

COOL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUNG FUNK MUSIC CONSUMERS

A Construção da Identidade Cool no Contexto dos Consumidores Jovens de Funk

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Abstract

Goal: This paper reports the results of a research that aimed to understand the articulation between sociocultural practices and symbolic processes in the construction of a cool identity by young people inserted in the funk environment.

Method: Fieldwork focused on participant observation at funk events and dances and in-depth interviews with 3 MCs and 26 young people. To analyze the data, the content analysis methodology proposed by Bardin (1995) was used.

Results: Among the results, it is noteworthy that, because funk is part of the daily lives of young people, their diverse experiences with

Resumo

Objetivo: Esse artigo relata resultados de uma pesquisa que teve por objetivo compreender a articulação entre as práticas socioculturais e os processos simbólicos na construção de uma identidade cool por jovens inseridos no ambiente do funk.

Método: O trabalho de campo concentrou-se em observação participante em eventos e bailes funk e entrevistas em profundidade com 3 MCs e 26 jovens. Para analisar os dados, lançou-se mão da metodologia de análise de conteúdo proposta por Bardin (1995).

Resultados: Entre os resultados ressalta-se que, pelo fato de o funk fazer parte do cotidiano dos jovens, suas diversas vivências

funk enhance the creation of a cool identity that makes these individuals find a place in this universe of signs and meanings.

Originality: The article discusses the concept of cool identity in order to understand the (re)construction of the identity of a group of urban young people supported by and in consumption.

Keywords: Consumption; Funk; Cool Identity.

com o funk potencializam a criação de uma identidade cool que faz com que esses indivíduos encontrem um lugar nesse universo de signos e significados.

Originalidade: O artigo traz para debate o conceito de identidade cool com a finalidade de compreender a (re)construção da identidade de um grupo de jovens urbanos amparada pelo e no consumo.

Palavras-chave: Consumo; Funk; Identidade Cool.

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INTRODUCTION

Studies focused on investigating consumption in contemporary society have gained prominent place in Social Sciences in recent decades, both in Europe and in the United States (Barbosa, 2006). Thus, nowadays, understanding it is no longer an intellectual luxury, but an essential need (Desjeux, 2011). According to Desjeux (2011), consumption became the center of ambivalences linked to social life, such as competition and cooperation, autonomy and control, hierarchy and community. Accordingly, from the aforementioned author's viewpoint, our societies appear to insist on maintaining such ambivalence, or according to Barbosa's (2006) understanding, they insist on maintaining expressive inaccuracy and ambiguity levels associated with consumption. Therefore, consumption is almost always perceived as source of desire, self-fulfillment, statutory positioning and economic development; at the same time, it is perceived as cause of alienation, waste, loss of values and culture dissolution (Desjeux, 2011).

However, the important thing to be taken into consideration lies on the fact that, despite all this discussion, consumption can be understood as social process associated with different forms of goods and services' provision and with different processes to have access to them. Furthermore, one cannot fail to mention that consumption is understood by Social Sciences as meaning and identity producer, as well as strategy used in social actors' daily lives to define different situations in terms of rights, lifestyle and identity, i.e., as core category to define the contemporary society (Barbosa and Campbell, 2006). Accordingly, it appears that researchers fail to show stronger interest in understanding some phenomena associated with consumption by individuals belonging to the youngest population strata. These phenomena have symbolic features capable of revealing the idea of youth as cultural experience, rather than just as physiological experience.

Social Sciences' understanding about the role played by young individuals in society can provide interesting topics for studies about consumption. According to Bourdieu (1983), individuals' division among age groups is socially manipulated and manipulable, besides arbitrary, since its function lies on establishing a division of power or a way of establishing order by respecting invisible social limits. However, Spanish anthropologist Carlos Feixa, brought the youth topic into debate and emphasized the term "youth culture" in order to translate the ways youth experiences can be expressed through distinctive lifestyles, as well as through the consumption of certain products, such as clothes, music, props, and forms of leisure, among others (Feixa, 2004).

It was in this context that a phenomenon that does not go unnoticed by attentive observers appears to have emerged, namely: the rise of the funk music and culture, which is significantly consumed by young individuals, since funk music singers, known as MCs (Masters of Ceremony), use the cultural, symbolic and consumption references of this group at the time to write the lyrics of their songs. Although the rise of this type of musical and cultural phenomenon has already been the subject of several studies conducted in different knowledge fields in Brazil (Silva, Santos & Cassandre, 2019; Faria, 2018; Resende, 2017), there are issues yet to be investigated. It is in this context that one finds a gap at the time to think about the phenomenon of consumption by groups of young individuals, who aim at

differentiating themselves from their peers by building an identity seen as cool by their group. According to Belk et al. (2010), this construction process is based on the articulation of Bourdieu's (2007) economic, cultural and social capitals. Based on Ostberg (2007), this cool status can be understood as an alternative cultural capital linked to certain groups, since owning it enables members of a given community to assimilate the codes necessary to remain "different" or "distinct" from others. Complementarily, Brown (2021) shines new light on this concept, based on its association with other topics such as fashion, authenticity and affectivity.

