

# **“O Funk tá tranquilo o tá favorável?”**

**A qualitative content analysis on the representation of Funk by news media in  
Brazil, the US and UK**

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### ABSTRACT

The focus of this thesis is on the cultural representation of *Funk*, a popular style of music that originated from the African diaspora present in Rio de Janeiro’s slums, Brazil, and derives from Miami bass and Gangsta rap music. During the last two decades, Funk became an increasingly prominent genre both on a regional and global scale, occupying the top positions in Spotify streams for all main Brazilian metropolis (source from Spotify). The year of 2006 marks Funk’s first big international breakthrough, after the launch of the online video-sharing platform YouTube that greatly increased its visibility and popularity, along with the rise of prominent international DJs who started to mix this style of music in their showcases. However, the popular Brazilian genre is often represented by news media as violent because it is linked to poor urban areas where criminality and gang presence is high. Furthermore, numerous Funk songs instigate sexual violence. There have been cases of collective rape by drug factions in or after *bailes* that created a general outcry in international newspapers. The danger of *bailes* and the explicitness of some Funk lyrics casted a shadow on the genre’s image. In this sense, this popular style of music has been stigmatized, often associated with gang culture, drugs, and misogyny. It has also been criminalized by the Brazilian government, facing prejudice and police repression, what incentivized in 2009 its nomination as an official form of culture by the State of Rio de Janeiro (Law No 5543) to prevent its stigmatization - period in which the region of Latin America was living the so-called Pink Tide.

This study contributes to the literature on the representation of culture by looking at popular music and how it is portrayed by the national and international media, in this case Brazilian, US and UK quality newspapers. It will collect, observe, and analyze data in terms of cultural legitimization, social & racial representation, as also in relation to criminal activity and misogyny & gender-role preferences. Articles issued in the US and UK will be discussed because of their high level of cultural authority in music and the important contribution of their national artists in Funk’s commercial success. A qualitative approach will allow the assessment of how Funk is portrayed by cultural gatekeepers, quality newspapers in this case. This research will examine what meanings were given to the popular genre and how they have evolved along the years. It also aims to understand if they differ depending on their coverage by local or foreign reporters. Furthermore, the degree of appreciation given to a specific music genre is often associated with durable social boundaries, dialoguing with the concept of symbolic distinction. As Funk began as a local manifestation of the African diaspora, the genre is a form of identity for the urban black youth living in the favelas, playing

a role as emancipatory decolonial cultural practice. Nevertheless, many artists are changing this music genre's image by singing funk 100% feminist and pro LGBTQ+, aiming at inclusion and diversity.

KEYWORDS: *Funk, popular music, representation, cultural representation, cultural classification*

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## 1. Introduction

Funk, also known as *funk carioca* or *baile funk* is a popular style of music in Brazil that originated from the African diaspora present in the Rio de Janeiro's slums. On a musical level, it has been said to derive from Miami bass and Gangsta rap music. During the last two decades, Funk became an increasingly prominent genre in the country; songs like "Bum Bum Tam Tam" by MC Fioti (2017) came to reach 1.5 Bn views on YouTube. While it is a form of identity for the youth living in the slums, the news media represent it as violent due to its sponsoring by gangsters (Sneed, 2008). Indeed, as it was conceived in poor urban areas where crime rate and gang presence are higher, the genre is repeatedly stigmatized and associated with gang culture, drugs, and misogyny.

Music is a key resource for different cultural groups in terms of how they make sense and negotiate with the "everyday" (DeNora, 2002). However, certain popular genres are openly criticized and represented by the media as making the apology of immoral behaviour (eg. Rap music). Frisby (2019) analyzed more than 400 top Billboards songs between 2006-2016 for themes of violence, profanity, misogyny, or gender-role references, and found that pop music lyrics contain the same amount of violent content as rap and hip-hop. Therefore, why is pop music not under the radars of public criticism just as Funk music is? This issue stems from the symbolic distinctions present within our cultural classifications systems that define which aesthetic categories are seen as more or less legitimate (Bourdieu, 1986; Lamont, 1994). Studies have shown they are linked to our social categories (Pachucki et al., 2007).

Furthermore, scholars discussed that durable social boundaries such as race (Dowd & Blyler, 2002) and gender (DeNora, 2002; Dowd et al., 2005) weight in the level of appreciation that is given to a specific music genre. However, they also argued musical boundaries linked to social boundaries can vary over time and across space. Indeed, researchers have assessed the coverage of popular music by the media and saw it increased in "aesthetic" perspective over time, giving artistic quality and credibility to it (Peterson & Kern, 1996). Journalistic reporting is an important concept to study because newspapers work as gatekeepers of culture (Schmutz et al., 2010), and can influence public debates or frame culture in particular ways. They also are a social construction (Bourdieu, 1986), and therefore we can question their portrayal of popular genres to the general public.

Furthermore, cultural globalization and digitalization have increased the representation of marginalized styles of music. The internet and international dissemination of Funk raised a positive interest in the genre that emerged at the beginning of the 21st century. Later on, to counter the stigmatizations it suffered from, Funk was recognized in 2009 as an official form of culture by the State of Rio de Janeiro (Law No 5543). Therefore, this project addresses the following research question: *how is Funk represented by Brazilian,*

*US, and UK news media in the past 15 years? In addition, I included two sub-questions: Is there a difference in how it is represented by Brazilian and English language media? How has the representation of Funk developed over the years?*

This study contributes to the literature on the representation of culture by looking at a popular style of music and how it is portrayed by the national and international media. First of all, Funk is a very prominent genre in Brazil that keeps increasing in popularity worldwide. Therefore, it is rewarding to understand and study the meanings attributed to this form of culture, as these representations shape how the genre is perceived. There has been an extensive amount of research done on how Funk has been criminalized by the government and media in Brazil (Herschmann, 2005; Vianna, 1987). However, there are not enough studies that address the representation of the genre in the news media since it reached international fame. Moreover, quality newspapers were discussed to contribute in reinforcing the appreciation of a music genre (Janssen et al., 2015): they have an influence in the voicing and framing of culture. They are established cultural mediators, gatekeepers of “high” art, and therefore provide general public knowledge about what legitimate culture is. This research will therefore analyze seriously how Funk is portrayed by established newspapers through time. Furthermore, in a globalized world like ours it is important to understand how a genre travels, and subsequently the role that international news media play in it. Indeed, there could be differences in the meanings that are given to this popular style of music. This research will therefore include the analysis of foreign quality newspapers from the United States and United Kingdom, as both countries had a strong influence on Funk and played an important role for its positive recognition as a music genre.

To properly structure the outline of this work I will first define the concepts of popular music, representation and cultural representation to generate a clear framework on how genres are represented by news media. I will then go through the existing literature on Funk to prepare an appropriate research design and evaluate what themes should be investigated due to their frequent mentioning in others scholars’ work. I will conduct a comparative qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles belonging to established news media located in Brazil, the US, and the UK, which will enable us to study context-dependent meaning (Schreier, 2013). Through the collected data will be evaluated what observations can be drawn on Funk’s representation by country and through time. This is an exploratory study because the first goal of this research is to put attention at international interpretations of Funk. In the end, we will discuss our findings while relying on the existing literature we have previously analyzed to answer our questions.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

This research is meant to observe how Funk is portrayed by national and foreign news media between 2005 and 2020, with the aim to study the representation of its culture through newspapers. Therefore, there are relevant theoretical approaches and previous empirical research on this topic to discuss. At first the concepts of “popular music”, “representation” and “cultural representation” will be defined. Then, the existing literature on Funk will be reviewed. This chapter intends to convey a robust theoretical framework to solidify the construction of the research design.

### **a. Popular Music**

There is no formal definition of popular music considering the numerous range of subject matters it embraces, as well as the various approaches scholars have taken to study the term (Connell & Gibson, 2013). Subsequently, attempts to define this concept have often been considered as incomplete or too categorical to draw an accurate portrait of its meaning(s) (Jones & Rahn, 1977). There are nonetheless key dimensions that are relevant to discuss. Based on the existing literature, I will argue that popular music can be characterized by its commercial orientation and aesthetic, as well as the sense of collective identity it disseminates. Furthermore, it heavily relies on mass media, and technological advances have boosted its consumption, influence and social function.

Different meanings have been elaborated for the term “popular” in music (Wall, 2003). On the one hand, it can be associated with the music that sells the most and has a large number of fans. This concept was overly addressed by Frith (1983; 2004), using weekly records charts as a tool to determine popularity because they reflect collective consumption. To Frith (2004), the term popular is a characteristic of its own: “it sets up the idea of truth in the first place – successful pop music is music which defines its own aesthetic standard” (p.36)”. In other words, a genre that is famous can be considered “popular” because of its notoriety. On the other hand, the “popular” criteria also applies to music that is enjoyable to people who know little about its seriousness and do not appreciate more complex works. Frith (2004) argues this distinction from “serious” music (linked to established elitist forms of art) can be explained by popular music answering to the commercial logic of the music industry. Because it is set up on achieving success, its aesthetic standard is assimilated to a market-driven logic that aims to attain a large number of fans. Consequently, mass media is essential to this type of music’s production, distribution and consumption (Hoeven, 2014). Indeed, the access to a wide number of audiences in different social spaces or commercial platforms constitutes a crucial element for success. Research done on the importance of mass media technologies in the birth of new music genres has shown that the radio, the TV and the internet have greatly contributed to the dissemination of popular genres like rock’n’roll or K-



pop (Oh & Lee, 2014).

