

Among protection, exposure and conditioned admissions: travestilities and sociability spaces¹

Gustavo Artur Monzeli^a, Vítor Sérgio Ferreira^b, Roseli Esquerdo Lopes^c

^aUniversidade Federal do Espírito Santo – UFES, Vitória, ES, Brazil.

^bInstituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal.

^cUniversidade Federal de São Carlos – UFSCar, São Carlos, SP, Brazil.

Abstract: This study aimed to understand, considering the experience of four young people who called themselves “transvestites” at some point during the research, residing in São Carlos (SP), the main techniques and strategies used by them for the manipulation of their own characteristics regarding their body, subjectivity and identity, in order to participate in certain spaces of sociability. Their aspirations and ethnographic contributions remain as clearly important methods to provide the demand for answers to questions of this research. This paper considers the multiplicity of ways to construct signs of what is considered feminine in bodies assigned as male. We discuss the strategies used by young transvestites to participate in different contexts such as family, school and prostitution. And in this context of these stories of protections and exposures these different realities are configured as an important issue for occupational therapy, specifically for social occupational therapy. These young transvestites, at different levels of awareness, identify the areas in which they can move more freely and the spaces where they should be more cautious, shaping their body, and subjective identity characteristics. Be accepted in different areas reverberates not “just” the inclusion or participation restriction and exercise of rights and citizenship itself, but especially reverberates in their own subjectivities therefore explain possibilities and impossibilities of “coming and going” in private or public spaces and especially the possibility to exist in these places.

Keywords: *Social Occupational Therapy, Sexuality, Gender, Transvestility.*

Entre proteção, exposição e admissões condicionadas: travestilidades e espaços de sociabilidade

Resumo: O objetivo deste trabalho foi compreender, tomando-se a vivência com quatro jovens que, em algum momento da pesquisa que os integra, se autodenominaram travestis, residentes na cidade de São Carlos-SP, as principais técnicas e estratégias utilizadas por elas para o manejo e a manipulação de suas características corporais, subjetivas e identitárias, a fim de se inserirem e circularem em determinados espaços de sociabilidade. Dado seu objeto, resta clara a importância das inspirações e contribuições etnográficas, enquanto uma metodologia que pôde fornecer os caminhos para a busca de respostas aos questionamentos desta pesquisa. Pondera-se a multiplicidade de formas de considerar e construir signos do que é tido como feminino em corpos assignados como masculinos. Discutem-se as estratégias utilizadas pelas jovens travestis para se inserirem em diferentes configurações familiares, na escola e na prostituição. No contexto dessas histórias de proteções e exposições, problematiza-se a pertinência das possíveis contribuições da terapia ocupacional nesse âmbito, mais especificamente para a terapia ocupacional social. Essas jovens, em diferentes níveis de conscientização, identificam os espaços pelos quais podem circular mais livremente e os espaços onde devem ser mais cautelosas, conformando suas características corporais, subjetivas e identitárias. Serem aceitas – ou não – nos diferentes espaços não repercute “apenas” na inserção ou na restrição da participação e do exercício de direitos e da própria cidadania, mas, sobretudo, reverbera em suas próprias subjetividades, pois acabam por explicitar possibilidades e impossibilidades de “ir e vir” nos espaços privados e/ ou públicos, e, especialmente, a possibilidade ou a impossibilidade de existir nesses locais.

Palavras-chave: *Terapia Ocupacional Social, Sexualidade, Gênero, Travestilidade.*

1 Introduction

This article is one of the results of a Master research from the proposition of theoretical and methodological integration. From the insertion of intervention experiences arising from demands related to a specific area of teaching-research-extension, the METUIA/UFSCar has been carrying out studies in partnership with social facilities, such as a Public School and a Youth Center² located in districts of Aracy city, peripheral region of São Carlos, Brazil.

This insertion has provided the perception and reflection of different issues related to the possibilities of comprehension and expression of identities and subjectivities of different young people living there.

Given these configurations and contacts established, the issues related to transvestilities³ are evident in our eyes in the more general context of that city and specifically this region, since the circulation of some “transvestites”⁴ young students deflagrated the inability of the school to live with certain differences. It is important to note that the word choice “live” shows the impossibility of certain subjective bodily-subjective-identity experiences in the school context.

The “problem” for the school began when conflicts linked to the fact that some of these young people decide to go with clothes and props identified as female, for example, the use of lipstick, nail polish, bracelets among other accessories.

As these props were used by these young people, there was a proportionally increase of school staff intervention, trying to minimize the visibility of what was perceived as problems caused by the presence of these young people and their female props in the school environment.

Thus, we wonder to what extent these institutional places differed from the street corners, place that they used to go and where they worked, related to exposure, insults and the everyday violence. At the same time, we find many ambiguities in the relationships and in spaces frequented by them, and also by us. The street corner that exposes and violence is the same that welcomes and gives pleasure, the institution should welcome and educate is the same that exposes and violence.

The main objective of the research was to understand, taking the experience of four young people who, at some point in the research, called themselves transvestites, residents in the city of São Carlos-SP, the main techniques and strategies used by them for the management and handling their own body characteristics, subjective and

identity, in order to be inserted and participate in certain spaces of sociability, specifically the family contexts, formal education institutions as well as prostitution.