Thus, interest in conducting an empirical study guided by the following research question arose: how are socio-cultural practices and symbolic processes associated in the cool identity construction process by young individuals inserted in the funk music environment?

Based on the herein proposed research question, the general aim of the current study was to investigate the association between socio-cultural practices and symbolic processes in the cool identity construction process by young individuals inserted in the funk music environment. One cannot fail to mention that, by focusing on investigating the daily life of urban young individuals, the present study has contributed to unveil the processes adopted by these individuals to translate their reality through the mediation of values, habits, tastes, attitudes, aesthetics and social practices (Rocha & Pereira, 2009). It is worth mentioning that results in the current research appear to adhere to the idea, defended by its researchers, that young individuals have conquered hegemonic power due to the considerable status acquired by them through the production of different tastes and customs.

With respect to the context of the current study - i.e. funk music -, it is worth mentioning Abdalla (2014), who emphasized the interest of public opinion in this "musical movement", which ended up enabling its mediatic visibility and projection. Despite its exposure in the media, studies in the literature focused on investigating the aforementioned musical movement under theoretical lenses, such as the cool identity proposed by Belk et al. (2010), remain scarce. It is also worth emphasizing that the current research brings to the Brazilian context the concept of cool capital - which was built based on the theory of capital, habitus and taste proposed by Bourdieu (2007) - to help better understanding the (re)construction of the identity of a group of urban young individuals supported by, and relying on, consumption. Moreover, the current research is also in line with the set of studies published in the Brazilian culture and consumption field, which focused on better understanding phenomena pertaining to the Brazilian reality (Pinto & Batinga, 2018).

The present article was organized into four other sections, besides the present introduction. The second section presents the literature review focused on discussions about the concepts of habitus and capital held by Pierre Bourdieu (2007) and Holt (1998), as well as on the debate involving the concept of cool capital proposed by Belk et al. (2010). The third section (Methodology) explained the methodological procedures adopted in the current research. The fourth section (Results) focused the discussion on the two herein adopted analysis categories. Finally, the fifth section presents the final remarks of the current research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brief review of the concepts of habitus and Capital

Firstly, it is pertinent addressing social relations before analyzing the social construction of consumption, starting from the concepts of *habitus* and capital by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu (2007) has expanded the Marxist concept of capital. In addition to economic capital, which directly refers to available money (goods and income), it is essential understanding the cultural capital reflected in individuals' manners, taste (Bourdieu, 2007; Holt, 1998; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013) and cultural dispositions, as well as in knowing the social capital reflected on social relations (Bourdieu, 2007; Holt, 1998; Üstüner & Holt, 2010) and of symbolic capital reflected on prestige and honor, to help better understanding postmodern social dynamics. This capital equation forms the agent's *habitus* (Bourdieu calls the individual as agent, the one who acts) and this agent uses this *habitus* to act in the field, where social relations take place. The field is a space of conflicts and competences. It is the lived life, wherein the agent - equipped with his/her *habitus* - will act. According to Bourdieu (2007), *habitus* rules the way we choose our actions, as well as our position before certain circumstances.

It is also necessary taking into account that social life can be understood as a status game wherein three different resource types (economic, cultural and social capital) compete for status (symbolic capital). Different from the economic (financial resources) and social (relationships, affiliations and social networks) capitals, cultural capital refers to a privileged place - associated with taste, skills, knowledge and practices - in society (Bourdieu, 2007; Holt, 1998).

Furthermore, Holt (1998) has advocated that cultural capital has three primary forms, namely: the one aggregated to practical knowledge, skills and dispositions; the one aggregated to cultural objects; and the one institutionalized through diplomas that certify the existence of this "body". Social capital, in its turn, belongs to the social milieu of cultural elites; in addition, it takes shape in families whose parents are formally well educated, as well as whose professional activities require cultural skills, interaction with peers holding similar cultural capital, academic training in universities attractive to elite members, in fields focused on emphasizing abstract thinking and the acquisition of skills and knowledge that are refined and reinforced in their professions, which, in their turn, emphasize symbolic production. In order to complete what was already explained in the previous paragraphs, it is worth emphasizing that these diverse experiences lived by the cultural elite are subjectively embodied in the ways of feeling, thinking and acting, through the psychological structure called *habitus* by Bourdieu (2007). Thus, *habitus* is an abstract system that classifies the world and the structure of actions (Holt, 1998).