However, “popular” is also used to qualify any type of music “that is made and enjoyed by a particular scene as a way to celebrate its distinctive identity” (Wall, 2003, p. 9). How this concept can articulate notions of community and collective identity has been for academics a key aspect of study. Kong (1995) addressed this dimension by analyzing popular music as an area of geographical inquiry. The constant presence of music in our public lives when going to grocery stores, malls, restaurants and such, defines our understanding of the geographic area we are in (Kong, 1995; Chow, 1993). Therefore, popular genres can provide a sense of collective identity often associated to the communal area it represents, may it be a city, region or country.

Furthermore, scholars have shown music plays an important role in the narrativization of place, how people define their relationship to their daily local surroundings, what Bennett (1997) called a “local structure of feeling”. Music in general is discussed as a key resource for different cultural groups in terms of how they make sense and negotiate with the “everyday” (DeNora, 2002): “People look to specific musics as a symbolic anchor in regions, as signs of community belonging, and a shared past” (Lewis, 1992, p.144). Certain popular genres are linked to specific urban areas to which they contribute by cherishing their symbolic societal values. Indeed, researchers argue music can accentuate the perception of the place you are living in by reflecting the symbolic notions it incubates through specific sounds and lyrics (Street, 2012). However, Wall (2003) recalls that “the very politics of popular music has shown that the materiality of music can be appropriated, its meanings interrogated or even altered” (p.223). In other words, because successful songs are accessible to anyone, they can be subject to different interpretations depending on who is listening to it. Therefore, they can be a powerful voice for political expression.

By looking at the existing literature in the field, key works like Frith et al. (2001) and Hesmondhalgh & Negus (2002) have helped establish a strong basis on the development of theoretical approaches dealing with the political relevance of popular music: it is agreed on by scholars that it forms part of the history of popular culture and popular movements. Indeed, beside popular music being central to youth’s consumption practices (Frith, 1983), it was also shown to be a way to introduce issues of race and geographical identities in cultural debates (Chow, 1993; Kong, 1995; Bennett, 2000). There is an important number of contributions in which scholars have conceptualized this notion by analyzing how music genres can be articulated in social movements (Shuker, 2013). Eyerman & Jamison’s (1995) article on social movements and cultural transformation in the 60s entails the relationship between music and politics by studying popular genres like soul or the revival of folk music (King, 1987; Guralnick, 1986; McAdam, 1988, as cited in Eyerman & Jamison, 1995). They have grown respectively along the Civil Rights Movement and the American student movement, to which

they contributed by exposing the oppression these communities were experiencing with productions from artists like Sweet Honey in the Rock or Bob Dylan. Eyerman & Jamison conclude:

Like theory, the best popular songs of the time identified social problems, gave names to vague feelings of alienation and oppression, and even offered explanations, albeit in poetic terms. But in addition to theory, popular music could also provide a sense of belongingness, a sharing in a collective vision, by making use of more emotive language and rhythms – and innovative performance practices that linked the musical and the political. (Eyerman & Jamison, 1995, p.78)

It is therefore a consensus that politics and popular music are cultivating a substantial relationship in which each has been involved with the other and made use of its influence. Indeed, according to McDonald's (2002) research, popular music in social movements has a much greater impact than political speeches. Street (2013) discusses this dimension by taking the example of the Live 8 campaign in 2005 held during the G8 summit. Concerts were held where artists like Bono collected millions of electronic signatures meant to put pressure on the nations to alter their foreign aid policies. Street (2013) concludes that while popular music's influence on international politics is questionable and limited, its performance and reception play an important role, which needs further academic research.

The social power of music can be illustrated through its force in gathering people together. For instance, by taking the examples of rave movements scholars have shown the political power that music can embody in the manifestation of a community as a marker of resistance and subversion, a democratic experience (Hesmondhalgh, 1997). Festivals like Woodstock or underground techno events gather great numbers of people, taking them away from daily life and society to peacefully listen to artists perform during a set time that can be as long as a full week. Furthermore, Kong (1995) argues music events can create sites of unity and equality. This concept was previously argued to group people who share similar tastes and form an imagined community they temporarily belong to (Valentine, 1993, as cited in Kong, 1995).

In our case, this research will seriously analyze popular music by examining the Brazilian genre known as Funk to discern what meanings are given to its sociopolitical expression, as it is a ground for cultural struggle that possesses both an cultural identity and commercial orientation.

#### b. Representation & Cultural Representation

Following Pitkin's (1967) straightforward definition: to represent is to "make present again". In our case representation relies on how voices, opinions, perspectives of culture and cultural goods are made present in newspapers. Hall (1982) discloses that the media are involved in "politics of signification": they have an influence on the world. Through the content they publish they give to enclosed events particular meanings, and therefore not only reflect but re-present "reality". Indeed, as Hall argues:

Representation is a very different notion from that of reflection. It implies the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping; not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labor of *making things mean*. (Hall, 1982, p.64)

In this study, we are examining how the news media represent the popular genre Funk. According to Hall (1982), there are three primary theoretical approaches that can help us understand the concepts of representation. There can be a reflective, intentional or constructionist approach to representation. The reflective approach theory explains that what is communicated is a mirror of reality that imitates the true meaning of the disclosed content. Furthermore, Hall (1982) defines the intentional approach theory by "words mean[ing] what the author intends they should mean" (p.177). Finally, the constructionist approach states that we develop our own meanings to content through our own language. Since scholars have promoted the notion that representation is an act of construction (Hall, 1997; Macdonald, 2003; Gillepsie & Toynbee, 2006; Lacey, 2009 as cited in Orgad, 2012), the third approach is better suited for this research because it discusses the social forces that shape how representations are constructed. Furthermore, this study will rely on the examination of established newspapers because they are perceived as a cultural form of authority (Schmutz, 2010). They have been argued to contribute in reinforcing the appreciation of a music genre (Janssen et al., 2015): they have an influence in the voicing and framing of culture.

In relation to media representation, coverage made by foreign newspapers that are not based where a local event is reported may have a different understanding of what is happening locally and portray it differently. Various case studies have shown how there can be different interpretations and meanings for regional content at the international level. For instance, there is the example of the Iranian music video "Happy in Tehran" (2014) where young people danced on Pharell Williams' song "Happy" (2013) while locally challenging cultural legal boundaries in public spaces. Those responsible for the video were arrested but then soon released by the authorities after to an international outcry. Nooshin (2017) compared how the incident was reported by the media outside Iran, and came to find a lot of

romanticized politization from Western authors, as very few failed to understand that popular music in Iran is also an entertainment defined by musical taste (Steward, 2013). Liebe's (2006) study on the comparison of news coverage by the Palestinian, Israeli and US media also discloses there can be different representations of reality depending on what country is delivering the information.

The differing interpretations of international media are argued to be the effect of globalization. This concept was defined by scholars as a socio-historical phenomenon that discusses "the organization and development of world trade, investment, and finance, as well as [...] the identity and politics of states and non-state actors" (Woods, 1998, p.5). Moreover, it encompasses power relationships between actors, which are believed to have an influence how we are portrayed as a community inside a globalized world: "representation plays a central role in constituting and framing the experience of globalization, the symbolic stretching of social relations across time and distance" (Orgad, 2012). Indeed, Orgad (2012) discusses that the networking of diverse social contexts and regions on a global scale is what determines media representation and shapes international portraits. In other words, actors such as countries or media foment their own perspectives of the world, which can engender different images based on various factors, such as the sociopolitical history or interests they share.

Moreover, representations fomented by the media can be jeopardized by the political interests they are embedded in. For instance, Davis (2009) disclosed the development in the UK of close relationships between British parliamentary reporters and the politicians they are supposed to cover critically. He entails that government scandals like the MP expenses were published by journalists outside the press gallery, which might confirm his suspicions. After all, it is a well-known fact that medias have to deal with socio-political interests that can influence their coverage. More recently, I can take the example of the French media conglomerate Canal+. In 2016, the Editor-In-Chief of the show *Special Investigation* openly criticized Vincent Bolloré (president at the time of the board of directors) to be instrumentalizing what themes journalists could write about to protect his own interests. In the following year many of them came to quit their job at Canal+. Finally, in 2018 the board of directors decided to remove Vincent Bolloré from its presidency. Such events in the company might be proof of his suspicious methods of work. These examples corroborate the fact that there can be issues regarding the transparency of media in general, and sustain Orgad's (2012) discussion on representations being inscribed in relations of power.

If we focus on the representations of culture specifically, this notion relies on how voices, opinions and perspectives on culture and cultural goods are made present in the media in general. Bourdieu (1986, 1993) contributed greatly to its conceptualization by

discussing the hierarchical definitions of “high” and “low” art aesthetics in cultural production. He argues that this creative ranking is organized by the relations of power between different social spaces through history. His influential theory corroborates scholars’ formulation of classification systems that interfere in the representative positions of cultural goods. They rely on conceptual distinctions or symbolic boundaries to categorize our society. In practice, categories perceived as less desirable, unworthy or illegitimate are excluded (Douglas, 1967, 1988; Bourdieu, 1986; Lamont, 1994).