We will present here some of the results of this research, focusing on the discussion of such spaces of sociability and their possible implications in the everyday life of the subjects in their belonging territories, pointing the circulation of these young people with repercussions in insertion levels, restricting or allowing their existence in different scenarios and social formations (ELIAS, 2001).

Transvestites are considered ambiguous by not fitting on consistency between genders, gender identity, sexual orientation and sexual practices. The premise sex-gender-sexuality asserts that sex indicates particular genre and this genre in turn, induces the desire. In this logic, it is assumed that sex is natural and it is understood as the natural given. Sex exist before intelligibility, being pre-discursive, prior to culture (LOURO, 2004), and each culture would shape, would print, its brands in this inert body and sexually differentiated by nature (BENTO, 2006).

This logic is completely subverted by several identity experiences related to sex, gender and sexuality. Transvestites, for example, mess up such a premise to carry a loaded body building of feminine signs coming from a body assigned as male, in addition to deal with the feminine article (“a travesty”) and at the same time, performing sexual practices considered male. It is clear that this subversion is not specific to the transvestites, since their customers performing sex programs are (at most) men, who treating with masculine article (“the father-of-the-family”) and at the same time, perform sexual practices considered female.

2 Methodological approaches

Based on the understanding that the attempt to rebuild the life trajectories is necessary for understanding and questioning the current insertion possibilities in relational contexts and work of individuals, it is clear the importance of the ethnographic inspirations and contributions, while a methodology research that could provide paths to search for answers to questions of this research.

The ethnographic research is not characterized as a longitudinal study, covering large population, searching for explanations in relationships between variables; on the other hand, it focuses on small groups to undertake in-depth study in order to

interpret the meanings of practices, motivations, rituals, beliefs, etc. (VILA et al., 2007).

In this sense, throughout the field period, between the months of July 2011 to June 2012, the four young people⁵ that contributed to the survey were Simone, Melissa, Claudinho and Jonas⁶. Simone was 16 years old at the beginning and had just turned 17 at the end of our field research; Melissa, Claudinho and Jonas were 17 years old at the beginning and all of them completed 18 years at the end of our field research.

With respect to this research, all the young people were accompanied in the aforementioned period, which occurred with varying frequency: in a few weeks were two or three meetings, while at other times of the research, the follow-ups were almost daily.

The field participation was quite fluid and depended heavily on the routine of all the involved in this process, having a monitoring daily with our physical presence or by telephone calls and/or contacts via the Internet. With different moments of presence – and absence – all they shared with us excerpts and clippings of their lives.

It is part of deepening in the biographies, the daily contact with them in different contexts, such as: at home, at school, in health care equipment, in the “nightclub”, in the church or in the street corner. The themes emerged from the various situations being real through our presence or through their own speeches. This is how we perceived and understood more clearly some lines/statements (PAIS, 2001) of these lives.

Considering the systematic recording of experiences in field diaries, held immediately after each meeting, combined with the thick description (GEERTZ, 1978) of interaction situations, we analyzed the data. The construction and reflection around the field diaries assisted us to better understand and systematize the life trajectories of young collaborators, pointing and organizing the main issues that arose from everyday experience with them.

Unlike what happened, for example, in an ethnographic of Barbosa (2010), in which he accompanied some “trans” people aged approximately between 40 and 60 years old, and trying to bring some coherence in the biographical reports, which he called “coherence of me”, the participants of this research, being very young, did not have long “trajectories” and “stories” of life but they have a daily edited and reissued through their own narratives.

It is clear that these young people, even though they do not traveled long paths of life, they can unite long experience of deprivation and exclusion,

and the older individuals can edit and re-edit their trajectories starting from their narratives and practices, but it is evident that in these young people’s lives we could follow, they have great experiences and everyday changes in their desires, in their identities and in their bodies, maybe worrying less about the biographical coherence and worrying more with the stories of what they experience.

3 Results and discussions

3.1 With the high heels at home or in the purse: about bonds and families

During the time of field research, we were able to closer bring the families of Melissa and Jonas, and follow the families of Claudinho and Simone although not so close.

All young people who contributed to this study are still living at home and living with their families, already observed by Duque (2009) when he suggests that:

Despite all the homophobia they are exposed at home since childhood (BENEDETTI, 2005), some individuals I have studied, have not broken ties with their families. Unlike what often happened with the previous generation, many transvestites teenagers have not been evicted from home by their parents, with a very different reality from the one described by Pelúcio (2007), in which transvestites, when they “assumed”, they had family space, as a rule, unsustainable [...] (DUQUE, 2009, p. 79).

Melissa is the one that, even today, uses feminine clothes and props in all places she goes, from the neighborhood streets to inside her house. Her family followed the whole process of her body transformation and aesthetics, and they know that every night when she goes out, she goes to Getúlio Vargas Avenue⁷ to work.

She lives with her mother and stepfather, both regulars of a Pentecostal church. Despite the strict religion on the concepts of man, woman and family, they do not see investments on Melissa’s transvestility processes as a problem, but on the other hand: sometimes, they even show some admiration, for example, when her mother shows us photos of the performances she does in some nightclubs of São Carlos region.

For them, the only problem is Melissa’s relationship with prostitution spaces because they always talk with

a lot of worry about all sorts of violence to which she is exposed in the streets and corners where she works, even more they know that she attends street prostitution spaces since 14 years old.