Similar to other aforementioned capitals, cultural capital is articulated in each institutional domain, in a particular way. According to Bourdieu (2007), the social world comprises several relatively-autonomous, although similar, structures such as the political, art, religious, education and business fields, which work as arenas wherein actors compete for place and status in the social hierarchy. Cultural capital is different in each one of these fields.

On the other hand, Holt (1998) has pointed out that the difficulty in inferring status based on consumed goods has increased in postmodern cultures, since the consumption hierarchy barriers found between the upper and lower class have been demolished. The objectification of cultural capital is a weak social exclusion mechanism adopted in advanced capitalist societies. According to Holt (1998), social distinction in North American society is currently based on peoples' practices and on the way they get along with objects.

The aforementioned researcher has also concluded that individuals who have more economic than cultural capital, such as members of the rising lower class, tend to adopt materialistic consumption styles. As for the upper class, whose taste is grounded in cultural capital, materialism is a pejorative term understood as ostentation; consequently, it is a rude term. Both groups - i.e., upper and lower class - seek prestige; what differentiates them is the way they acquire it. According to the lower class, prestige comes from acquiring goods and from participating in activities with high economic symbolism, whereas, based on the cultural elite, it comes from experience. This materialism type is the one avoided by elites at the time to set their social position.

Accordingly, Belk *et al.* (2010) adopted Bourdieu's concept of capital to suggest another capital, whose symbolic action is limited to the micro group the agent belongs to, namely: the cool status. The concept of cool status will be introduced and discussed in the next section.

Cool identity

Belk *et al.* (2010) introduced and defended the idea that the cool status is a capital that operates based on very specific cultural features. Nancarrow and Nancarrow (2007) defined cool as tribal capital, by taking into consideration that it is acknowledged and shared - in its specific meaning - by members of a given tribe.

Cool is an adjective, whose noun is coolness. This feature, although pursued, does not have a clear meaning. However, it has some properties that already seem clear (Warren & Campbell, 2014). The first one lies on the social construction of this meaning, i.e., it is a feature attributed by a given audience (Belk *et al.*, 2010). The second property comprises subjectivism and dynamism. Social objects (which can be either people or things) considered cool change over time and between groups. Consumers with similar backgrounds and interests tend to agree on the perception of coolness (Warren & Campbell, 2014). The

third one regards the positive (desirability) nature of the coolness feature (Belk *et al.*, 2010). Finally, cool is not a different way of saying “good”, since it has an implicit cultural background (Warren & Campbell, 2014). Warren and Campbell (2014) advocated that the autonomy over other individuals’ standards, beliefs and expectations is what differentiates “good” from “cool”.

The main cool identity features shared by several authors who defined individuals acknowledged as cool comprise:

- (a) Talent, audience and closeness to the streets, which are socially-constructed attributes, such as popularity or status. In other words, cool individuals are the ones acknowledged by others as such (Belk *et al.*, 2010);
- (b) Style, according to Belk *et al.* (2010), is expressed through music, dance, sports, as well as through the way of speaking, dressing and gestures. According to these authors, rap music and hip hop culture emerge as cool. Rap music holds the basic features of cool, namely: it is rebellious, romanticizes what is not in compliance with the law and launches fashion trends;
- (c) Authenticity, singularity, attitude, autonomy, counterculturalism, indifference towards the mainstream and impulsivity, which are close features addressed by Warren and Campbell (2014) and Belk *et al.* (2010). They refer to availability to create one’s own life course, regardless of the rules and expectations of others.

Belk *et al.* (2010) have also claimed that the pursuit of the cool status is, nowadays, the largest global consumption motivator. These authors invite us to think about a fundamental social condition for contemporary young individuals, namely: having a cool presence, which ultimately means being loved, admired and, consequently, having this status validated by the micro group the agent belongs to. In other words, cool is a valuable alternative to cultural capital, since it is built in local social groups. According to Belk *et al.* (2010), what one pursues is the cool status, rather than the elite one.

At this point, it is appropriate resorting to the definition by Ostberg (2007), who argued that the cool status is an alternative cultural capital linked to groups. The ownership of this capital is what enables members of a given community to assimilate the necessary codes to stay in it.

