

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN FUNK MUSIC

### GÊNERO E SEXUALIDADE NAS MÚSICAS DE FUNK

### GÉNERO Y SEXUALIDAD EN LA MÚSICA FUNK

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**ABSTRACT:** This work was developed as a project within the curricular component of Natural Sciences, on the theme "Life and Evolution" and analyzed the issue of gender and sexuality present in most Brazilian funk music lyrics, from the 2010s, from the 2017s and 2018. This musical rhythm brings stereotypical allusions of gender and sexuality, which portray the figure of the woman as an object of pleasure and with social representativeness inferior to that of men. The work involved two eighth grade classes, from a school in the interior of São Paulo, in the content of Reproductive Processes and Sexuality. The issues of gender and sexuality appear in the curriculum of the state of São Paulo as a transversal theme in the National Curriculum Parameters (PCNs), entitled Sexual Orientation. At the end of the work, we observed that the pedagogical practices used in the school context barely address these issues.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender. Sexuality. Pedagogical practices. Music.

**RESUMO:** Este trabalho foi desenvolvido como projeto dentro do componente curricular de Ciências da Natureza, no tema "Vida e Evolução" e analisou a questão do gênero e da sexualidade presente na maioria das letras musicais brasileiras de funk, da década de 2010, dos anos de 2017 e 2018. Esse ritmo musical traz alusões estereotipadas de gênero e sexualidade, retratando a figura da mulher como objeto de prazer e com representatividade social inferior ao homem. O trabalho envolveu duas turmas de oitavo ano de uma escola do interior paulista, no conteúdo de Processos Reprodutivos e Sexualidade. As questões de gênero e sexualidade aparecem no currículo do estado de São Paulo como tema transversal nos Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCNs), intitulados como Orientação Sexual. Ao término do trabalho, observamos que as práticas pedagógicas utilizadas no contexto escolar pouco abordam essas questões.

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Gênero. Sexualidade. Práticas pedagógicas. Música.*

**RESUMEN:** *Este trabajo se desarrolló como un proyecto dentro del componente curricular de Ciencias Naturales, sobre el tema "Vida y Evolución" y analizó el tema de género y sexualidad presente en la mayoría de las letras de la música funk brasileña, de la década de 2010, de la de 2017 y de 2018. Este El ritmo musical trae alusiones estereotipadas de género y sexualidad, que retratan la figura de la mujer como objeto de placer y con representación social inferior a la del hombre. El trabajo involucró dos clases de octavo grado, de una escuela del interior de São Paulo, en el contenido de Procesos Reproductivos y Sexualidad. Los temas de género y sexualidad aparecen en el currículo del estado de São Paulo como un tema transversal en los Parámetros Curriculares Nacionales (PCN) titulado Orientación Sexual. Al final del trabajo, observamos que las prácticas pedagógicas utilizadas en el contexto escolar apenas abordan estos temas.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Género. Sexualidad. Prácticas pedagógicas. Música.*

## Introduction

The objective of this study was to identify the musical styles listened to by adolescents from different social classes, from lower- and middle-class fractions, and how this can be approached by science teachers, from the eighth grade of elementary school, in their work with gender issues and sexuality.

For Bourdieu (2007b, p. 446), the word “class” is defined by its being-perceived, by its being, by its consumption – which does not need to be ostensible to be symbolic – and also by its position in the relations of production (even if it is true that this position commands that consumption).

From this definition, we have that the different accesses to culture depend on the amount of economic goods (money) that each family uses for the acquisition of cultural products, such as paintings, books or appreciation of musical concerts, plays.

Our theoretical framework was guided by the studies of Pierre Bourdieu, for whom the *habitus* inherited from the family helps to define the subject's attitudes towards his cultural capital and the school institution.

In the *Currículo Paulista* (p. 22, our translation), the “valuing of cultural knowledge and experiences through the students' prior knowledge” is highlighted as a starting point for understanding cultural diversity and the construction of knowledge.