Moreover, these cultural classification systems were shown to be linked to social categories (Pachucki et al., 2007). This means the degree of appreciation given to a specific music genre will often be associated to durable social boundaries. Race (Dowd & Blyler, 2002) and gender (DeNora, 2002; Dowd et al., 2005) were demonstrated to weigh in the level of acceptance given to a specific style of music. However, musical boundaries linked to social boundaries can vary over time and across space. Various factors are responsible for these alternations to occur, such as social movements and the politization of cultural struggles (Eyerman & Jamison, 1995), or changing trends.

For instance, DiMaggio (1987, 1991) disclosed that the hierarchical distinction between “high” and “low” culture has been impaired by the commercialization of cultural fields. Indeed, the music industry’s fast economic growth led actors to develop a deep interest in commercial assessments like weekly records charts which traditionally represented sales and radio plays (Frith, 2004). These new marketing tools have made popularity matter in the judgement of music, and incentivized consumers to question historically established “high” art gatekeepers that have been neglecting this aspect in their aesthetic review. In addition, the emergence of new cultural forms of authority like the Grammys in 1958 contributed in legitimizing popular genres. In the end, sales figures and contributions to the recording industry are now another object of measurement no less valid than critics’ polls. Consequently, established cultural experts that were meant to be the gatekeepers of true aestheticism have been impaired by the development of alternate rating systems adopted by the music industry, which often reflect commercial interests.

Nevertheless, the birth of new disruptive technologies (Chow, 1993) and their effect on representing marginalized identities also participated into increasing the visibility of genres that did not receive enough media attention, which counterbalanced the commercial aesthetic orientation of music. For instance, the internet was an important assist to the democratization of cultural reception, which disrupted as well originally present cultural forms of authority (Lupo, 2007). It opened the door to a new generation of underground artists in competition with the established actors in music industry. The emergence of innovative ways to consume music has also challenged social boundaries by allowing economically limited artists to represent marginalized communities and give a voice to the unheard.

However, the discussion of music in cultural debates is also represented by the news media. Indeed, it is argued to have an influence in the voicing and framing of culture, and can contribute to reinforcing the appreciation of a music genre (Janssen et al., 2015). There has been an important amount of research made on media representing culture that has been giving legitimacy to popular music as a ground of cultural struggle. Longhurst (2007) argues there are two main ways this concept has been written about academically, journalistically and by enthusiasts: it is either in a critical mode or a celebratory mode. They both include a “political” and “aesthetic” dimension, positive or negative depending on whether the writer is criticizing or celebrating the genre. Moreover, scholars have argued that there was a distinction made by established media between popular and serious music (linked to established elitist forms of art). Gripsrud & Weibull’s (2010) analysis on quality newspapers’ reports on music events from 1960 to 2000 came conclusive to the fact that you could witness indeed an ongoing process of defining what is “art” and “popular” music, at the exception of certain media such as *The Times*. However, they also support Peterson & Kern’s (1996) observation that “traditional supporters of high art developed a taste for and openness towards certain forms of popular music” (p.259). This shift of elites’ cultural appreciation testifies of the variation of musical boundaries through time.

Furthermore, Orgad (2012) argues “in an age of accelerating globalization, driven by economic, political, cultural and technological forces, the national is no longer the only or necessarily dominant context within which representations [...] acquire meaning” (Section Global Representation and the Global Imagination: A Framework, par. 3). In other words, foreign media are considered to also have a cultural influence on the representation and appreciation of regional content. Scholars have discussed that phenomenon by denouncing the recurrent standardization and stereotyping of the world by creatives and cultural industries, consequently inducing the institutionalization of whiteness (Said, 1995; Julie C. Garlen & Jennifer A. Sandlin, 2016). Said (1995) for example argues that the concept of “Orientalism” is a construction of the West; its meaning was created by another cultural entity and is consequently distorted in what he says to resemble anti-Semitism. In addition, Nooshin’s (2017) case study on the controversial Iranian videoclip can also be quoted as an example. Therefore, it is a consensus that international medias are influenced by the constructed imaginary they have built over a said region of the world (Hall, 1982; Orgad, 2012; Said, 1995; Nooshin, 2017).

In our case, our research is focused on the analysis of Brazilian, UK and US established news media, how they stand for Funk, and what meaning(s) they have for it. Established newspapers are considered to be trusted cultural mediators, gatekeepers of “high” art, and therefore provide general public knowledge about what is legitimate culture. As we have previously argued that popular music addresses societal issues by representing

marginalized communities, it is critical to study how local and foreign news media depict the genre, if they have conflicting visions in its portrayal. In addition, time is a necessary factor to take in account. Globalization is transforming social interaction and communication in radical ways (Thompson, 1995, as cited in Orgad, 2012). In a 15-year-study there have been various changes also related to sociopolitical developments in Brazil and worldwide that constantly reshape the context in which music is made.

### c. Existing Literature on Funk

Brazil has acute social inequalities that are directly linked to racial issues resulting from its colonial past, as well as the long ruling of autocratic regimes. Therefore, the poorest part of the population in the country descends from African roots, as Brazil extensively used slaves to maintain its economic power and was the last country to abolish this barbarous system in 1888. As Funk takes its roots in the Rio de Janeiro's slums, it began as a local manifestation of the African diaspora present in these poor neighborhoods, where criminality is high. Furthermore, this popular style of music has generated a lot of discussions concerning the notion of "black" Brazilian identity (Treece, 2000). Since its start the genre has been victim of constant critics and discrimination of its fans, which gives reason to research how its representation in the media reflects social boundaries. Hedegard (2011) and Vianna (1987) suggested through their research that people in Brazil have a certain rejection of Funk because of class and racialized boundaries. They associate the genre to lower classes and blacks, whereas bossa nova and rock is linked to "white identities" (Hedegard, 2011, p.788). However, geographical proximity between the rich and poor neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro also created a certain degree of integration, as ways of talking, slang, gesturing, and dressing spread from the favelas to the rich neighborhoods (Essinger, 2005; Mizrahi, 2010). Furthermore, bossa nova also was a prejudiced popular style of music until it was later declared a national symbol under Getulio Vargas' presidency in 1930. Moreover, it is interesting to point out that Funk is also connected to Miami Bass as a musical precedent. Their linkage at a musical level is described by Bellos (2004) to reflect the similar social boundaries both styles are embedded in due to the local context in which they originated: blackness, poverty, crime, and "booty-shaking". Therefore, similar music may lead in representing a similar representation of social boundaries.

Funk has been through the last two decades actualized and given a new signification at a national and transnational scale thanks to the dissemination of hip-hop as a legitimate form of art and culture (Lopes, 2009). The first Funk parties in the 1980's were illegal street events in Rio de Janeiro that frequently turned into a problem due to the many disturbances it would cause. In 2000 the first State Law that would regulate the organization of these *bailles* was enacted. Unfortunately, until 2009 legislations made on Funk were here to prejudice this

style of music and prevent its dissemination. As the discrimination of the genre perdured in spite of its popularization, extensive support given by intellectuals, academics and associations pressured the State of Rio de Janeiro to label it as an official form of culture (RJ State Law No 5543) in order to fight against its stigmatization.

These political advances surrounding Funk's social and administrative appreciation solidified its expression as a cultural identity. Indeed, it is a widespread style of music that embodies its own forms of manifestation through events called *bailes de favela*. According to Frith (1998) the physical and social experiences music offers create a sense of identity that brings people together and forges a sense of cultural identity. Therefore, Funk might be a popular type of music in Brazil, but more importantly its social manifestation is a form of identity for the youth living in the slums, who are its main producers and consumers. As Born (2000, p. 31) argues, there are "prior" identities embodied in musical cultures that organize their reproduction. It is therefore important to look at who is culturally represented by the genre. Indeed, the anthropologist Vianna (1987) defends the idea that the Brazilian government and prejudice have pushed Funk into the favelas, associating the genre to poor communities. Sneed in his ethnographic research to explore the *baile* Funk experience discusses in his conclusion:

[Funk] is the favela heightened, or the transformation of the favela sounds and realities into music, in which people from favelas come together to lift themselves up emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually in the face of the harshness of the conditions of their lives in a largely in formal, socially excluded community, through their own stubborn insistence to keep dancing, loving, and living, to a feeling of what it would be like to live in a better world. (Sneed, 2008, p.78)

Indeed, because Funk's identity takes roots in the Rio de Janeiro's slums it subsequently shares an on and off relationship with the criminal world. To put it into context, Rio's favelas where *bailes* take place are controlled by narco-traffickers, involving drug use and shootings. The relationship between factions and Funk is so strong they have used songs to advertise themselves, such as the famous song "Faixa de Gaza" (2010) performed by MC Orelha promoting the *Commando Vermelho* (Red Command) criminal organization. However, even though their lyrics make the apology of a life of crime, they also reflect the harsh struggles there are in the favela and the precarity of the poor living conditions.