METHODOLOGY

The features of the herein conducted research align it with the interpretative (Schwandt, 2006; Charmaz, 2009; Creswell, 2014) and qualitative (Creswell, 2014; Flick, 2014) research perspective. The fieldwork comprised participatory observation conducted in funk music events and parties, as well as in-depth interviews conducted with 3 Masters of Ceremony (MCs) and with 26 young funk-style connoisseurs who lived in poor neighborhoods of Belo Horizonte City. All these procedures were performed between 2015 and 2017. Many conversations held with these young individuals happened in an informal manner; they were recorded in field journals that later contributed to the analysis of results. Formal interviews were conducted based on semi-structured scripts developed for each audience. All interviews (which totaled almost 20 hours of recording) were transcribed and thoroughly analyzed in the Atlas.ti data analysis software.

Content analysis was used as data analysis technique to help identifying what was said about the experiences of members of the Funk Cultural Movement. According to Bardin (1995), content analysis can be understood as a set of communication analysis techniques aimed at inferring knowledge associated with messages’ production/reception conditions (inferred variables), through systematic and objective procedures focused on describing their content.

Based on the analysis conducted in the Atlas.ti software, documents resulting from all interviews have generated 326 codifications, which were named based on 134 codes. These codes were clustered into eight groups that, in the end, generated data analysis categories. Among these categories, two will be analyzed in the next section of the current article: (a) funk music seen as culture built by young individuals from urban peripheries; and (b) funk music and cool identity.

RESULTS

Funk music seen as culture built by young individuals from urban peripheries

This is undoubtedly the category explaining the long life of funk music, which, in its turn, can be explained as the noise of life in urban peripheries, rather than as musical choice. The feeling conveyed by these young individuals from urban peripheries is that funk music is intrinsic to the daily life of the places they live in. It is the music – or for some individuals, a lifestyle – merging to the natural sounds of corners, houses and life in community. In other words, although funk is not the music of choice of all individuals, it is heard everywhere, whether at home, on the streets or at work. It is so organic that it leaves the impression that contemporary poor young individuals were born into and cradled by this musical genre...

I remember the cars, my neighbors played funk music at the time to wash the car, to clean the house and at school too. (Patrícia, 24 years old)

I have always lived in the periphery, so I listen (to funk music) kind of involuntarily, right? So, it is always playing wherever I go, my neighbor listens to it, and people driving their cars down the street are listening to it and then, as I interact with people in the periphery, I have more contact with funk music, nowadays. And the parties I go to play it, everyone at school listens to, and talks about, it; in the end, I kind of started to like it (Jennifer, 25 years old).

The neighbors, everybody listens to funk music (Jonathan, 22 years old).

When we are in the periphery, we are involuntarily in contact with its culture. So, the funk music was there, just like the wall writings were there too (Ananda, 22 years old).

All the fragments of interviewees' speeches appear to reinforce the idea that consumption is a way of inserting individuals in society, a way of introducing them to the world (Douglas & Isherwood, 2004; Barbosa & Campbell, 2006). Funk music, in this case, represents this connection, this link that enables individuals to socialize and to be introduced to the world. Moreover, according to Desjeux (2011), consumption is the "lens" used to better understand everyday life, identity constructions, political issues, ways of life, as well as to provide interesting subsidies to identify social stratifications and globalization elements. On the other hand, according to McCracken (2003, p.11), consumption is "shaped, guided and constrained in all its aspects by cultural considerations".

Virtually everyone in my school listened to funk music (Jennifer, 25 years old).

It is played a lot in slums, you know? We end up listening, learning, enjoying it (Isabelle, 31 years old).

I live in a slum, so there were a lot of funk music parties there (Camila, 21 years old).

Based on Bourdieu (2007), who sees musical taste as cultural capital, the following fragments of interviews enable understanding neighborhood impact on young individuals' musical taste, with emphasis on the fact that this taste is learned and shaped by experience. If one revisits what was previously mentioned about socialization for consumption purposes, the following fragments make this issue explicit. The words "experience", "having contact with", "always listened", "learning, enjoying", "funk music was there" seen in interviewees' speeches reinforce the idea of socialization for consumption purposes.

I think it is a baggage of experience too, right? Those who live in the periphery end up having contact with this type of rhythm since early age (Rafael, 26 years old).

It is played a lot in the slums, you know? We end up listening, learning, enjoying it (Isabelle, 31 years old).

Oh bro, (I) have been listening to funk music since I was a kid. The guys used to play it out loud on the streets and I started to like it (Thiago, 15 years old).

I got to know funk music based on my family and neighborhood experience, so I always listened to it, but it was not my favorite music style (Rafael, 26 years old).