Issues of gender and sexuality are addressed within the *Currículo Paulista* (São Paulo State Curriculum) of Natural Sciences from the premise that social issues are developed in a

live curriculum, that is, the teaching-learning process takes place within the historical and cultural diversity through problematizing issues present in the daily lives of students.

In this sense, the State Department of Education of São Paulo, with the objective of guiding pedagogical practices in schools, prepared the Curriculum of the State of São Paulo, aiming to support the work of teachers and improve the quality of student learning, creating thus, the Teacher's Notebook and the Student's Notebook (SÃO PAULO, 2010, p.7).

The Natural Sciences curriculum and its Technologies aim to improve the development of the necessary capacities for individuals to understand the actions that occur around them and to be able to modify their reality (BRASIL, 1997). Thus, the Science classes have a privileged space for theoretical and practical activities that include explanations about the phenomena of nature, the changes that have occurred in human development due to the manifestations and interactions of man in the natural space.

### Theoretical Reference

In this work, we explore the Bourdieusian concepts of *habitus*, cultural capital, economic capital and social capital to show that the style of music called *funk* is present in all social classes regardless of economic capital.

Funk emerged from rhythm and blues beats in the United States in the year 1950, passing through the rhythm of rock and soul, until reaching the present day. We highlight here the *funk carioca* (Funk from the city of Rio de Janeiro), which, according to research by Patrick (2019, p. 16), was not initially considered an artistic expression that represented the Brazilian people and the characteristics of the country, but rather a way of silencing the producers of this musical style, linked to the image of crime, drug trafficking and poverty. In this way, *funk carioca* is seen as the way that Brazilian society reiterates its stigmas about prejudices, values and respect.

*Habitus* is defined as the generating principle of objectively classifiable practices and also a classification system for such practices. It is seen that the various conditions of existence produce different *habitus* that will affect lifestyles.

According to Carmignolli (2019, p. 12), *habitus* is understood as a scheme of practices, productions and perceptions that express the social position in which it was built, enabling individuals to master classificatory social codes, necessary for understanding the social world.

As cultural capital we designate the set of symbolic goods externalized by individuals through their cultured language, body posture, diplomas, possession of works of art, books, among other materials that represent the dominant culture.

Economic capital, according to Lebaron (2017, p. 101), is the extension of patrimony valued in monetary units, such as real estate and various possessions. In other words, we can say that economic capital is represented by remuneration and material goods present in the social environment as a principle of differentiation between individuals.

Social capital, as defined by Bourdieu (2003), is linked to the set of resources linked to the possession of institutionalized relations of knowledge, being recognized when the individual starts to benefit from the social bonds generated. These possessions may cease to exist if the individuals involved in these relationships do not continue the work through which the social bonds were generated.

## Methodology and procedures

The work presented here was carried out within a qualitative research approach, through a case study and developed in two eighth grade classes of a public school in a city in the interior of São Paulo, which serves an audience of approximately six hundred and fifty students the final years of elementary and high school.

We started from the students' experiences through their musical tastes and developed a project to discuss some musical lyrics, such as “*Garota de Ipanema*”, by Vinicius de Moraes and Tom Jobim, “*Mulheres*”, by Zeca Pagodinho and Martinho da Vila, “*Lei do Retorno*”, by Mc Don Juan and Mc Hariel, “*Vou Tacar*”, by Mc Mirella, which address the figure of women, with the aim of relating music to the issue of gender and sexuality.

Sousa (2016, p. 17) states that when we listen to and analyze some funk lyrics, we see that the female identity is set to eroticism, promiscuity and objectification, in which the man is always the holder of domain and strength, emphasizing the inferiority of women. It was precisely this reading that triggered all the work.

The work in vogue is part of the interdisciplinary projects of the school unit that works with the theme of the role of women nowadays. During the month of March, when we celebrate International Women's Day, each subject, according to its teaching content proposed in the curriculum of the state of São Paulo, addressed one of the aspects present in our society in different historical moments.