As for Jona's family, the big problem is neither the investment in body transformation processes nor exposure to violence in the streets, but the relationship he has with the licit and illicit psychoactive substances.

The speeches of her mother and her sisters show the problem is the use of drugs that for them, it is directly related to her dressing and attendance at places of prostitution; meaning that the skirt, makeup and high heels mean prostitution, which simultaneously turns into drug use.

The relationship Jonas constituted with some illegal drugs made the family along with the Guardian Council and the Center for Psychosocial Care (CAPS/AD), decided his hospitalization in a therapeutic community for detoxification and "cure addiction" by abstinence.

The main problem is that this Therapeutic Community, although contracted to the public health sector of the city, has guidelines of "care" based on beliefs, values and religious precepts. Thus, the health care processes, whether in the public sector, are mixed with private nature and religious procedures, in a performance that brings together contributions "supposedly" of professional/scientific and evaluative judgments, and of faith toward the imposition of transformation practices, behaviors, subjectivities and bodies. In this institution, Jonas had "care" and exist as "male".

In Claudinho's family, our relationship was a bit more complicated, because we never knew for sure how much his parents and siblings knew about his dressing and his circulation in street prostitution spaces, and because they did not know, we did not feel well to address these issues in our conversations.

Every time we find Claudinho at home, he was being a boy⁸, with a more or less tight clothing, but never a female prop, sometimes only traces and make-up leftovers from the previous night. Considering his family very religious and conservative, Claudinho does not dress up in his own home and when he goes out at night, he puts his clothes, his "picumã"⁹ and the high heels in the bag, and goes to the house of some friends, where he could more freely dress up for the evening.

For Simone, her family accepts the fact that she relate affective and sexually with men, and also sometimes dress up herself inside and outside her home. She says her mother likes to help her choose one or another outfit to go out and at the same

time, always want Simone to give her opinions to clothes and accessories, as well as to make her up and make different hairstyles, because she thinks her son has a lot of skills in this area.

Unlike Melissa situation, to which the heels and miniskirt are already part of family life, for the families of Jonas and Claudinho, these investments in transvestility processes mean the experience in prostitution and access to illicit psychoactive substances, among other possible violence.

It is interesting to note in the speeches of Melissa, Jonas, Claudinho and Simone that much of their social lives are divided between inside and outside the parents' home. This duality has other reverberations: at home, it is the place reserved for the attitudes and situations considered correct, while away from home there are the errors and less valued situations; all this takes place within a bourgeois and Christian logic of "right" and "wrong", which seems to integrate a more general, common experience among different young people.

Although they are not bourgeois nor necessarily Christian, they often share the established cultural values and valued as a norm, and though, they build their bodies, identities and subjectivities always in the relationship between the demands and norms of expectations and their own wishes and desires.

This logic allows Melissa negotiating the entry of a boyfriend in the house of their parents, and when the mother at first denies the presence of her boyfriend, Melissa uses the argument that she better be dating at home, close to her parents' eyes, than spending the night away from home, away from family reach and exposed to violence.

Like Melissa, Simone uses the same strategy to her mother helps her in the purchase of materials and instruments for her work as a hairdresser, arguing that she better works as a hairdresser at home than going to Getúlio Vargas Avenue to work in prostitution spaces.

This inside and outside is daily negotiated between them and their families, fed and fed back in this context; they can at different levels subvert this same logic on which they are based.

Thus, in addition to financial support, the non-disruption of family ties is certainly an important fact in that the prolonged stay in the parental home, at varying levels of awareness and agreement on the transvestility processes of the children, influences both on issues of social areas as in the constitution of social and personal support networks, repositioning some of these young people in different family scenarios.

3.2 On the road, with people and cars with people inside

Walking in the night of Getúlio Vargas Avenue with Melissa is always an adventure. Like other young people who participated in this research, she began to have sporadic experiments with paid sex market since about the beginning of her 14 years old. By attending this space for a long time, she knows well the places where they may or may not be, as well as among those she may be, those who are better for the beginning or the end of the night.

This region of Getúlio Vargas Avenue – or “Gê” as Melissa liked to call it to demonstrate her intimacy with the spaces – is constituted as a multi-territoriality (HAESBAERT, 2004), since during the day is characterized as automotive trade area – with numerous dealers stores to car sales, since the so-called “popular” to the most luxurious cars and numerous gas stations and machine shops, for being one of the main routes of entry/exit of the city – and during the night, the streets are transformed into female prostitution spaces, women and transvestites.

Walking with Melissa at night on Getúlio Vargas Avenue, we stopped at one of the corners where she often prefers to stay and we sat on a concrete wall a little farther, to not disrupt the flow or drive away customers.

The streets are somewhat empty, low traffic consisted of cars going to different places and with different speeds, some motorcycles, bicycles and sometimes people walking. There are imported cars, popular and, at any given time, a wagon.

As cars pass, Melissa combs her hair and corrects her lipstick, sometimes putting down her skirt and straightening the “neca”¹⁰. The people’s heads inside the cars – and also Melissa’s – run as well as their bodies, looking for something, it is not known what, but we can assume.