One of the interviewees, MC Klebinho (34 years old), was able to make a clear analysis of the role played by funk music in the culture of periphery neighborhoods. If one assumes that funk, as musical style, is a consumed good, Klebinho's statements can be read in light of Barbosa and Campbell (2006), who defined consumption as strategy used, on a daily basis, by different social groups to define different situations in terms of rights, lifestyles and identities. His statements can also be read from Thompson & Hirschman's (1995) perspective, according to whom, consumption is an imbricate system of values, feelings and thoughts that are built and negotiated in the interpretation of social life; or from McCracken's (2012, p.15) perspective, who advocated that goods enable individuals to make their meanings public. By stating (in the fragment below) that funk music has to do with the pursuit of style and with individuals' identification with a given social group, MC Klebinho reinforced the considerations made by the aforementioned authors.

They are looking for style too, right? [They are looking] for identification with a given social group. Because, like it or not, if we are raised always seeing our mother, father and siblings going to church, we may even be the black sheep of the group, right?, but we end up following the same path. We see everyone in our family going to university, or our father reads a book every day, and we end up repeating some habits. Maybe we improve or retroact a little bit, but we end up drinking from these sources. And most young individuals from these communities, which means most of the population ... the only thing left for these guys, I often say, is soccer and church, pubs and funk music parties. It is a quadripod, so to speak, to keep it upright. It could even be a tripod. There are more things that we could list, but it is basically these things. Funk music parties are the joy of younger individuals living in rough areas, and there are plenty of them there. Nowadays, it is changing a little bit because people have fewer children and things like that. So the boys are getting older and older. But it is still like that. Whoever is not at the funk music party goes to church. Those who do not go to church go to the pub. And those who are not at the pub are playing soccer. So, these are the four things. Is it alienating? It might be, when people can only live like this, because they do not have the opportunity to live different things (MC Klebinho, 34 years old).

This fragment of MC Klebinho's speech brings up some discussions about the funk music phenomenon. Firstly, it presents an argument in line with Bourdieu (2007), who emphasizes the influence of family structure and social context on individuals' formation process. When MC Klebinho said that individuals go to funk music parties because they do not have other alternative, he ended up reinforcing the idea that these individuals have few possibilities to break the structure of poverty, penury and lack of opportunities to live another reality. Funk music parties appear to be their best option, since not everyone "find themselves" in church, or have talent to play soccer. Pubs, based on MC Klebinho's words, are linked to alcohol and drug consumption, a behavior that, in a way, is also associated with funk.

Some interviewees - whose interview fragments are transcribed below - took on the role of giving life to the concept of consumption by Douglas and Isherwood (2013, p. 8), according to whom, consumption is "something lofty and constant in our daily lives and it plays key role in structuring values capable of building identities, regulating social relations and defining cultural maps".

Funk music helps us to learn a lot about the daily life of the periphery and this daily life includes a lot of slang (Jonathan, 22 years old).

In rough areas, the guys just turn on the music out loud and the crowd arrives (Jéssica, 20 years old).

The speech of these two interviewees reinforces the idea that funk music is organic, since it adheres to the daily lives of members of low-income communities by using their language and slangs to portray their lives in its lyrics. In addition, one cannot fail to mention that “turning on the music out loud” is a reason for people to crowd together.

My mother likes samba, my father loves samba and MPB, and my siblings like funk music (Rafael, 26 years old).

It has a lot to do with acceptance, with being accepted by the group, inside and outside of school (talking about enjoying funk music) (Natália, 21 years old).

I think funk music is a genuine Brazilian wealth, since it allows most teenagers and young individuals to express themselves and to communicate experiences lived by them in their communities. Maybe, later on, they might say, “wow, I exaggerated here”, but it is the “place” where they feel free. I say this and I am thinking about the two girls who are here, they are funk music party fans and they will do whatever they want here, because they are far from all kinds of structure that often forbids them to do so, they are in a place where they can free themselves, where they identify with that type of lyrics, no matter how rough it is, rough in the sense of being direct and communicate with them in a way that their parents and peers are often unable to do (MC Klebinho, 34 years old).

The MC’s speech brings along some interesting elements that give rise to the discussion about the role played by funk music in the daily lives of young individuals. When he emphasizes that funk is the “place” where young low-income individuals are able to express themselves, to feel part of the context, he ends up attributing to funk music a role that goes beyond its lyrics. He brings to debate the content of the lyrics that portrait the reality of this group, which will be addressed in the next topic.