Before starting the project, we surveyed the seventy eighth grade students from a public school in the interior of São Paulo, about which songs heard in the family environment spoke of women. From this survey, we explored the knowledge that the students had about culture, through the following Mafalda strip:

Figure 1. *Corpus periférico*



Source: *Corpus periférico*. Toda Mafalda (1994, p. 92)

In response to this reflection, most students responded that culture are beliefs, customs passed down from generation to generation over time. Continuing the project, the teacher explained the different types of culture: mass culture, high culture, popular culture, until reaching the musical influence on culture.

The last stage of the project was the deconstruction, with the students, of the stereotypes attributed to women at different times and the construction of the role of women in our society, which implies the development of individual and collective health within the perspective of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

## Analysis and discussion

Seeking to relate the learning objective that deals with body development from oneself and others, with an emphasis on the maintenance and integration of systems within a whole, we asked the following question: “What is the role of women in our society?”. To deconstruct some sexist jargon present in Brazilian society for decades, that the role of women was to procreate and take care of the house and children, we brought to reflection the role of women today and the analysis of the lyrics: “*Garota de Ipanema*”, by Vinicius de Moraes and Tom Jobim, “*Mulheres*”, by Zeca Pagodinho and Martinho da Vila, “*Lei do Retorno*”, by Mc Don Juan and Mc Hariel, and “*Vou Tacar*”, by Mc Mirella.

According to Lima and Zucco (2010, p. 104), songs act as devices for perpetuating asymmetric attributions between men and women and, in this way, the concept of gender is used to analyze the female figure, going beyond the biological issue.

Gender is constituted through social relations, institutions, symbols, discourses and doctrines, materialized in the mind and bodies. The songs were chosen based on the context of creation and the historical facts that permeated that moment. The analysis was carried out highlighting some excerpts, as we point out below:

<b>“Garota de Ipanema” (1962)</b>	<b>(Girl from Ipanema)<sup>5</sup></b>
Olha que coisa mais linda	(Look what a beautiful thing)
Mais cheia de graça	(Full of grace)
É ela menina	(Is she, girl)
Que vem e que passa	(That comes and goes)
Num doce balanço	(In a sweet swing)
A caminho do mar	(Going to the sea)
Moça do corpo dourado	(Lady of the golden body)
Do sol de Ipanema.	(From the Sun of Ipanema)

Vinicius de Moraes and Tom Jobim, 1962.

In this song, the students realized that the woman's beauty is being extolled. The first sensation they had was of estrangement and only a few said that they had already listened to this song at their grandmother's house. Then, the teacher intervened telling them the historical context in which the song was written, that is, saying that it was written in 1962 in honor of Heloísa Eneida Menezes Paes Pinto Pinheiro, presenter, businesswoman and former Brazilian model, known as Helô Pinheiro. This song was considered a Bossa Nova anthem.

<b>“Mulheres” (1995)</b>	<b>(Women)</b>
Já tive mulheres de todas as cores	(I've had women of all colors)
De várias idades de muitos amores	(Of various ages of many loves)
Com umas até certo tempo fiquei	(With some, for a time I stayed)
Pra outras apenas um pouco me dei	(For others I just gave a little of myself)
Já tive mulheres do tipo atrevida	(I've had naughty type women)
Do tipo acanhada, do tipo vivida	(The shy kind, the lived kind)
Casada carente, solteira feliz	(Needy married, happy single)
Já tive donzela e até meretriz	(I've had maiden and even harlot)

Martinho da Vila, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> The original lyrics were kept with a literal translation in front, the musicality was not considered in the translation.

The song “Mulheres” created a controversy among the students, as the expected objective for the work was not achieved. The students interpreted that a man could have several women until he found the “right” woman, that is, here we notice, through the students' speeches, the predominance of a sexist view.