The interior of the cars are inaccessible worlds or a large display. What is individuality to some of them, it can be extreme exposure to other. The car that goes around and back again, may be the next money, the next “piris”¹¹, the next assault, the next boyfriend or the next ride home. May be the security privilege for some of them or the unknown threat to others, but both allow access.

Access to pleasure, money, the materialization of desire. Access to places, worlds colliding, meeting, embracing, penetrating. The car that can lead to the motel, at that moment, can lead them to the scrub, or home, or to the police station, they do

not known yet, it is expected. The wait can create tension, but can also give pleasure, lust and fear, all these feelings, expectations and emotions are mixed before the car stops.

With the same speed at which the car stops, the heart rate starts to increase. The car stops, the heart races and legs move into the unknown, sometimes too known. At that time, they swallow dry saliva and goes, hoping to be good. Good, certainly, is walking to the car, almost like a parade, like Gisele’s walking¹² on the catwalk: this is one of the key moments, the negotiation. Previously they were isolated bodies, one of them more protected by a car and others more exposed around the corner, but now the car has already stopped and the two bodies are much closer.

The parade serves both to bring the bodies and to assess the possibilities to carry out the sexual program. While walking, Melissa observed the car and its conditions (if its new, old, used, imported, automatic windows, power locks, etc.), as well as the person who is in the car (if he is young, old, “maricona”¹³, “sarado”¹⁴, if he is probably sexually active or passive, if he is alone or with friends, boyfriend or girlfriend, etc.). As for the subject (or subjects) in the car, those seconds act as a final evaluation, in order to verify if the choice was the best for the program.

After the parade and the first words exchanged, the next step could have two directions, one is to come back to the street corner, which rarely happens, because this whole process of initial seduction, and the other is the door that opens. When this happens, Melissa knows something she will get.

Melissa told us of cases in which she was asked to get in the car and, after a little time talking, the customer gave up the sexual program, which for her – and for many others who work in the context of paid sex – leads to confusion because, since they are in the car, the program starts, the customers willing or not; he has to pay for the time available for it, even though it has been a “loss of time”. In these cases when clients gave up the program, the solution found by Melissa is to “lock the car”¹⁵ and wait for the customer to pay or the car to be damaged.

There are different everyday survival strategies, including to fight back some situations of extreme violence.

Possibly, these strategies do not always work with all clients and in all situations; therefore, a “*tamancada*” to break the car window, sometimes it is what they can do, and at other times, running is just what is left.

As already well discussed in other ethnographies with transvestites on the contexts of the paid sex market (PELÚCIO, 2007; SILVA, 1993; BENEDETTI, 2005; DUQUE, 2009), as well as in the ethnography of Perlongher (1987) about the experiences of prostitutes, entry into prostitution contexts is not only resulting from the impossibility of access to “[...] the normal paradigms, but the factual refusal. The refusal of labor discipline and order logic can take forms directly of delinquency [...]” (PERLONGHER, 1987, p. 204). The study of this author points to the itineraries of the “[...] prostitution as an expression of rejection of these normal paradigms [...]” (DUQUE, 2009, p. 40).

More than forms of resistance and refusal paradigms, prostitution appears as a space that provides autonomy, enabling a financial income and especially as a mean and recognition possibility of existence.

This is important, since the contexts of prostitution is no longer considered only as a place of exhibition, exploitation and violence to be understood as important social areas (BENEDETTI, 2005) and learning of body building techniques –including techniques survival – for some young people.

In the social nature of the sex market, many find recognition and learn from their peers bodily techniques to build their particular aesthetics desired. In the case of transvestites, the process starts with the consumption of female hormones indicated by the more experienced ones (DUQUE, 2009, p. 40).

In Melissa’s every day, prostitution, besides being the primary means of getting money, for her and for the family – since with the money she earns in the night, she can help to pay some household bills – it is one of the few places where she can prepare and also be valued for their feminine beauty. The idea of being desired in the evening and pannies pay to be with her turns “poor gay beaten in school bathroom” in a “beautiful transvestite desirable for pannies”.

3.3 Just gays, or where the gossips start

The stories of Melissa, Jonas and Claudinho with the school are very similar; despite the flow of abandonment/return/stay/abandonment, all attended the same school and attended classes until they reach certain similar level, incomplete elementary school.

We know the three of them when they considered themselves as gays, more or less effeminate, depending on the context. The moment they started going to

school wearing women’s accessories was when the school began to regard this as an issue, a problem.

According to them, its own executive committee officially had never called any of the three to a conversation about the problems and difficulties they would face in school because they are considered gay or by walking in the halls all “*pintosas*”¹⁶. For them, the situation has only become an issue when women’s accessories have become part of everyday clothing, including inside the school.

The more quantity of accessories, the more this relationship became a problem for the school. What before was ignored or not noticed, voluntarily or involuntarily, it is replaced by a high visibility.

This increased visibility was at the same time, perceived by the reaction of other boys and school girls, who mingled among loves and hates, as they liked to say, dazzled and grotesque comments and looks, between desires and abjections.

It is interesting that for them, in the relationship with the school and with other students, there is an important difference between the “before” and “after” begin to dress up. A before perhaps marked by an “unnoticed” and then characterized by anything but the invisibility in school hallways.

