, leisure etc. In the words of Lefebvre (1972, p. 11, own translation) “the history of a single day encompasses the history of the world and of society” and “in it, those relations are expressed and fulfilled which bring into play the totality of the real, albeit in a certain manner which is always partial and incomplete: friendship, comradeship, love, the need to communicate, play, etc.” (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 97).

Actually, the critique of everyday life in the light of historicity allows to go beyond its apparent micro scale and lead to the synthesis of synchronic and diachronic orders (Viderman et. al. 2022). As Villoría (2004) points out, what interests Lefebvre is to reveal the subtle mechanisms that hide in everyday life and operate to prevent social transformation. It is at this point that we recognize ourselves, doing the observation and analysis of soirees, of the collectives and the young people who are the protagonists of these soirees, as well as the way in which this daily life is revealed through their poetry, and the path is taken here to understand the decolonization of everyday life. As Debord pointed out, since 1961, “this next attempt at a total contestation of capitalism will know how to invent and propose a different use of everyday life, and will immediately base itself on new everyday practices, on new types of human relationships (being no longer unaware that any conserving, within the revolutionary movement, of the relations prevailing in the existing society imperceptibly leads to a reconstitution of one or another variant of this society)” (Debord, 1981).

In addition, it is important to emphasize, as Martins (2012) argues, that the critique of everyday life in Latin America needs to consider the impossibility of everyday life, the

⁶ The ephemeral nature of the practices, the ties, and the bonds among the members are found in the contexts studied, which suggests that temporality is a core issue to be considered in urban analysis.

fragmented daily life, the difficult and broken daily life. Modernity is experienced at very uneven rhythms under the economic, social, and technological imperatives Brazilian and other societies are facing, and in terms of the fulfilment of the democratic promise. In addition, the transit between everyday life, dream, imagination, carnival, play and religion (including the very religious syncretism) generates a mixed relation towards the social world(s).

Voices and spaces of resistance

The Common Soiree, the object of this study, started in 2014, but its history goes back to October 2013, when a group of artists decided to occupy a state-owned old and abandoned mansion. After a lot of struggles and with the support of the local community, the state government formally granted this group of artists the right to use and occupy the mansion. Thus, the *Luiz Estrela Common Space* was created as a cultural centre intended for public use, and dedicated to art, culture, education, and politics, always in a collaborative way, guided by the principles of the Common⁷.



Figure 1. Luiz Estrela Common Space Main Facade. Photograph by Rachel Almeida.

Until December 2019, the Common Soiree was held once a month, always on a Friday. The mansion doors open at 7 pm to anyone interested in the event. The soiree's starting point lies in the conception of the ambience, shown through the way the patio is arranged: a large free open space, with cement floor and a few small trees. The resulting environment is perceived by the active members and the audience as very

⁷ Luiz Estrela, a homosexual individual experiencing homelessness, resided in Belo Horizonte. He gained recognition among artists and activists in the capital of Minas Gerais due to his active participation in cultural and political events. Tragically, he was murdered on June 26, 2013, coinciding with one of the June protests that faced substantial police repression. To date, his death remains unresolved, with no official investigation conducted. For more information about the Cultural Centre, see <https://espacocomunluizestrela.org/>

welcoming and intimate, yielding a sense of familiarity and privacy. Casual comments during events repeatedly value this ambience.

For the event itself, items of furniture, made of recycled materials, are arranged to configure an appropriation in a circle or a semicircle or, sometimes, a square. There is always a central void where the performances are accommodated. Additionally, a space is organized, the "Common Library", where books are available for consultation during the soiree by those who want to choose a poem and recite it. Displaying this symbolic collection also serves as a pretext to encourage newcomers to choose poetry and recite. As the photo reveals, lighting is quite simple and, usually, the moon is the main source of brightness. Some recycled containers are used as candle holders scattered on the floor and there are a few bulbs scattered on the walls. The space is informally organized, and it is constantly changed with the use of a great deal of different ornamental details. The logic in sorting out the space is quite flexible, free, creative, with no fixed marks. The lack of available funds results in different occupational strategies. Such practices corroborate the original intention of the collectives that maintain the Common Space Luiz Estrela, revealed in Priscila Musa's statement to the Ministry of Citizenship: "(...) restoring the old mansion is not about cracks and fissures, but restoring other bodies that occupy that space: the sounds, the tracks, the scents, the swirls" (Brasil, 2017, own translation)⁸.

Thus, every evening of Common Soiree, bodies and forms of appropriation express a public space being constructed where decisions are made together, creating a common destiny for the collective itself. This ritual of arranging the space is very symbolic and powerful as it organizes the collective at the same time. Countless meetings are strategies to gather personal and collective experiences which configure a collection "that carries the sonar of transhistorical voices, compositions that complement each other" (Bassi, 2018c, p.8, own translation). The Common Soiree's audience consists mostly of around 15 to 20 regular members and some 10 to 15 people who gravitate around the event but do not participate all the time and hardly speak up. They are young people and adults, aged 15 to 35 years old; male and female bodies, slight female predominance, heterosexual and gay, many are university students, there are a few couples, and a great deal of black people. The vast majority of the attendants live in peripheral neighbourhoods of the metropolitan area.