Funk music and cool identity

These features were clearly perceived in the current research, both on the streets and in interviewees’ speeches. Among all the herein observed features, style, closeness to the streets, authenticity, uniqueness, attitude, autonomy, counterculturalism, indifference to the mainstream and impulsiveness were remarkably evident in the speeches of young individuals interviewed in the current study. Some of these features refer to the essence of the hip hop culture where funk music is inserted in. The counterculturalism and attitude revealed by funk music are the elements bringing it closer to the streets. This aspect is clear in the interview excerpts transcribed below:

Funk music portrays the experiences lived in the periphery, all the difficulties faced by it and its daily life. (Jonathan, 22 years old)

Jonathan’s speech seems to portray the way the herein interviewed young individuals see funk music. This musical style results from young individuals’ construction process, since its lyrics describe the daily life of the periphery and the difficulties observed in the “life lived” in it. This aspect puts funk music in opposition to the well-behaved lyrics “manufactured” in studios in order to “sell” an unreal, fantasized life. This feature appears to be in line with the idea of counterculturalism and attitude.

I see funk music as an attempt to unmask things that happen in real life, whereas rich people try to hide them. (Lana, 25 years old)

Interviewee Lana has also reinforced the idea that funk music works as a way to show the general public what actually happens in the periphery. The use of the word “unmask” refers to the concept of opening, fully exposing, widely opening, which is a little different from its original meaning that reinforces the concept of “demoralizing, ridiculing”.

They (the MCs) are free in their lyrics. They say “here we kill”, “here we do”, it is the blatant reality. And they are not imposing that on anyone, like ‘reproduce the bitching, the shot at the kid’. They are saying: this is what we have here, for now. I am yet to see the day when funk and rap lyrics portraying the life in the periphery will say: here there is poetry, here there is rap for the order, here you do not need to flaunt, here you do not need to have the best things to feel included, and here you will be accepted as you are. In rough areas, people are not accepted among themselves (Jéssica, 20 years old).

Slum residents do not run from what they do. (Jéssica, 20 years old)

The two fragments of Jessica's speech confirm the herein previously presented idea that funk music is the portrait of urban periphery, it is the way young individuals find to vent their feelings. Thus, its lyrics are expected to report the difficulties and violence experienced in these places. It is also evident that this type of lyrics is not imposing this reality on anyone; actually, it is just a portrait that appears to be far from a poetic and idealized situation, a fact that reinforces its counterculturalism, most of all, its authenticity. The following excerpts ratify these features.

But since in rough areas it is remarkably wide-open, people are much less ashamed to show what it is. So, it generates greater discomfort in policies, as well as in societies; thus, people “bash” funk music parties. (MC Klebinho, 34 years old)

When we are in the periphery, we are involuntarily in contact with its culture. So, funk music was there, just like the wall writings were there too. (Ananda, 22 years old)

My interpretation is that they (the MCs) are free in their lyrics. They say “here we kill”, “here we do”, it is the reality. And they are not imposing that on anyone, like ‘reproduce the bitching’, ‘reproduce the shot at the kid’. They are not saying that, they are saying: this is what we have here, for now. I am yet to see the day when funk and rap lyrics portraying the life in the periphery will say: here there is poetry, here there is rap for the order, here you do not need to flaunt, and here you do not need to have the best things to feel included. In rough areas, people are not accepted among themselves. (Jéssica, 20 years old)

Authenticity is evident in the excerpt from Ananda's speech, when she states that “funk music was there, just like the wall writings were there too”. In other words, she appears to link funk music to the environment marked by taggers. In this case, both would be related to the typical environment of poor communities. It is also important understanding how this group values counterculturalism, indifference to the mainstream, as well as authenticity. The interview excerpt transcribed below makes it explicit by emphasizing that songs talking about topics that do not portray the reality of these young individuals end up having little acceptance among them.

Nowadays, for example, people living in rough areas do not listen to MCs from Som Livre, Nego do Borel, Anitta and Ludmila. If you play this type of song, they will complain that it is tacky, that it talks about love, that it does not talk about what the guys want to hear. (MC Klebinho, 34 years old)

This closeness to the streets, in its turn, grants an audience to funk music, an audience that spreads countrywide, as shown in the excerpt transcribed below.

I think funk music is a genuine Brazilian wealth, since it allows most teenagers and young individuals to express themselves and to communicate experiences lived by them in their communities (MC Klebinho, 34 years old)

MC Klebinho's speech appears to summarize a funk music feature associated with the concept of cool in terms of its singularity. In other words, funk music portrays young individuals' daily lives and it enables them to stand out, to become "special" and "unique", and to create an opportunity to conquer a place in the world. The two excerpts extracted from two speeches by MC Jeffinho also make it evident.