Many students made it clear in their speeches that a man can have several girlfriends, while a woman cannot, because if she does, she gets the nickname “easy”, the one that everyone has already “hooked with”.

**“Lei do Retorno” (2017)**

**(Law of Return)**

Vou marcar de te ver e não ir  
Vou te comer e abandonar  
Essa é a lei do retorno  
E não adianta chorar

(I'll schedule to see you and not go)  
(I'll eat you and leave)  
(This is the law of return)  
(And it's no use crying)

Mc Don Juan and Mc Hariel, 2017.

The students said that this song was one of their favorites, as it represented them by the fact that, when they “fall in love”, they do not want to be refused and when that happens, they want to discount the embarrassment they went through.

Here, the female body is fragmented, represented only as an object of pleasure, in a performance that portrays stereotyped discourses on the use of the female body.

**“Vou Tacar” (2018)**

**(I'm gonna throw)**

Dá espaço pra eu passar  
Pra eu começar a rebolar  
Mas tu só pode olhar  
Sem querer vim me abuser  
Porque, porque o corpo é meu  
Quem manda nele sou eu  
Então pega a receita  
Que agora eu vou te ensinar

(Give me space to pass)  
(For me to start shaking)  
(But you can only look)  
(No intentions, I came to abuse myself)  
(because, because the body is mine)  
(I'm the one who rules it)  
(So get the recipe)  
(That now I will teach you)

Mc Mirella, 2018

The song “Vou Tacar” is sung by a woman and symbolizes, for the students, that it is the woman who rules her body, although it is also a song that exposes the woman's body as an object of pleasure.

These last songs are from the students' repertoire and, to show how much they know them, they sang them until the end and wanted to add others that also talk about women. However, the teacher took up the proposed questions so that the work would not lose focus.

Through these songs, we can analyze how the different selected composers treat the female figure, through words that enhance or denigrate the role of women. We take the opportunity to discuss the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy. This theme is part of the syllabus and is addressed within the Transversal Themes. Taking advantage of the developed project and the survey of issues addressed in the musical lyrics, in relation to the female figure, we focused on working on the development process and the female reproductive system. So, we realized how immature students are, by the way they expressed themselves in their concepts and points of view, demonstrating a worldview still with sexist remnants.

Therefore, we only address the development of the female body during pregnancy and the types of sexually transmitted diseases, content provided for this stage of teaching.

### **Final considerations**

From a look at the testimonies of students and reflection on the pedagogical approach to these issues, we realize that activities focused on this theme are still treated in isolation in the school context. Since this work is carried out only based on the texts present in the materials of the São Paulo Makes School Program, which focuses on Science teaching, the countless possibilities of working with other areas of knowledge, in an interdisciplinary and even with the use of different materials, such as videos, software were discarded. These materials could enrich the work with the theme, without prejudice and discrimination, we have here an example that this is possible, with the integrated work between the disciplines of Portuguese Language, Science, History and Geography.

The Portuguese Language course worked with the location of information in an explicit text, in which students had to read different textual genres and interpret which image of a woman is being pointed out and in what way. The Science discipline, as explained above, addressed the concepts of female development and reproduction, also through the reading of different materials. In History, the historical context of the country and the role of women in the years 1962, 1995, 2017 and 2018 were brought up. Finally, in Geography, the issue of regionalization and female representation was addressed.

The work with the issue of gender and sexuality, presented in funk songs, showed us that teenagers learn more when knowledge is part of their universe, that is, learning needs to make sense for these young people who live in a world surrounded by technologies. Through their cell phone, tablet or computer, they carry out research, interact with their peers, make



decisions and solve problem situations, so it is up to the teacher to review their planning to suit this reality.

But, above all, we conclude that these lyrics with vulgar words are present in all economic classes, whether they are more or less economically favored, as the rhythm is contagious.

What will be distinctive here is how this will be reproduced through cultural capital and social capital. According to Lebaron (2017, p. 103), the different types of capital are transmitted from generation to generation in a different way and related to the social context.

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