At the beginning of every event, the rules are announced, and a ritual cry is chanted. This opening is conducted by a young man or woman, one of the pioneers of the collective, taking the role of some kind of master of ceremonies and mediator of the same. After the rules are introduced, he or she calls out the audience for the ritual cry consisting of an interaction between a first person who shouts "Common!" and the others answer "Soiree", several times. Thus, it is possible to realize the opening ritual as a moment when the cooperation between the collective and the audience is expressed.

⁸ Priscila Musa is an architect and urban planner, playing a key role in the movement that took over the abandoned mansion. She actively engages in the collective management of this cultural center and has significantly contributed to the development of the restoration methodology for the building. When the Ministry of Citizenship featured an article about the Luiz Estrela Common Space as a groundbreaking and successful example of collective public space management, Musa was among those interviewed.

This practice makes everyone feel they are part of the moment, with no separation between the organizers and the attendants: they are all united. The microphone is then made available, open to anyone. The performances are quite varied. Regular members coordinate and take the lead, consequently setting the tone of the event. They not only recite but also encourage others to participate. Usually, the more experienced speaker stands up and recites something by heart. With quick gestures and movements, he or she occupies the entire stage and approaches the audience. Some people, however, do not get up to recite or, if they do, they speak with a low voice. Others protect themselves from shyness with devices, such as a cap partially covering their faces.

Such performances are a central component of the Common Soiree, and over time we notice and follow the changes in each assiduous member in relation to the degree of confidence and bodily expression in public. These bodies expose the marks of a peripheral everyday life, as Tennina explains, referring to the Cooperifa Soiree, in São Paulo: "The ways of speaking and rhyming, of approaching the microphone, of standing, the movements of the hands and the bodies themselves - which often show scars, diseases and tiredness, or muscles -, the presence and the character are affirmations of the "peripheral being" that, through repetition, installs driving schemes that make the environment recognizable and worthy" (Tennina 2013, pp. 17-18, own translation).

Bodies and words express the hallmarks of this form of collective action through which art, culture, and politics are interwoven. In fact, in the preface to *À Luta, À Voz: Coletivos Sarau de Periferia*⁹, Bassi (2018c, p. 8) explains that "the literature contained in this book is a meeting place, as one friend of mine says, it is the celebration of the word"). For Coletivos, these encounters are a process of collectively building a public sphere as "a soiree [is a way of] entering pacts, [between] bar customers, peripheral residents passing by, co-workers, artists, MC's, people..." (Coelho, 2018, p. 7, own translation). As Lefebvre points out, space is considered a field of possibilities where a differential space can be built, where space contains and is contained in social relations. "Then, the real is historically constructed based on a mental representation of the urban and the city as the material expression of this representation." (Souza, 2009, p. 4-5, own translation).

The ways of understanding social position and class position are very powerful ways of expression, as already indicated by Bassi: "His electoral ward was his comfort zone."¹⁰ (Bassi, 2018a, p. 96, Electoral Ward poem, own translation). The electoral ward shows how the relation of domination is sustained by the inequality of resources available to different social groups. In the urban society, power is expressed by means of the different capacity of groups and classes to unleash actions that allow them to compete for urban resources, including infrastructure, sanitation, transportation, services, and housing. In fact, this unequal distribution of resources reflects an uneven distribution of power itself. The electoral ward reveals the correlation between spatiality and the unequal access to resources and forms of political representation. Territorialities and

⁹ Collectivo soiree to the struggle, to the voice: of the periphery

¹⁰ The electoral zone in Brazil refers to a territorial division established for the organization of the electoral process. Each voter's electoral zone is located in the neighborhood of their residence.

vital needs are literally occupying public spaces. In the soiree circles, little by little, through each new meeting, these young people build space of commoning, which allows forms of representation and expression of their territories, as their centralities, and revealing their thirst, as vital necessities¹¹:

“My club's headquarters is on the corner,
We don't sing ornate verses,
We scream with a breath of aspirin,
Our sputtered dreams,
Through the mouth with a mint glow,
But it bleeds and stinks,
When, mercilessly, it places
Dirty words in my life.

The thirst of my corner club,
It's not of water, it's of a hundred different things,
Destroyed by forces more ruthless than Katrina,
So far away that they seem perverse,
This is my clubhouse, the clubhouse of other key players,
From footnotes of tabloids
Notes stained with our warm blood,
Written by the hawks that devour us.

My club's headquarters is on the corner,
But when it rains, it's a disgrace,
The streets get empty, with no mongrel,
Not a lost soul, just cold and nothing else,
Inside my shack there are only moths,
I swallow the anger, I choke. I breathe. More aspirins,
Thirst strikes, hunger crushes,
And the empty streets are ugly. Murderers.” [Flor, Priscila,
2018: 60, from the poem *Clube da Esquina* (club at the corner),
own translation].