Moreover, Brazilian newspapers have always been very bleak on the coverage of *bailes* Funk, which contributed to the demonization of the genre (Herschmann, 2005). Starting in 1993 the term *funkeiro* (word for funk singers, dancers and fans) was used by journalists to designate the "dangerous" youth from the favelas (Herschmann, 2005). The constant



association of this style of music to violence and crime deeply impacted its national reception. However, because there was so little communication and exchanges between the middle-class and the favela (very few people dared to go there), news media became the main reference to learn about the social stratifications of daily life in these poor suburbs. In addition, because there was also a lot of curiosity and fascination about the slums, they also contributed to the “glamorization” of *bailes* and Funk by storytelling the uncharted manifestations of the genre.

Even though this popular style of music plays an important social function as an emancipatory cultural practice, the meanings of sexual violence in its songs are a conflicting issue that involves negative representations of women and immoral behavior (Morais Brilhante et al., 2019). Indeed, there are numerous Funk songs with lyrics that refer to sexual violence that have a broad media repercussion and are significantly shared in streaming platforms. In addition, there have been “famous” cases of collective rape in *bailes* that generated an international outcry. The horror of these incidents casted a shadow on Funk’s image. However, the rise of female artists in Funk playing with contradictory and excessive performances of femininity has helped marginalized women fostering solidarity and fighting against oppressive structures to bring change (Moreira, 2017). An essential way *funkeiras* (feminine word for funk singers, dancers and fans) have been countering men’s degrading songs about women is responding to MCs’ sexual demands with sarcasm and aggressiveness: Moreira (2017) quotes Valesca Popozuda’s lyrics “I go to the baile without panties! Now that I’m a whore, nobody is holding me back!”. Heterofemininity was historically subordinated to masculinity: “men and patriarchal institutions regulate women’s sexualities in a heteronormative context” (Moreira, 2017, p.184). Through the explicitness of her lyrics, Popozuda rises up against the subordination of men’s heterosexual desires. The media has also targeted *funkeiras* and their performances (Tiburi, 2011 as cited in Moreira, 2017). Women artists finally became protagonists of a section of the movement of Funk *ousadia* (dirty Funk) (Lopes, 2011). It created in the 2000s numerous public debates discussing the men-centered moralistic of women’s historically defined heterosexual desires (Filho & Herschmann, 2003, as cited in Moreira, 2017; Lopes, 2011).

Moreover, Bailes Funk received a surprising amount of international attention from newspapers and critics. There seems to be, as Font-Navette (2015) suggests it, specific narratives in foreign media that might glamorize Funk and give it a different level of appreciation depending on the global imaginary that has been built around the genre. They insist on this popular style of music’s relationship with sex, poverty violence and blackness. Nevertheless, the existing literature on how Funk is represented by foreign media remains thin, and therefore needs further research to understand what meanings are given to the genre at the international level. Moreover, there are studies that disclose the influence of

Western artists on Funk, contributing to its internationalization and sensationalizing the image of the popular genre (McNally, 2016). Therefore, the existing link existing between western countries and Funk legitimate research on how it is being represented at the international and if there are contrasts in comparing it to regional medias.

### 3. Methodology

According to the cultural representation theory, the image of popular genres like Funk is partly fomented by how they are portrayed through local and foreign media. To better understand how this popular style of music is represented, I will conduct a comparative qualitative content analysis of quality newspapers articles published in Brazil, the US, and the UK. Consequently, I will rely on a purposive sampling method and proceed to an inductive approach.

#### a. Qualitative content analysis

This research will rely on a qualitative content analysis to examine the different range of meanings given to Funk in media text and the causal contribution they have on its cultural representation. Castleberry & Nolan (2018) argue that “qualitative research methods allow us to explore the beliefs, values, and motives that explain why the behaviors occur” (p.807). Therefore, this type of analysis is suited for the carrying out of this study, as it should provide a better understanding of how the popular genre is portrayed by gatekeepers of culture like quality newspapers in this case. It can also enable the observation and comparison of different viewpoints such as foreign and local media perspectives on Funk. Furthermore, qualitative research provides a better understanding of the meanings placed in this popular style of music. Moreover, because this study is based on cultural representations of media, the adoption of a content analysis will enable the examination of the presence of themes and concepts surrounding Funk within newspaper articles.

As I will study context-dependent meaning (Scheier, 2013), I will follow an inductive approach and observe if there are patterns in the collected data on how the genre is portrayed in established newspapers. In other words, I will explore through my analysis of local and foreign media on Funk the conditions that can account for all the observed outcomes of this popular style of music’s cultural representation. Key aspects to this research will consist in examining how it as developed through time and if there are disparities between how local and foreign media portray the genre. Furthermore, a qualitative comparative analysis is a theory driven approach, which means I will have to rely on the discussed literature when analyzing my dataset to explore the meanings given to this popular style of music. Therefore, I will use the conceptualization of the discussed literature to build a primary version of the topic list I intend to follow (Schreier, 2013). It will be categorized in themes expected to be found in the newspaper articles. In addition, as my dataset will consist of published media on which I have no influence, this study can be considered as unobtrusive.

#### **b. Sampling and Data Collection**

To enhance the representativeness of my study, the size of my dataset will consist of 48 newspaper articles. I chose to rely on a purposive sampling method based on criteria I will discuss further along to achieve my research objectives. Because it is a non-probability sampling technique, I will collect the articles based on my considerations and criteria as it is believed by researchers that one can obtain “a representative sample by using a sound judgment” (Black, 2010). It will create a diverse dataset that will represent the different aspects of the research. Therefore, this technique can be an effective method to reach a targeted sample quickly. Furthermore, as I will select different groups of articles based on distinct criteria such as the country where it was issued or the quality newspaper that published it, this study’s dataset is an heterogenous sample.

My sampling will be divided in eighteen Brazilian articles, fifteen US articles and fifteen UK articles. I have chosen to add as objects of research newspaper articles originating from foreign countries to compare meanings given to Funk by different cultural entities. The third eye perspective they might have on this popular style of music will enable me to explore what key aspects the genre is carrying at the international level, which consequently contribute to the construction of its identity (Orgad, 2012). Furthermore, this mixed sampling will also allow me to examine if there is a difference between regional and international cultural gatekeepers on the evaluation of the genre. This would contribute to exploration of disparate representations of popular music depending on the studied area. Moreover, the two English speaking countries I chose have a strong popular cultural baggage as they are the birth places of legitimized popular genres like Rock & Roll and Rap. It will be interesting to observe how they assess aestheticism in foreign popular genres. In addition, because of their strong influence on the music industry and the role they played in Funk’s positive recognition (McNally, 2016), they make perfect study objects as they contribute to its cultural representation.

The articles must belong to established newspapers dealing with the topic of Funk as a genre. Through the use of various online libraries to create my dataset, my selection is based on the prestige of media that are considered to be cultural references by the general population. Therefore, amongst the chosen newspapers will be present prints such as the NY Times, the Guardian or O Globo do Brasil. The selection of only established press galleries is a choice I made to observe how cultural gatekeepers that traditionally weigh in the appreciation of a popular style of music like Funk develop their opinion through time and context, either in a positive or negative way.

The newspaper articles must have been published between 2005 and 2020. Sixteen articles will be analyzed per period of five years. I have limited my timeframe to fifteen years to observe how the representation of this popular style of music by local and foreign media

has developed through time. For various reasons, I chose my research to start on the year 2005. It marks the ignition of Funk's global recognition because it backtracks the genre's first big international breakthrough: famous international artists like the DJ Diplo start at this period to mix Funk in their showcases and popularize the genre (McNally, 2016). Moreover, more and more people are benefiting from the access and democratization of the internet. Subsequently, medias are transitioning to publishing their content online, and adapt themselves to our world globalization by developing their coverage of foreign content. In addition, the online video-sharing platform YouTube is launched on the same year. It is an important change, as the website will severely contribute to Funk's visibility and success, and consequently increase its popularity. Furthermore, Brazil is experiencing in 2005 one of its most prosperous periods, where social inequalities are diminishing, a middle class is emerging within its social hierarchy, and the violence rate is severely diminishing. This is an important factor to stress, as it is a possibility that a relationship exists in newspaper articles between these changes and how Funk is ergo being portrayed. In addition, I chose to extend my research to fifteen years because it is during that period that the genre has grown into a worldwide phenomenon and reached interest of the middle-class and elites. This shift was incentivized by various factors that have influenced perspectives on Funk. Therefore, it is important to see how the portrayal of this popular type of music is being stressed at different periods in time.

#### **b. Operationalization**

I will use an inductive approach to observe what themes will emerge from the collected sample. Nevertheless, I will also rely on sensitizing concepts found inside the discussed literature to structure the outline of my research. They are viewed by scholars as the starting point for a qualitative study: "research usually begins with such concepts, whether researchers state this or not and whether they are aware of them or not" (Gilgun, 2002, p. 4). They are a first approach to theory because they provide general guidelines to the study and suggest what directions to look at (Blumer, 1954). Therefore, based on the literature, the operationalization will rely for starters on four different topics meant to observe the outline of the research: cultural legitimization, social and racial representation, relation to criminal activity, and relation to misogyny and gender-role preferences. Again, new themes could emerge from the dataset that differ from the ones found in the existing research.