But funk music is amazing, since it can help a boy from the community to become a super famous guy. [...] Funk is my life. It is everything, right? It is all I have conquered, all I have done. It is even heartwarming. (MC Jeffinho, 36 years old)

According to the authors, one needs to have an audience in order to be cool. This idea seems to be obvious in the following excerpts taken from the speeches by MC Jeffinho and by other funk style fans.

That! I could not find the word, but I saw a curtain, that's the thing, there is a curtain in front of you, I say to funk artists. At some point, when it opens, imagine the theater, it will open and there will be no one there, or it will open and there will be no space for so many people who are waiting for you, you know? It is a surprise. Funk style is like that, that is what I am talking about. It turned Nego do Borel, a guy who walked barefoot in the slum, into a star that, in my opinion, is a great artist, nowadays. I have had reservations about him, but he became a great artist. (MC Jeffinho, 36 years old)

Funk music started to reach another place, a place it did not belong to... (Ananda, 22 years old)

Funk music became a universal thing. I went to a freshman party at UFMG and it was playing MC Dodô. I was stunned. People did not know how to "twerk", but they were there. It is something that people cannot say they do not like it; people who say they do not like are just hypocrite. (Ananda, 22 years old)

Funk music time is the hit of the party. Everyone wants to twerk their booties down to the floor and be happy, walk out of there sweating and not even be able to walk the following day. (Patrícia, 24 years old)

The feeling that funk music has extrapolated the environment of poor communities to become a cool movement for audiences other than the original one can be seen in interviewees' speeches. Ananda has mentioned something relevant, when she said that funk music has prominent place in an environment other than "the periphery", such as the freshman party at UFMG, which comprises a more refined audience. However, from her perspective, it is clear that young individuals in that environment did not "know how to perk", and it was far from the authentic and typical behavior of those who were born "in the periphery". It is also important emphasizing that the issue concerning the style linked to the funk movement pervaded the discourse of several interviewees.

They are looking for style too, right? [They are looking] for an identification with a given social group. (MC Klebinho, 34 years old)

I think funk becomes a lifestyle (Patrícia, 24 years old)

Oh bro! Gotta be in fashion, right? (Thiago, 15 years old)

We identify with this type of tribe. We must have this identity so when a certain person arrives with a certain haircut, or wearing a cap, we can feel close to him/her, right? I think it is awesome. (Patrícia, 24 years old)

The aforementioned excerpts address issues that can enlighten this point of the analysis. Throughout the herein conducted fieldwork, it became evident that individuals create this identity through a specific style that is not only linked to clothing, but also to the way of dancing, singing and acting in their everyday life.

There was a saying that tease girls do not feel cold. You may think you will feel cold to go to a funk party just because you are in Belo Horizonte City. You need to wear the right clothes; you have to dress up accordingly. (Ananda, 22 years old)

Bird and Tapp (2008) referred to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to situate cool as an "illegitimate capital", i.e., based on icons deriving from the internet, movies, alternative music, drinks and fashion brands; in other words, from knowledge about, and sharing of, the latest trends. This new elite - the cool elite - is not defined based on money and social class. Cool is a valuable alternative to a cultural capital that is built in local social groups. According to Belk *et al.* (2010), what individuals pursue is the cool status, rather than the elite status.

In short, it seems that one can say that young individuals from the periphery see music as the portrait of their daily lives. Music addresses popular features linked to the experience lived in the moment and to freedom. Thus, funk music - as representative of the material culture of young individuals from the periphery - is the sensory resource used to deliver young individuals' features - such as audience, attitude, style, closeness to the streets, talent, authenticity, autonomy, counterculturalism, uniqueness, impulsiveness and indifference to the mainstream - to the world.

Final Remarks

Results in the current study have suggested that although the lives of the herein investigated young individuals are featured by evident material shortages; they do not limit them at the time to attribute meanings to the goods they have access to. Therefore, the aforementioned results enabled stating that funk music does not determine young individuals' consumption; it is the expression of a given lifestyle. It is a cultural trait resulting from young individuals' financial, social and cultural context; in other words, it reflects their *habitus* and the field they live in.

Based on what was previously discussed in the current study, it seems appropriate to conclude that Bourdieu's (2007) theory of capital, which was re-contextualized by Holt (1998) and completed by the cool capital proposed by Belk *et al.* (2010), adheres to the investigated context. In other words, the agent's *habitus* explains the entire taste-development process; therefore, its action in the field. Individuals acknowledged as cool would stand out in this field; this is likely how opinion makers - a role most likely played by MCs in the context of the current research - would emerge. Young individuals who wear many brands end up using replicas acquired by exchange, borrowed or even bought at low prices in small neighborhood stores or in downtown low-price shopping malls.