This does not mean that when they were acting as boys, they were more accepted or did not have any problems with other students, because, as they told us, the gossips and confusions already happened, long ago, in the school bathrooms.

What this means is that for the perception of the school, the dressing up in the school environment, at least at that time, was the limit of acceptable, because when they were going to school “just as gays” it was as if there was not a problem, a matter to be perceived and resolved by management, even if they were beaten or assisting¹⁷ boys¹⁸ in the school bathroom. The question and the problem arise when the female props start to become more present in that environment.

At that time, the three of them were about 14 years and studied, as they always have, during the day, when the school board called them for a conversation about the problems that were going on and, as a solution, they suggested their transfer for the nighttime, with the claim that they would be more accepted by older students, who attend school at night and at the same time, they would not be bad influence for children studying during the day.

After the transfer, problems were not solved, nor diminish. They continue attending school with women’s accessories and remain the difficulties at

the time of “call”¹⁹ by the teacher, at break time or when using the restrooms.

Jonas tells us that the last conversation with the school was a little harder. The latest “solution” found by the board was to say that they were very well accepted in school, but if they wanted to attend classes, they would have to go dressed as boys, because otherwise they will not enter to school.

The transfer to the night period was difficult at first, because the class schedules coincided with the schedules of work, in that the three of them have attended Getúlio Vargas Avenue for some time; and after this intervention and the impossibility of them go to school already dressed up, the will and interest in being in school were decreasing, and they decided to gradually stop attending school.

The gossip at school also passes through the bathrooms. A door with a male or female symbol functions as a filter that, in addition to separating the elements, it exposes and identifies some differences. Many are the symbols for just two doors of possibilities, as pointed out by Beatriz Preciado, as the emblems are practically a genre questioning:

[...] male or female, ladies and gentlemen, male hat or female hat, mustaches or flowers, as if people had to go to the bathroom more to assert their genre to get rid of urine and faeces [...] (PRECIADO, 2014, p. 1, free translation).

In a school scenario, the bathrooms have a defining character, exposure and repetition of sex and gender norms, always situated in a heteronormative way, that is:

[...] The bathrooms are of high symbolic density areas for research of gender relationships and sexuality in public and school context. They embody and express ideas of body care practices and environment [...] marked by meaning of sex and gender (TEIXEIRA; RAPOSO, 2008, p. 1).

According to Cruz (2011, p. 78),

[...] our binary mode of work divided the boys-penis for a bathroom and the girls-vaginas to another. When in the school routine (and societies) arise those fleeing the classification process set up, the confusion is established.

Thus, there are no spaces or bathrooms, they can conceive the existence of a girl-penis or a boy-vagina as these bodies, first of all, are not intelligible.

By the time a person is directed to one of two door options, it happens a placement that runs through the individual and subjective plane, and reaches

collective identification levels; targeting, as well as a conscious choice, being also an identification and an exhibition.

Simone continues to study and currently is attending the second year of high school in a different school than the other three young people study. She does not feel free to use the men’s door and, most recently, she does not feel empowered to enter the ladies’ room; some confusion has occurred outside and inside these doors, from nasty jokes when she wore the masculine side to a warning of the direction banning her to use the ladies’ room.

When she goes to the male side, she decides not to go because she recognizes that in this place it is not fully filtered, their false eyelashes, makeup and some glazes get stuck and exposed, and know that this door may represent exposure to types of violence by the boys that enter and leave freely this passage.

At the same time, she cannot use the ladies’ room because the rules of the school, and not specifically this school, creating another impediment, a very accurate filter which again cannot filter it completely, and this time, which prevents through the door of the girls is his penis.

However, sooner or later, everyone needs to use the bathroom, including transvestites. In some situations, Simone said trying to not take a lot of water during the time she is at school to avoid having to go to the bathroom and, repeatedly, have to “hold” throughout the period, to be able to use the bathroom just in her home where she can come and go without worrying about the filtering processes.

As at present, the disorder is the door, or rather the problem is Simone who cannot fit into any of the doors, the solution that the school was found and suggested was the creation of a third door. In fact, this third door is a hidden and secluded little bathroom courtyard where all the students are in the range of classes and the male and female bathrooms are located.

This little bathroom with no light and sometimes without water is the filter through which Simone can pass completely, the reserved, exclusive place for her, a “corner” inside the school where she can be and exists. These games of visibility and invisibility, existence and non-existence, are constant in the life of Simone, not exclusive to her, but has repeatedly occur in her daily lives.

The sexuality device reconfigures and renews this scene, showing the limits of acceptable and unacceptable, what can be seen and what needs to be hidden, displaying constantly that borders exist and that the exchange rate and the actual inter-borders

limit are dangerously unstable and threatening. Thus, for those who do not fit the normative symbols of masculine and feminine, there is always – or not always? – a hidden little and no light bathroom.

The differences in location between the bathrooms position not only those who need to use the bathroom hidden, but mainly replacing the center of social life – in this case the courtyard – the standardized subjects (boys and girls). In this situation, there is no subject that is hidden and what is seen, what happens is that the situation is configured in a way that the geographic difference exposes interdependent relationships and hierarchies that re-updated their own limits.

3.4 Dressing and undressing for the occupational therapy

Taking the criticism drawn by some occupational therapists regarding the bases and foundations of the professional actions, social issues become intrinsic elements of a particular occupational therapy in Brazil (BARROS; GHIRARDI; LOPES, 2002).