I will observe how Funk was legitimized through the representations that were made of the genre through time. It will allow me to assess Peterson & Kern (1996) and Gripsurd & Weibull's (2010) theories on the representation of popular music in the media, whether there has been a shift in taste from cultural elites with Funk, and if it there is still a distinction made between it being a "low" form of art. Furthermore, the comparison of local and foreign

newspapers will enable me to observe if the genre's rise in legitimacy has been evolving at the same pace in different countries. The existing literature on Funk insists on the contribution foreign artists played in making this popular style of music famous and more appealing to audiences (McNally, 2016). Therefore, newspaper articles from the US and the UK might have a more positive opinion of Funk than those issued in Brazil. When processing the dataset, I will look for dimensions that will serve me as "evidence" of the genre's "cultural legitimization" such as characteristics that define its cultural forms. Presence of the following would imply quality newspapers take the genre seriously and consider it as a legitimate form of art. There are numerous aspects discussed by scholars that can demonstrate the genre has cultural value. For instance, its description as a voice for the black community living in the slums in Brazil and its recognition as a form of culture.

Moreover, I will observe how social representations of Funk were portrayed by quality newspapers. In the literature, various scholars disclosed Brazilian reporters being very critical of this popular style of music to the point of demonizing it (Herschmann, 2005; Vianna, 1987). It is an aspect I will be paying attention to by exploring the ways in which journalists discuss how the genre impacts society. Furthermore, Hedegard (2011) suggested through his survey that there is a certain rejection of Funk in Brazil because of class and racialized boundaries. As we have previously seen, the genre is linked to lower classes and more specifically the black community present in Brazil. Consequently, in addition to social representations I will observe how Funk was portrayed in terms of racial representations, and what meanings were given to it. The genre has generated a lot of discussions concerning the notion of "black" Brazilian identity (Treece, 2000). Therefore, I will seek what social boundaries are represented within Funk by the media, and what changes have been made. Furthermore, scholars have argued that foreign articles reporting on this popular style of music seem to share a common imaginary for the genre that relates to blackness, poverty, crime, and "booty-shaking" (Bellos, 2004). Those elements seem to be key aspects to portray Funk at the international level. This study will verify those claims and determine whether they have changed in time. Furthermore, it will also compare the popular genre's social and racial representations by local and foreign media, if they can travel and develop themselves within the global community.

Moreover, I will observe how newspapers link Funk to criminal activity. Indeed, Rio's favelas where *bailes de favela* take place were controlled at various times by narco-trafficking gangs that subsequently had a direct influence on the genre. Therefore, I will examine what dimensions in the articles portray a connection between the genre and the criminal world. As discussed in the literature review, Brazilian newspapers have always been very controversial towards the portrayal of Funk and the community it represents (Vianna, 1987; Herschmann, 2005). There is a possibility that a relationship exists between how journalists report on Funk

and the social, political, and economic challenges Brazil is going through. I will examine when the media link or dissociate Funk to crime and gang culture from 2005 to 2020. Furthermore, the comparison of how it this aspect is perceived locally or at the international will allow me to have a better understanding of what representative meanings of Funk have travelled.

Finally, I will explore how quality newspapers are representing misogyny and gender-role preferences in Funk. Indeed, there is a broad number of funk songs with lyrics referring to sexual violence that were shown by scholars to have a high media repercussion and be extensively shared on streaming platforms (Morais Brilhante et al., 2019). ). Furthermore, musical boundaries are linked to social boundaries like gender (DeNora, 2002; Dowd et al., 2005). Therefore, I will look at dimensions that show how Funk is represented by the media in terms of gender norms, if there have been progresses from 2005 to 2020. Furthermore, I will be comparing how this sensitizing concept is being portrayed by local and foreign journalists, and if there has been changes in meanings.

### *c. Analysis*

This research is an exploratory study because it aims to put attention on the comparison of national and international interpretations of Funk as a genre. I performed a thematic analysis by looking at what is written in the newspapers articles I sampled, while also observing what type of language is used and what meanings are translated through the text. Therefore, to explore the dataset I performed respectively an open coding, axial coding and selective coding to discover what themes are present within the dataset (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). To proceed with ease on the conduct of this analysis, I have used the software Atlas.ti (version 9).

First, I read through the articles several times to get a good grasp of what information is relevant to this study and will help me answer the research question and sub-questions I thought up. I then started to create labels for chunks of data that give substance to how Funk is represented by the media. Because this analysis is inductive, they are based on the meanings that emerged from the articles and not on the existing theory. Afterwards, I identified the relationships among these open codes and started to connect them. I eventually singled out sixteen different axial codes that characterize the different dimensions of Funk's media representation in the dataset, such as for example "Impact of factions" or "Funk working as a political tool for favelas' sociocultural integrity". Finally, I proceeded to a selective coding by figuring out the core themes that englobe these dimensions. Following this analysis I identified five different themes present in the dataset, four of them corresponding to the sensitizing concepts I previously defined in the operationalization.

When assessing qualitative research, numerous scholars rely on their own conceptualization of reliability and validity. Nevertheless, they use a wide range of

characteristics that are often related to quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mishler, 2000; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001, as cited in Golafshani, 2003). Although “reliability” is a concept often used for quantitative research, it is also applied on qualitative research. It has the purpose of “generating understanding” (Stenbacka, 2001, p.551), and therefore is ensured through the examination of the study’s trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003). Since I collected newspapers articles while following a purposive sampling method, I used (previously discussed) relevant criteria to assure the quality of the dataset. Furthermore, the operationalization is set up on sensitizing concepts found in the existing literature that should provide understanding to the analysis. Consequently, the validity of the method is verified through the assessed “accuracy” of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2013). Nevertheless, the reliability and rigor of this research could be enhanced by a double-coding to assess the consistency of the core themes that have been found through the inductive identification of dimensions in the dataset.



#### 4. Results

Following this analysis, I noticed different dimensions I have categorized under five core themes which I labeled as: “cultural legitimization”, “social & racial representation”, “criminalization”, “misogyny and gender-role preferences” and “societal rejection”. Each theme includes a set of dimensions that encompass its articulation in the studied dataset, where changes in the representation of Funk are disclosed and interpreted.

	2005-2010	2010-2015	2015-2020
<b>CULTURAL LEGITIMIZATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CULTURAL CONSOLIDATION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL IMPACT</li> <li>CULTURAL COMMERCIALIZATION</li> <li>DIGITAL CULTURAL IMPACT</li> </ul>	
<b>SOCIAL &amp; RACIAL REPRESENTATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCIAL MARGINALIZATION THROUGH RACIAL DISCRIMINATION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FUNK WORKING AS A TOOL FOR FAVELAS' SOCIOCULTURAL INTEGRITY</li> <li>CULTURAL RECOGNITION AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IMPACT</li> <li>MAINSTREAM IMPACT</li> </ul>	
<b>CRIMINALIZATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IMPACT OF FACTIONS</li> <li>FUNK AS THE VOICE OF CRIME</li> <li>IMPACT OF FUNK'S CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IMPACT OF FACTIONS</li> <li>IMPACT OF FUNK'S CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT</li> </ul>
<b>MISOGYNY &amp; GENDER-ROLE PREFERENCES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PATRIARCHAL AND SEXIST ASPECTS OF FUNK</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PATRIARCHAL AND SEXIST ASPECTS OF FUNK</li> <li>PROGRESSIVE GENDER NORMS</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIETAL REJECTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>POLITICAL DISCRIMINATORY ACTIONS</li> <li>SOCIAL DISCRIMINATORY ACTIONS</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCIAL DISCRIMINATORY ACTIONS</li> <li>MILITARY POLICE DISCRIMINATORY ACTIONS</li> </ul>

Table 1: Prominence of dimensions representing Funk from 2005 to 2020

#### 4.1. Cultural legitimization

From this analysis followed four dimensions that legitimize Funk as a form of cultural expression. They are “cultural consolidation”, “international cultural impact”, “digital cultural impact”, and “cultural commercialization”. US quality newspapers seem to give more importance to this theme as they are more prominent in its disclosure. It could be interpreted by the United States participating in the positive dissemination of this style of music and promoting Funk overseas. In general there is no dominant period during which the theme seems to prevail, however its dimensions change through time.

##### 4.1.1. Cultural consolidation

This dimension refers to the acknowledgement of cultural meanings that legitimize the Funk movement. In other words, it concerns quotes underlining specific criteria that justify the genre’s articulation as a form of culture. Established newspapers seem from the dataset to emphasize this dimension during the period 2005-2010. However, after 2010 they gradually lose interest in its disclosure. This change could be explained the recognition of Funk as an official form of culture in 2009. There was before a social duty to discuss whether the popular genre had cultural value that was no longer required once it was legalized by the government of Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, since it is was a national debate Brazilian quality newspapers seem more dominant on this dimension than foreign media. In this theme, Funk is represented as a massive phenomenon in Brazil; society’s interest in the genre is growing: “Funk involves one million young people each weekend” (The Guardian, 2009). Furthermore, the favelas from where it originates are qualified as core creative and innovative hubs, where other national symbols have emerged such as Samba: “the peripheral cultural production is today the ‘cutting-edge laboratory’ of capitalism, of creative novelties for consumerism. Cultural innovation doesn’t come from the middle-class or rich people<sup>1</sup>.” (Folha de Sao Paulo, 2006). In addition, the popular genre is sophisticating itself by collaborating with other cultural fields and surpassing its traditional definition :

“From the projects we conducted and observations we made on our trips through the country, we saw that Funk today defines itself farther than the traditional universe that is commonly thought of as bailes and CDs”, says the Secretary of Culture Adriana Rattes. “In projects dedicated to the genre, there are photography exhibitions, creation of websites, book publishing, proposals to collaborate and blend different styles of dance, music and video... [Funk]’s voice is sophisticating itself.” (O Globo do Brasil, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations in Portuguese have been translated in English.