Thus, and generally in a dialectical fashion, the expressions of the young active participants in the soirees reveal that all and any space has been previously conceived and produces a sensory perception (sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste), which is an integral component of all social practice that results from experience, from the lived space (Lefebvre, 2014).

A space in which the conception is given by the omission of the public authority and by the concrete material (im)possibilities. The space with precarious infrastructure that faces environmental problems and a life resulting from this condition, expressed by terms such as "cruel forces", "disgrace", "emptiness", "cold", "anger", "thirst", "hunger".

¹¹ For the understanding of this poem, it is necessary to note that in Portuguese the word “sede” means both “headquarters” and “thirst”. Moreover, it sounds like the verb “to give in” conjugated in the *present tense in the first person*. As the poems are produced to be performed the effect of the sound ambiguity is very relevant.

However ambivalently, it is also a representation that hints to the symbolic power of *Clube da Esquina*, a Brazilian musical movement, appearing in the 1960s in Belo Horizonte, which brought together young musicians who little by little gained recognition and had great influence on several other young artists.

Here we find a poet shaped by a socio-spatial reality and who expresses the dialectical relationship opposing objective opportunities and conditions to subjective hopes concerning one's life. A poet whose headquarter – territoriality – is marked by his thirst – a vital need – after all, "this is my thirst, the thirst of the other protagonists". And at the same time, he shows us his ability to give in – to transfer, to borrow, to renounce, to succumb, to agree, to diminish, to end, to sink and to widen – and or to resist: "(...) I swallow the anger, I choke. I breathe. More aspirins, Thirst strikes, hunger crushes, And the empty streets are ugly. Murderers." Territoriality, corporeality, and vital need are giving way and resisting, because it is in this context that we find "these forthcoming poets who wander about, up and down, an overcrowded bus, from nine-to-nine, who poeticise dreams, loves and utopias" (Bassi, 2018c, p. 8, own translation). As suggested by Velloso (2020) in the peripheries of large Brazilian cities, these collectively organized forms of resistance, even if less visible - because they are internally consolidated within the territories -, combine duration and ephemerality, protest and occupation rationales, in addition to different social arrangements.

Thereby, the lived space reveals a reality where it is possible to observe the claims of the absence or even the discretionary presence of justice, the police, the political and religious spheres, and the very capitalist and colonial rationales. At the same time, in a contradictory manner, they are configured in contrast to narratives that express strength, resistance, and dreams.

"The black [woman] that had no room
She is there, full of voice.
Ancestry took over
Now she just sings
And no longer hides in the corners.
No scams
Black is just strength."
(Bassi, 2018b, p. 96, Ubuntu poem, own translation).

This is the black, the peripheral black woman, who now presents herself with her own voice, supported by her ancestry and demanding her own embodied space. It is a space marked by a certain aspect of race/colour and gender, since the "peripheral territories do not only require their recognition and inclusion in a neoliberal state that reproduces colonialism, but that the State recognizes the epistemic, ethical and political colonial difference" (Velloso, 2020, p. 169, own translation).

Final remarks

The black woman, who had no time, is there; she is simply strength, full of voice. Poetry and art materialise in everyday resistance and demonstrate the role played by the spatial dimension in configuring the identity of peripheral social actors. Their speech is

moulded from and based on their social standpoint, which reveals individuals with a new subjectivity. They have built the ability to explain their place in the world and the pride of being collectively peripheral is the foundation of their existence and as fundamental part of their social experience.

In the footprints of youth from Belo Horizonte, more specifically in the footprints of the poets who participate in soiree collectives, a new way of expressing the chaos of antagonistic valuations can be perceived, lived and conceived in an urban environment which carries major hallmarks of omnipresent and disruptive socio-spatial inequalities. Far from the traditional social movements fighting for urban reform, which mobilized past generations, contemporary young people unveil other dimensions of expression, organization, and mobilization. "Common Soirees" are more than poetry, they are socio-spatial practices of spatial occupation, they are expressions of everyday resistance in the face of unequal conditions of urban experience and social existence at the margins. In this context, leisure, entertainment, and culture are combined into new forms of political action. It is in this intertwining fabric that everyday life materializes, and peripheral subjectivities are elaborated.

The discourse, the appropriation of space and the performances taking shape when the everyday artists gather again and again, through every new poem, every new presentation, every new circle of poetry. The creative and strong resistance of urban peripheries is portrayed not only by proclaiming the multiple forms of voicing inequality, but also by revealing the way these marginalized territorialities work, in constant movement, by creating new places for critical and democratic speech and action. Repetitive *everyday praxis* and *innovative appropriation of lived space* reveal the dialectical tension between alienation and revolution.

Acknowledgement

This research was supported by an International Fellowship awarded by the Urban Studies Foundation. The hosting institution was the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space (<http://skuor.tuwien.ac.at>) at the Faculty of Architecture and Planning of Technische Universität Wien in Austria. The fieldwork had the support of the Research Incentive Fund from the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais, between 2020 and 2021.

Our thanks to Lula Ramires who revised and edited the language in this article and has also translated the poems transcribed in the text.

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