In the early 80s, in Brazil, professionals concerned with generating social dynamics of a picture of extreme social inequality, seeking to discuss these issues within the discipline, asking if this would be a field object and specific acting method. This debate enabled to realize the risks and the need to define the limits of professionalism, showing that occupational therapy was defined not only within the profession.

The proposal for a social occupational therapy in the 1990s, takes new meanings and different implications, result of efforts to renounce the adoption of reducing models and simplifying perspectives for the understanding of social issues, redefining objects and intervention tools, establishing the profession wider bases (BARROS; GHIRARDI; LOPES, 2002; BARROS, 2004).

The central focus for the actions of occupational therapists out of the individual subject contexts (considered body / sick or deviant mind) and passes to the collective conjunctions, in which the cultural meanings can not be disconnected from personal experiences. Thus, the actions focused on the individual and their uniqueness, passes to think, to consider and deal with the community and with established relationships, trying to understand the interactions that act on the subject, determining the various forms and intensities vulnerabilization the support of social networks (LOPES et al., 2008).

The professional action contexts are in the extent that the institutional spaces and so-called therapeutic

scenarios give spaces of everyday life, valuing the territories where they live, the scenarios of identities and the different forms of belonging of the subject, individual and collective.

The social occupational therapy, when structuring their actions on and/or from the existence territories are faced with other problems that arise from this movement of “deinstitutionalization” of their professional actions, issues beyond rehabilitation issues or health care (BARROS; GHIRARDI; LOPES, 2002).

It is the immersion of different territories and in the daily doings of the individuals that technicians can know and learn in a better way, cultural diversity and changes (BARROS; ALMEIDA; VECCHIA, 2007). By recognizing other ways of organization and creation of meaning for many actions, occupational therapists can provide for the identification of differences (ethnic, religious, sexual, social class, generation, etc.) and production of social inequalities.

It is essential to bet on stimulus opportunities and support for different resistance modes (individual and collective) to dehumanization, inventing together forms of experimentation, learning, teaching and creation to combat inequalities and contribute to building bridges access to rights, to the development and deployment of processes oriented to personal emancipation (ALMEIDA et al., 2011).

Considering the actions that discuss the availability of more inclusive services and awareness and community participation in the procedures for settling problems, social occupational therapy can play an important role in the dynamics of articulation of these different levels, trying to contribute to the redefinition of public and institutional spaces, and the perception and appreciation of various demands arising from the communities.

In this sense, we identified the need and relevance in developing a scientifically based therapeutic-occupational practice and not just an impressionist and/or bureaucratic practice based on normative conventions about the realities and social experiences, often ideological and based on prejudices.

We start from the identification, within the school's institutional space, of a “behavior” that was a “social problem”, and whose resolution would be its restraint: the growing assembly bodily expressions of femininity by some students assign as male bodies.

It is essential for professionals to understand that the “social problem” is not in the fact that these young people experiencing these travestilities

processes, or their body dressing and undressing, but in the fact that these institutions when dealing with prejudice with these body transformations, preserve stereotypical views that fall on them, playing in their interventions, enforcement mechanisms and structures of oppression, domestication and docile these bodies and social experiences that they provide and are lived through them.

Faced with these new empirical and even ethical realities for occupational therapists, we tried to understand the changes that these young people represent from their own experiences in micro-territorialities inhabiting, trying to extend the legitimate field of possibilities within the institutions in which they live and participate in their everyday life.

The occupational therapists have to propose actions that are not justified by the promotion of “social adjustment” of subjects “pathologized” to institutional rules – towards standardization of practices, bodies and subjectivities – but effectively assume, within the scope of professional action, the need to understand the collective, institutional and interaction that also these subjects live their daily lives and give value and meaning to their practices.

4 Conclusions and some notes

Perhaps, the main conflict in these existing institutional relationship is no longer the access and integration of subjects at different levels of care and services. Perhaps the analysis should be directed to this network of services and institutions that works selectively, building daily boundaries that show who can be accepted and who cannot be part of that framework, or rather who should be included in that system marginally.

This system of “protection” consists of school, social assistance and health equipment, while saying the importance of integrating, prescribe the possible ways of being in these contexts, producing “symptoms”, stereotyping, criminalizing and/or stigmatizing to select.

When the school, represented by its director, comes to Melissa, Claudinho and Jonas to discuss the permanence of them in this environment, she only choose these young people because the “symptom” has already been diagnosed. This diagnosis is related to the articulation of differences of gender and sexuality – not only, but especially – and with the intelligibility of these bodies in the school context.

In this sense, the school institution that in speech and in legal terms, values the universal access, turns out to highlight the prerequisites for admission of

students, and consistency between sex, gender and sexuality an important condition, with the resulting in the inability to access and movement in this space, some people who do not fall into these standards.

Access to health services, as in the case of Jona’s admission in a therapeutic community because of the realization of “drug user”, follows the same as the school, in that in addition to the diagnosis of “drug addiction”, there is a diagnosis of incoherence of life that, for reasons based on religious precepts or even health, delegitimize corporal, sexual practices and gender, prescribing regulations which also act as requirements for admission to the health service, in which the main conditions, there are: pretend masculinity, heterosexuality and have a “healthy”²⁰ aspect.