Conclusions in the current study head towards understanding that, in fact, individuals' identity appears to be built through a sum of events. It was possible noticing that lack of financial resources forces them to live in the moment, to focus on what is imminent, a fact that somehow brings light to these individuals' lives. Whenever there is a funk music party in the weekend and a guy wants a special cap, he does a side hustle during the week, gets the money, buys the cap and rocks the party, without too much complication. Girls' short and tight clothing does not appear to be limited to funk music parties. They also wear them in the alleys, on the bus, in the villages. It is something built in everyday life, in diverse and different relationships between individuals who end up forming the group's identity. They wear the same type of outfit in the funk music parties, on the streets or in small local shops. There seems to be no division between party wear and everyday wear. Funk, in its turn, is the noise of the

slums. It is music for washing the car, cleaning the house and gathering friends – it is part of it, “it has always been that way” (they say).

It is also worth mentioning that scholars who worked with the concepts associated with the cool identity have emphasized them as applicable to individuals. Individuals are the ones acknowledged as cool. The cultural uniqueness of this group appears to allow it to acquire features, such as the cool identity, which are theoretically perceived in individuals. Based on the analysis of the current results, young individuals live the moment, in a place featured by funk music, despite the violence and drug trafficking observed in it. Funk music blends in with the natural sounds of street corners, houses, and community life. People listen to funk music at home, on the streets and at work. It is everywhere! Funk music enables individuals to socialize and, based on this musical taste, they “build” themselves, relate to others and present themselves to the world. Funk music lyrics portrait the lived reality and talk about the place of those who live in the periphery. Funk music parties are a leisure and socialization experience for young individuals with few resources to try other possibilities, even besides leisure. It is a magical moment, when individuals can detach from their harsh reality to experience a fantasy, wearing outfits capable of conveying style.

Thus, it is important emphasizing that the current study made contributions to the investigated field, since it focused on investigating the perceived gap between cool identity construction and different capital combinations addressed by Pierre Bourdieu in a national context with very specific peculiarities. In short, the theoretical contribution of this research lied on the analysis of the investigated group from the cool capital perspective, based on which, it is possible concluding that a given group, rather than an individual, can take on and convey cool identity features.

As stated earlier, from the analysis of the results and their consequent discussion, numerous other reflections emerged that, tangent or not to the focus of the work, serve to inaugurate fertile research trails in the field of consumer studies. One of these possibilities is in the direction of researching other consumer audiences of the funk style. A first suggestion, therefore, is precisely to carry out research with the wealthiest young people in the population. Conducting investigations could contemplate the real role of funk in the lives of these young people who, contrary to what was found in the research, was not built by them and is distant from their daily lives. In this sense, it is essential to understand the power that some cultural elements have to serve as a bridge to momentarily desired realities. Thus, investigations that direct the focus to funk dances aimed at audiences from other economic classes with other sociocultural constructions would be of great value for comparing results.

Other important concepts of consumer studies such as socialization, consumption practices, brand power, consumer narratives, materiality, stigmatization, body consumption, among many others, only touched upon in the analysis, can serve as a starting point for important contributions in investigations future. In the same way, the contribution of other themes dear to fields of studies related to consumption can also be considered adequate. It was found, in the discussion of the results, that the lyrics of the songs have the role of denouncing the daily life of these young people. It would be appropriate, therefore, to conduct research that could analyze, in the light of different methodologies such as, for example, critical discourse analysis and socio-semiotic analysis, how these lyrics portray, reflect and refract the daily lives of these young people regarding their political positions and their understandings regarding other complex issues related to relations in society. In all these analyzes, themes dear to the concept of intersectionality, such as the articulation between the variables gender and ethnicity, and also elements linked to economic classes could not be left out.

Research ethic statement

The authors confirm that the article has not been previously published and that it has not been simultaneously submitted for review in another journal.

Author contribution statement

First author: conceptualization (lead), data curation (equal), formal analysis (lead), investigation (lead), methodology (lead), project administration (lead), resources (supporting), supervision (supporting), validation (equal), visualization (lead), writing-original draft (lead), writing-review & editing (lead).

Second author: conceptualization (supporting), data curation (equal), formal analysis (supporting), investigation (supporting), methodology (supporting), project administration (supporting), resources (supporting), supervision (lead), validation (equal), visualization (supporting), writing-original draft (supporting), writing-review & editing (supporting).

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