This quotation from the secretary of culture reflects how the popular genre is articulating itself in more ways than only music production; it enlists a set of characteristics that sustain its cultural manifestation. Therefore, it is relevant to give Funk aesthetic recognition as it is a cause supported by various factors.

#### 4.1.2. International cultural impact

This dimension refers to how foreign entities have influenced the genre in its conquest for legitimacy. It is a recurrent theme that is disclosed at all periods. Furthermore, in the dataset US and UK quality newspapers seem more dominant in disclosing transnational cultural articulations. They interpret it as the result of representative power relationships that embed our world (Orgad, 2012), as both countries play a role in legitimizing Funk due to their cultural authority. The main ideas this dimension communicates in the dataset is the connections Funk cultivates with foreign genres it descends from (such as Miami- Bass for example) and how international artists like M.I.A and Diplo have contributed into making this popular style of music trendy. In addition, it discloses how the positive reception of Funk at the international level has contributed to the Brazilian society accepting the genre:

“Whenever a Brazilian artist starts to make a mark abroad the upper classes go, ‘Wow!’ and start to give that artist an importance,” said Marcos Boffa, a producer who has taken funk carioca stars on tour overseas. “It is a form of colonialism, a hangover of our colonial past.” (The Times, 2005)

This quote indicates there is a link between international (occidental) opinions and Brazil’s cultural acceptance. Furthermore, this effect is said to be correlated with remaining old colonial social boundaries that sustain as well transnational cultural power relationships (Orgad, 2012). However, in the dataset during the period 2015-2020 foreign quality newspapers start to take interest not in foreign artists that popularized Funk but in Brazilian MCs (especially female) that have become worldwide celebrities such as Anitta and Ludmilla: “female stars are giving Brazilian funk global appeal” (The Economist, 2019). This change in what is observed is important to underline, as it shows that the Funk industry is no longer requiring help from foreign cultural authorities to cultivate its international fame. This can be partly explained to the increased visibility the genre has benefited from thanks to its dissemination through the internet.

#### 4.1.3. Digital cultural impact

This dimension refers to how technological advances and developments such as the internet have contributed to Funk’s aesthetic valuation. We have seen through the literature

that the democratization of the internet greatly contributed to the cultural reception of popular genres that were disfavored by established cultural gatekeepers (Lupo, 2007). Funk is no exception. The dataset insists on the important role that played the internet and online platforms such as YouTube in the diffusion of the genre both at a national and international scale. It gave the opportunity for artists with limited budgets to publish their content online for free, which incentivized and developed innovative productions as many were in the hope to reach a massive number of views and break through. This phenomenon in Funk is said to have been especially present in Sao Paulo:

In São Paulo, the internet transformed the way funk was produced and consumed, and a new generation found more ways to profit from the music. “At the beginning of the decade, YouTube paid a lot of money for visualisations,” [...] “The São Paulo generation came with YouTube paying a lot for views, and some videos had millions of them.” (DJ MAG, 2020)

Furthermore, YouTube is often described as the main alternative for the genre to fully develop itself and gain mass popularity:

[...] with major labels mostly ignoring music from the slums, those artists turned to the platform to reach the masses. “It’s not that funk discovered YouTube before the rest of the world,” explains Dantas. “It’s that YouTube was the only tool funk had.” (Billboard, 2019)

This quotation from the multimedia Funk mogul Konrad Dantas’ interview refers to the professional discrimination (that we will discuss later on in this chapter) that the genre was being victim of, that made YouTube present itself as the best way to make Funk content accessible to everyone and especially people living in the favelas that have limited buying power. The astonishing case study of the label KondZilla that turned itself into a multimedia conglomerate is often shown as example, as it represents now one of Brazil’s top media entities. To put it in a nutshell, online platforms are reported by journalists to have greatly contributed to Funk’s aesthetic legitimacy by making it massively accessible to its audience, to the point of generating worldwide trends like for example the *passinho* dance moves. However, this digital cultural impact is not mentioned in the dataset during the period 2005-2010, but the dimension increases in prominence after 2010. This late impact could be interpreted by a shift in the use of internet as an alternate way to publish and consume music.

#### 4.1.4. Cultural commercialization

Through the dataset you can see various articles address the cultural commercialization of Funk. This dimension represents all discussions relating to the professionalization of the popular genre through time. I observed in the sampled dataset US quality newspapers seem more dominant in this theme's disclosure. This could be a result of the capitalist development of the US music industry that picture this field as more than songs and artists, but brands that form part of the global market. What I have observed to be a key change in Funk's cultural industrialization is the diversification of Funk in many subgenres that do not have as much controversy as *proibidaos* (associated to factions). It is also entailed that the professionalization of Funk is mostly linked to Sao Paulo that has a more serious and business driven scene:

“Rio de Janeiro is creative, but it's very oba-oba (too much partying),” says DJ Marlboro. “It has no professional structure. It doesn't think ahead and isn't organised. In São Paulo, funk [became] professional, and a new business behaviour was fundamental to creating the industry.” (DJ MAG, 2020)

Indeed, Rio's scene incubates more traditional forms of Funk such as the *proibidaos* that rely on illegal markets and give few opportunities to its licit industrial development. However, the pacification process from 2008 to 2011 which consisted of the Brazilian military invading city slums and eliminating drug factions contributed into changing the funk scene. As soon as the genre started to broaden itself and temporarily end its relationship with criminal organizations, the music industry grew in interest and included it in the market. Furthermore, the end of discriminatory laws against Funk thanks to its legalization allowed professionals to organize legitimate events with the State's support: “Rio's state department of culture has also allocated \$292,000 to fund 37 funk projects across the city, 18 of which are baile funk events” (Al Jazeera America, 2014). These developments turned Funk into a serious industry that has now the legal means to collaborate with other cultural fields. It also consolidated the genre's aestheticism because it turned into a specific industrial field with its own dynamics.

#### 4.2. Social & racial representation

I found through the analysis four dimensions that focus on the development of specific social boundaries present in Funk: “social marginalization through racial discrimination”, “Funk working as a political tool for favelas' sociocultural integrity”, “cultural recognition and industrial growth impact”, and “mainstream impact”. They portray which identities are linked to the genre and the shifts these relationships lived through time. This theme seems more dominant in the sampled articles that have been published between 2010 and 2020. It could

interpret that the legalization of Funk as an official form of culture had a strong impact on the social and racial representations of the genre, generating vehement debates surrounding Brazil's acceptance of said culture. Furthermore, in the dataset Brazilian and US quality newspapers seem more prominent on its disclosure.

#### 4.2.1. Social marginalization through racial discrimination

This dimension refers to the segregation Funk suffers from because it represents the poor African community living in the slums. It concerns discussions that disclose the social and racial discriminations the genre is submitted to, what contributed to the ostracization of the genre that pushed this popular style of music to articulate itself in the favela. In the dataset, this dimension has no dominant period, although its presence seems more prominent in 2005-2010 when public debates on whether the genre could be accepted as a form of culture or not were held. What is generally expressed is the discrimination Funk suffers of because it represents the poor African Diaspora that lives in the slums. It goes as far as women MCs whitening their skin to be more appealing to middle-class audiences:

Anti-discrimination campaigners and social commentators say the music industry's fastest rising star has had to sacrifice her blackness to make it into the predominantly white middle-class market. The controversy was prompted by the publication of then-and-now photographs that show a dramatic lightening of Anitta's skin tone since she signed a deal with Warner. (The Guardian, 2013)

Because this popular style of music is a way for the favela youth to articulate itself, it is forced to remain in the slums. As they are poor and dangerous neighbourhoods, at one time or another the genre began to nurture a relationship with crime. This emphasized the marginalization of Funk because it represented factions. In the end, the lack of interest in the genre due to these factors generated financial limitations in its public display, that reinforced stigmas:

Funk is black and poor. It comes from the favela and will always be discriminated. *Trombadinha* (purse snatcher), *pivete* (brat) and *funkeiro* are synonyms to a big part of Brazil's population, and society has created pretexts to censure Funk, like the assaults in the 90s. Baile funk also doesn't transmit Aids, like a lot of people say. Society is losing the opportunity to communicate. A youth that knows where its wants to go, what it wants to hear... It's a space for politics and communication. (O Globo do Brasil, 2009)

The article where MC Leonardo is being interviewed shows the prejudices that have been elaborated on Funk by the common opinion in Brazil. It confirms scholars' theories that durable social boundaries such as race (Dowd & Blyler, 2002) weight in the level of appreciation that is given to a specific music genre. The fact that this dimension is disclosed at all periods although there have been developments Funk is still socially and racially marginalized. I believe this outcome stems from deeper social issues that outpace the popular genre.