These conditional admissions have a selective and prescriptive role of these institutions, and ensuring access, permanence and care with guiding principles, when it comes to contact with the changes and different ethnic, sexual, religious, social class, among others, these institutions continue prescribing and reaffirming consistent forms of access, inclusion and participation.

The road, which has also its standard and prerequisites, allows greater movement and experience of transvestilities processes; however, these processes of body building, subjective and identity, also function in a normative manner, since prescribe possible ways of living and cycle through those places. Not all constructions of femininity, and not all bodies that are recognized and can move freely in this context. There is a regulation of the desired female by them – and other transvestites – and desired by potential customers, as shown by other ethnographies (SILVA, 1993; BENEDETTI, 2005; PELÚCIO, 2007; KULICK, 2008; DUQUE, 2009).

In addition to the norms and function as a possible place of movement and existence, the road offers the possibility of living the risks of violence and the pleasures of experiences.

As already discussed, the family spaces begin to reconfigure the experiences of some of these young people, to the extent that what was seen as impossibility and restriction, is now part of everyday life for some of them.

Being at home, with high heels or hidden in the bag, it can mean acceptance or denial, recognition or delegitimization, valorization or shame, which can vary depending on the level of investment in transvestility processes within and outside the home, the levels the involvement of family members in these processes, moral and religious precepts of every

domestic scenarios, and the possible relationships established within each household.

Anyway, the fact that the family can be constituted as one of the most imaginable circulation and belonging contexts has repercussions in the experiences of these young transvestites to their desires, their expectations, their stories and their future prospects.

Thus, investment in contact and technical contribution which cross the institutional walls involves the need for enhancement of circulation spaces of the subjects as a potential recognition of different conceptions and quotidian, and the possibility of articulation and redefinition of own spaces.

For Simone, Melissa, Claudinho and Jonas, the circulation of possibility in institutional spaces and in the different territories – or the restriction of these various courses – shows the capacity and recognition of standards in certain more or less explicit moments, which refer to behaviors, the subjectivities and the expected and valued identities in each context.

These young people, at different levels of awareness, identify the areas for which they can move more freely and spaces to which should be more cautious, shaping their body, subjective and identity characteristics, depending on the wishes and desires to participate or not in certain areas.

When these young people dress and undress their bodies, subjectivities and identities, beyond the explanation of their wishes and desires, the limits and possibilities of articulation are evident to everybody with their spaces of movement and belonging. The different dressing levels problematize the various levels of acceptance and/or denial of the institutions and own territories, regarding to their bodies, their subjectivities and their identities.

Be accepted – or not – in different spaces, does not affect “only” entering or restricting the participation and exercise of rights and citizenship, but especially reverberates in their own subjectivity, because ultimately explain possibilities and impossibilities of “come and go” in private and/or public spaces and especially the possibility or impossibility to exist in these places.

References

- ALMEIDA, M. C. et al. Terapia ocupacional e pessoas em situação de rua: criando oportunidades e tensionando fronteiras. *Cadernos de Terapia Ocupacional da UFSCar*, São Carlos, v. 19, n. 3, p. 351-360, 2011. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4322/cto.2011.008>.
- BARBOSA, B. C. *Nomes e diferenças: uma etnografia dos usos das categorias travesti e transexual*. 2010. 130 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Antropologia Social) – Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2010.
- BARROS, D. D. Terapia ocupacional social: o caminho se faz ao caminhar. *Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo*, São Paulo, v. 15, n. 3, p. 90-97, 2004.
- BARROS, D. D.; GHIRARDI, M. I. G.; LOPES, R. E. Terapia ocupacional social. *Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo*, São Paulo, v. 13, n. 3, p. 95-103, 2002.
- BARROS, D. D.; ALMEIDA, M. C.; VECCHIA, T. C. Terapia ocupacional social: diversidade, cultura e saber técnico. *Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo*, São Paulo, v. 18, n. 3, p. 128-134, 2007.
- BENEDETTI, M. R. *Toda feita: o corpo e o gênero das travestis*. Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2005.
- BENTO, B. *A reinvenção do corpo: sexualidade e gênero na experiência transexual*. Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2006.
- CRUZ, E. F. Banheiros, travestis, relações de gênero e diferenças no cotidiano da escola. *Revista Psicologia Política*, São Paulo, v. 11, n. 21, p. 73-90, 2011.
- DUQUE, T. *Montagens e desmontagens: vergonha, estigma e desejo na construção das travestilidades na adolescência*. 2009. 163 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Sociologia) – Universidade Federal de São Carlos, São Carlos, 2009.
- ELIAS, N. *A sociedade de corte: investigação sobre a sociologia da realeza e da aristocracia de corte*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed, 2001.
- GEERTZ, C. Uma descrição densa: por uma teoria interpretativa da cultura. In: GEERTZ, C. *A interpretação das culturas*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1978. p. 13-41.
- HAESBAERT, R. *O mito da desterritorialização: do “fim dos territórios” à multi-territorialidade*. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2004.
- HALL, S. *A identidade cultural na Pós-Modernidade*. Porto Alegre: DP&A, 2006.
- KULICK, D. *Travesti - prostituição, sexo, gênero e cultura no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fiocruz, 2008.
- LOPES, R. E. et al. Juventude pobre, violência e cidadania. *Saúde e sociedade*, São Paulo, v. 17, n. 3, p. 63-76, 2008. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0104-12902008000300008>.
- LOURO, G. L. *Um corpo estranho*. Ensaios sobre sexualidade e teoria queer. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2004.
- PAIS, J. M. *Ganchos, tachos e biscates: jovens, trabalho e futuro*. Porto: Âmbar, 2001.
- PELÚCIO, L. *Nos nervos, na carne, na pele: uma etnografia travesti sobre o modelo preventivo de aids*. 2007.