#### 4.2.2. Funk working as a political tool for favelas' sociocultural integrity

I am referring in this dimension to the social improvements the slums have benefited from thanks to dissemination of the popular genre. Indeed, the articulation of Funk as a voice for the youth has greatly contributed to changing perspectives on the favela and the African Diaspora. It seems social repercussions on the represented community are more dominant during the period 2010-2015, due probably to the enactment of Law No 5543 declaring Funk an official form of culture in 2009. Overall, this dimension entails Funk is a way for the favela to address its political issues. It seems the cultural recognition of the genre helped the slum community fight for their rights and reclaim their spot within society: "We're beginning to live in a different era of self-consciousness, in all senses. Artists haven't just been expressing these feelings through songs. They're connected to the protests. They're on the front line" (The Guardian, 2013). The reason that this popular style of music can survive such changes is due to the strong territorial relationship it shares with the favela with the organization of Baile Funk events: "it's a central place for the favela's sociability" (Al Jazeera America, 2014). In addition, Funk contributes to the slums' economy by feeding orbiting markets that service the parties hosted by its industry:

While no figures exist on the exact economic impact of baile funk, the parties do provide a boost to local communities, according to Dr Simone Pereira de Sa, a professor in the Media Studies Department at Federal Fluminense University in Rio. (Al Jazeera America, 2014)

Moreover, it is a way for artists and professionals to climb the social ladder, especially since the emergence of new marketable subgenres like Ostensory Funk. Nevertheless, these social improvements seem to appear more as the aftereffect of Funk being recognized as an official form of culture.

#### 4.2.3. Cultural recognition and industrial growth impact

This dimension concerns discussions that refer to what repercussions of the popular genre's legalization and commercialization that led to its social acceptance in Brazil. This is a theme that shows perpetual advances through time. Furthermore, it seems to be dominant in US and Brazilian quality newspapers as both countries play an important role in the genre's aesthetic valuation and professionalization. They pinpoint that Funk's diversification has broadened its audience, which enabled more people to accept this style of music. In addition, the genre is recognized as an official form of culture to prevent the ongoing discrimination it suffered from, and force its social acceptance:

Law 5543 deemed funk performers as “agents of popular culture”, and that “any type of discrimination or prejudice, whether of a social, racial, cultural or administrative nature against the funk movement or its members, is prohibited.” (DJ MAG, 2020)

This legislation protects the Funk movement and its members from any type of hatred, which allowed professionals to grow and industrialize the genre. In addition, positive valuation, support and coverage of this popular style of music is done by various cultural fields to educate people on what the genre is and represents. In the dataset, one article promotes the printing of a book that is described by its authors as follows: “it is an art book on Funk for A and B social classes, that pay 100 reais to enter clubs in Zona Sul and, at 4h in the morning, are dancing to ‘Créu” (O Globo do Brasil, 2009). This quotation demonstrates intellectuals' will to expose paradoxes in the elite and middle-class population in Brazil that socially denigrate Funk but enjoy its music.

Furthermore, people have started to differentiate *prohibidao* (associated to gang culture) from other subgenres, which contributed to dismissing Funk's assimilation to factions: “the *prohibidao* (funk promoting crime and pornography) doesn't represent the genre as a whole, that is an original cultural manifestation very important to Rio” (O Globo do Brasil, 2009). Therefore, as the criminal world became a small part of what the genre represented, new marketing opportunities to enhance its crowd emerged, which led to its significant commercialization. However, these improvements are said to also be generated by Brazil's economic growth and social progress:

Ostentation funk emerged at a time when Brazil's left-leaning Workers' Party was in power and implementing subsidized social programs that lifted millions out of poverty. Banks were extending credit to the new working class. “There was this false illusion that everyone had access to everything,” says Dantas. “It was a time of celebration and conquest and all these material goods, and people wanted to flaunt them.”



(Billboard, 2019)

Therefore, we can suppose there is a relationship exist between Funk and the social, political and economic challenges Brazil is going through.

#### 4.2.4. Mainstream impact

This dimension refers to the social changes that emerged in relation to Funk's growth in fame and the subsequent enlargement of its audience. It encompasses all discussions referring to consequences of the genre's normalization in Brazil. It seems to be in the dataset a dominant theme from 2010 to 2020, which could be interpreted as an obvious observation as this popular style of music lacked in visibility before invading online platforms and being recognized as an official form of culture. The dimension seems in the dataset prominent in US quality newspapers. Key aspects in relation to the theme that emerged in the dataset disclose the effect of the popular genre's elitization:

“The problem is that there has been a process ... [of] 'elite-isation' of funk. It's becoming commodified. Even in certain places where people do host funk parties, these funk parties charge entrance fees,” said Mano Teko, a funk MC and member of APAFunk, a grassroots group that links funk to social and political activism. (Al Jazeera America, 2014)

This quotation explains that one consequent impact of Funk going mainstream is its cultural reappropriation by the middle-class. Indeed, as the genre opens itself to a larger crowd, its expansion jeopardizes the cultural representations it embodied. There are various consequences to this shift. The favela youth that this popular style of music used to represent and defend is now economically discriminated by the elites who host the Funk events. Furthermore, the representation of black culture in the genre is overshadowed by its commercialization:

The problem is not having black culture represented; it's having black people represent black culture. The heart of the issue is that there are spaces for black culture to be manifested in Brazil, but the white, elitist institutions are appropriating [it]. (Al Jazeera America, 2014)

In addition, the important resurface of criminal factions in 2016 pressured the police to take action and repress again *bailes de favela* where they are present. Subsequently, the Funk industry gains in instability and limits the power of action of professionals working in the

slums. This provokes the slow-death of the traditional Bailes Funk, that are replaced by industrial clubs reserved to the privileged middle-class. In sum, as the genre started to adapt itself to legal industrial fields, it is reformatted to broader audiences and loses the cultural significations it used to represent.

#### 4.3. Criminalization

From the analysis followed various dimensions that relate Funk to criminal activity. It is indeed a theme that plays a strong part in the articulation of the popular genre. Various articles link this popular style of music to gang factions. Through my examinations I have identified and named three dimensions in relation to criminal activity: “Impact of factions”, “Funk as the voice of crime”, “Impact of Funk’s criminal involvement”. As a whole, this theme seems to be dominant in the dataset during 2005-2010 and 2015-2020. This could be interpreted by the ruling of factions in the favelas during these periods, and the direct impact they have on the genre’s articulation which I will examine in further details. Conversely, the period 2010-2015 is marked by the aftereffect of two administrative resolutions. The first one is the implementation of cultural Law No 5543 giving the opportunity for the Funk industry to develop itself on a licit perspective. The second one is the result of the “pacification” process run by the government in the favelas to get rid of factions that dominated the slums. The Rio de Janeiro federal State however lost control over these poor neighbourhoods after going bankrupt due to the financing of the 2016 Olympics, which allowed criminal organizations to regain possession of these areas. This theme seems to dominate UK quality newspapers. This could be interpreted by a fascination for the favela, a theory disclosed by various scholars as the romanticization of the poor (Karnani, 2009; Nisbett, 2017). It dwells on the idea that the violent world that is represented in the slums is turned into an attraction for the elite and the middle-class. In our case, it implies UK quality newspapers focus on controversial aspects of the favela to portray a sensational environment that is more appealing to people.

##### 4.3.1. Impact of factions

The dimension “impact of factions” refers to how gang presence in the favelas influence Funk and its industry. It concerns all discussions referring to the paper these criminal organizations have or had in the genre’s articulation. This theme seems to be in the dataset prominent when drug factions rule in the favelas (what corresponds to periods 2005-2010 and 2015-2020). They seem to be considered as responsible for the hosting of *bailes de favela*: “Baile funk derives its name from the enormous parties in Rio favelas from the late Seventies and bankrolled by drug factions as a way of showing investment in their communities” (The Times, 2016). Indeed, criminal organizations have a strong influence on

the dissemination of the genre: “Fernandinho’s generation of bandidos like to party. Gang chiefs are major promoters of funk carioca, or Brazilian gangsta rap” (The New Yorker, 2009). Because Bailes Funk take place in the slums where factions are the ones ruling on the territory, professionals have to collaborate with them. Therefore, for MCs to perform at these events, they have to sing songs that fulfil gangs’ desires, and often focus on promoting them and making the apology of crime:

Even so, Juca knows that he owes his success to the factions. “The best way to get a break is to sing something that pleases the traffickers. It’s sad. I’d prefer to sing about other subjects, like poverty or protest, but no one’s interested.” In Juca’s case, the Red Command liked “24 Hours” so much that they paid to have it recorded and distributed 1,000 copies of the CD. (The Observer, 2005)

This need for artists to please factions that host Bailes Funk led to the extensive development of the *proibidao* subgenre (associated to gang culture) in Funk. In the end, as criminal organizations are investing themselves in the industry they influence the outcome of its productions, which impacts the image and creativity this popular style of music reflects to the world. This theme seems dominant in international quality newspapers, which seem to be interested in this controversial aspect of the genre.