264 f. Tese (Doutorado em Ciências Sociais) – Universidade Federal de São Carlos, São Carlos, 2007.

PERES, W. S. *Subjetividade das travestis brasileiras: da vulnerabilidade da estigmatização à construção da cidadania*. 2005. 201 f. Tese (Doutorado em Saúde Coletiva) – Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2005.

PERLONGHER, N. *O negócio do michê*. São Paulo: Fundação Perseu Abramo, 1987.

PRECIADO, B. *Basura y género, mear/cagar. masculinolfemenino*. Disponível em: <www.hartza.com/basura.htm>. Acesso em: 20 jan. 2014.

SILVA, H. R. S. *Travesti: a invenção do feminino*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume-Dumará, 1993.

TEIXEIRA, A. B. M.; RAPOSO, A. E. S. S. Banheiros escolares promotores de diferenças de gênero. In: SEMINÁRIO INTERNACIONAL FAZENDO GÊNERO: CORPO, VIOLÊNCIA E PODER, 8., 2008, Florianópolis. *Anais...* Florianópolis: UFSC, 2008. Disponível em: <<http://30reuniao.anped.org.br/trabalhos/GT23-3472--Int.pdf>>. Acesso em: 20 jun. 2013.

VILA, V. S. C. et al. Pesquisa etnográfica em saúde: sua apreciação por Comitês de Ética em Pesquisa. *Revista da SOCERJ*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 20, n. 3, p. 240-242, 2007.

Author's Contributions

Gustavo Artur Monzeli proposed research, collected and analyzed data, under supervision, at all stages, Roseli Esquerdo Lopes and supervision of Vitor Sérgio Ferreira, during the probationary period in the Youth Permanent Observatory at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon; initially drafted this text, which had a critical review of two other authors. All authors approved the final version of the text.

Notes

¹ This article is one of the master's research developments entitled *At home, on the road or at school is so much gossip: social areas of young transvestites*, developed with support from FAPESP (Support Foundation of São Paulo Research) - Process N° 2011/03536-3, whose theme was part of the internship work plan in Research Abroad, also funded by FAPESP (Process N° 2012/03162-9), under the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon.

² In order to promote cross-sectoral action for young people in the city of São Carlos, the City opened in 2008, the Youth Center "Elaine Vivianne", social equipment that provides a link between the Departments of Health, Education, Culture, Sports and Leisure; their coordination is referenced in the Special Municipal Secretary for Children and Youth and it is intended that the actions of this service to create and expand alternative culture, leisure, education and vocational training for young people in Aracy City region.

³ Term created by Peres (2005), referring to the variety of identity processes by which transvestites pass to constitute as "feminine" and, further, not only to mark their heterogeneity, but also to replace the suffix "ism" which would refer to pathologies. This term is used in erasure (HALL, 2006), in that it operates in a queer problematic in which a term systematically employed to offend stigmatize and disqualify is used as a way of offering new significance (PELÚCIO, 2007).

⁴ Nesta pesquisa, considerou-se, assim como Barbosa (2010), o termo "travesti" para pessoas que foram assignadas como nascidas do sexo masculino e que constroem o que consideram feminino em seus corpos.

In this research, it was considered, and Barbosa (2010), the term "transvestite" for people who have been assigned as born male and building what they consider women in their bodies.

⁵ The choice for the use of the female article in Portuguese is given as well to Pelúcio (2007), both on a political position (related to the demands of social movements) and for the way they are treated themselves; even when referring to male name they end up using the article in the female.

⁶ Fictitious names

⁷ Avenue is known for being the main female prostitution point, women and transvestites in the city of São Carlos.

⁸ Neste contexto, a expressão significa se passar por um rapaz.

⁹ Weg.

¹⁰ Penis.

¹¹ Cocaine.

¹² Referring to Gisele Bündchen, a leading Brazilian model, known worldwide.

¹³ Client of a program that has male mannerisms, but that often is passive in sex (PELÚCIO, 2007). It can also refer to older customers.

¹⁴ Generally refers to men with male mannerisms and which are stronger, bodybuilding activities of practitioners.

¹⁵ Melissa explains that the car can be caught pulling the brake-to-hand while it takes the car-of-touch key, turning it off completely.

¹⁶ “Pintosa” or “dando pinta” refers to homo-oriented person who shows that in his behavior, his sexual orientation (PELÚCIO, 2007).

¹⁷ “Assist” can refer to carry out a program or even doing unpaid sex.

¹⁸ Boys.

¹⁹ The time of “call” is when the teachers at the beginning or end of class, check for the presence of students from a list of all the names.

²⁰ Healthy in the sense of consistency between sex, gender, body and sexuality.