#### 4.3.2. Funk as the voice of crime

This dimension refers to the impact the industry’s collaboration with illegal and criminal activities has engendered on its musical production. It enlists quotes that represent what the genre ends up promoting due to its relationship with factions and development in crime infested neighbourhoods: “‘Lift up your AKs. FB’s party is Bin Laden style,’ the MC sings at one point. ‘Red Command<sup>2</sup> lift up your hands. If you are Red Command shout ‘Faith in God’” (The Guardian, 2010). Furthermore, it relates to the negative image Funk cultivates with its fans and the influence it generates. This dimension is linked to the domination of factions in the favelas and the overruling the *proibidao* subgenre (associated to gang culture) in Funk. From the dataset, it seems UK quality newspapers are dominant in its disclosure. What is entailed foremostly is the fact that Funk is promoting violence and factions. This is unfortunately a reflection of the reality in the favelas and what people are put up against: “As DJ Marlboro explains, funk is ‘the favela singing to the favela. Singing about its situation; be it violence, sexuality, exclusion... that’s where proibidão is born. It’s born because of the prohibition of funk in clubs’” (DJ MAG, 2020).

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<sup>2</sup> The Red Command aka *Comando Vermelho* (CV) is one of Brazil’s strongest factions, along with the First Command of the Capital aka *Primeiro Comando da Capital* (PCC).

The main issue criticized in Funk is its dissemination of wrong symbols which corrupts young minds: “minors freely attend these parties and get involved in criminal and immoral behaviour” (Al Jazeera America, 2017). This argument is often advanced by people who want to banish Funk: “If lyrics that glorify drug-trafficking, incite crime, pornography and even paedophilia are a popular art form, I do not know where Brazil is going to end up,’ one reader wrote. ‘Funk is rubbish” (The Guardian, 2009). However, this phenomenon is also present in the articulation of other genres, that go from Samba and Rock and Roll to Techno music. The real problem relies on the insecurity and gang presence that subsists in these poor neighbourhoods, that cannot be resolved by only banishing a certain type of music. However, it seems the pacification operation led by the Brazilian military from 2008 to 2011 which eliminated the presence of drug traffickers in the favela until their return in 2016 had an impact on the dissemination of the *prohibidao*. Furthermore, the musical articulation of criminal organizations has diversified itself through other emerging genres such as the Brazilian drill. In addition to that, since its cultural recognition the Funk music industry has grown exponentially, minimizing the impact of factions on the genre.

#### 4.3.3. Impact of Funk’s criminal involvement

This dimension refers to what consequences emerged from the involvement of criminal organization in the industry, in regards to its community and professionals. It concerns discussions that represent the dangers and negative repercussions that appeared after the popular genre had to invest itself in illegal activities. This dimension seems dominant in the dataset during periods where factions are in control of the favelas where Bailes Funk are hosted. Furthermore, UK quality newspapers seem dominant in this theme’s disclosure. It suggests that when Funk and the traditional community it represents were ostracized and prejudiced, they were forced to involve themselves in illegal activities to keep their culture alive, which led to the criminalization of the industry. Subsequently, because MCs have to sing content that promotes factions in order to gain showcase opportunities, they endanger themselves by becoming targets for rival gangs and police squads:

“The problem is that some rappers continue to make music that inflames some factions who are ex-police officers and some who are still in the police. These officers take the insult extremely seriously and it can lead to revenge missions,” explains a police source. (The Independent on Sunday, 2013)

This affects the life of professionals in the Funk industry, who are forced to be discrete and surround themselves with security to refrain from getting killed, like this quotation from an MC’s interview:

The previous week, says Juca, he left a baile in the early hours of the morning in his manager's car. The driver took a wrong turning - and ended up in German territory. "If anyone had seen us they would have shot first and asked questions later. Luckily, it was 6.30am and no one was in the streets." In addition to that, their growing wealth also becomes a subject of envy. (The Observer, 2005)

There have been numerous cases of artists being killed while performing at a Baile Funk:

The 20-year-old Brazilian funk singer, whose stage name was MC Daleste, was shot in the stomach in front of a 4,000-strong crowd that night and died in the early hours of Sunday morning in hospital. His death brings to seven the total number of MCs assassinated in Sao Paulo over the past three years. (The Independent on Sunday, 2013)

The killing of MCs reflects the criminalization of the genre, as they are associated to gangs and become victims of their art. Moreover, medias trying to report on Bailes Funk are silenced:

Brazilian journalists all but stopped going into the favelas after Tim Lopes, a well-known reporter for the O Globo television network, disappeared in 2002, after taking a hidden camera to a baile funk in a favela. Several days later, what was left of Lopes's body was found by police. He had been tortured to death-beaten, then cut into pieces with a samurai sword, then burned-by a Red Command gang leader and his men. (The New Yorker, 2009)

These incidents result in accentuating the alienation of the popular genre, and consolidating its affiliation with factions. Furthermore, Bailes Funk become a lawless area where criminals are in charge. Subsequently, people who come to those events are confronted to numerous illegal activities such as drug dealing, gun shots and so on. As there are no competent authorities present in these areas due to the danger they could be submitted to and the easy corruption of the ladder, violence is normalized within the traditional Funk community.

#### 4.4. Misogyny and gender-role preferences

In relation to misogyny and gender-role preferences, there are two dimensions I have observed emerge from the dataset that are connected to this theme. They portray the patriarchal and sexist aspects that are represented in Funk, and how the development of its industry has enabled progressive gender norms to gain importance within the genre's articulation. This theme seems dominant in periods that are related to Funk's social struggles due to its criminalization. Indeed, it seems that the evolution of gender boundaries is also linked to other social boundaries. Furthermore, the disclosure of this theme seems dominant in the dataset in US and UK quality newspapers, which could be interpreted by the differences in gender norms in both countries and Brazil. Mentalities differ, as you can see through the dataset the exaggeration of erotic lyrics is subject to different interpretations depending on who is writing on this topic. The two dimensions that encompass Funk in relation to misogyny and gender-role preferences are "patriarchal and sexist aspects" and "progressive gender norms".

##### 4.4.1. Patriarchal and sexist aspects

This dimension refers to meanings in Funk that prejudice women and portray them as submissive. It is a dimension that seems prominent in the dataset during 2005-2010 and 2015-2020. The resurgence of the theme's disclosure in 2015-2020 could mean that Funk's recognition as an official form of culture was not a sufficient change to tackle the articulation of patriarchal and sexist symbols in the genre. Furthermore, this theme is dominant in US and UK quality newspapers (possibly for the reasons I have previously discussed). It deals with the exaggerated erotization of Funk in its lyrics and dance moves, a phenomenon that grew in the 2000 with the emergence of the *ousadia* subgenre:

Not all Rio funk tracks are about violence. There are a lot about sex, too. Out in Acari, on the distant outskirts of Rio, Valesca, the bleach-blond lead singer of Gaiola das Popozudas, - the Birdcage of Big-Butted Babes - is teasing the crowd with their hit "Vai Mamada": "I'll give you my cunt nice and slow but what I really want is your dick in my asshole," she sings. (The Observer, 2005)

This quote reflects the oversexualization of Funk in its lyricism and live performances through erotic dance moves and exaggerated representations of sex. This effect is partly incentivized by Funk songs being illegal, what allowed MCs to fully express their train of thought without worrying about censors: "Baile funk lyrics blared: 'You're not worth the dick you suck,' and then the refrain, repeated over and over, '*Pau que chupa, pau que chupa.*' 'Dick you suck, dick you suck'" (The New Yorker, 2009). Moreover, professional women

working in Funk are often hired as dancers or second-role singers: MCs in the industry are mostly boys and girls are under-represented. In consequence, the lyrics disclosed in the genre are defined by males who chose to focus on gender-role preferences because it is said to be at various times in the dataset to be what works with the public: “In the crowd, about 20 per cent of the girls are faithful girlfriends, the rest prefer infidelity - so it made sense to write lyrics in favour of casual sex,’ he says” (The Observer, 2005). They often portray women as submissive, and promote symbols that support misogyny. Furthermore, I found in my analysis that the articles in the dataset disclose that race plays an important role in the valuation of *funkeiras*, as dark-skinned women MCs are prejudiced. Finally, I saw there is little inclusion of the LGBTQ community even though they are present in Funk’s dissemination.

#### 4.4.2. Progressive gender norms

This dimension refers to the developments there have been in Funk that make it more inclusive. It also relates to the evolution of feminist movements within the genre that empower black women. However, there seems to be a low presence of this dimension in the dataset. A quantitative research could show if there is little concern in quality newspapers for this aspect, or if there are too few advances to be noted in its articulation in Funk. Nevertheless, what this dimension reveals is that a new generation of *funkeiras* superstars has grown: “in recent years women have come front stage and are making a name for themselves by singing lyrics loaded with double entendre that celebrate casual sex and ghetto life” (The Times, 2005). Their idolization is as big as hip-hop celebrities like Beyonce or Cardi B, as women MCs seem to generate a global appeal on Funk. They have had however to fight prejudice in order to turn into what they have become, which gives significance to their story and makes them a role model for black female fans. The medias report that they use sexually explicit lyrics in order to fight against sexism:

Senhora Garcia sees the sexually explicit lyrics as a form of liberation: “It is not 70s-style feminism but the respect the women MCs have earned among male and female audiences shows a kind of democracy in sexual relations.” (The Times, 2005)

Some songs by women are frankly feminist. In the music video for “Nao Sou Obrigada” (“I Don’t Have To”), which appears on Spotify’s Global Viral 50 list, MC Pocahontas chides her dopey boyfriend for bossing her around. In “Cai de Boca” (“Drop Your Mouth”), a putaria hit from 2018, MC Rebecca sings about men performing oral sex on women. (The Economist, 2019)

These quotes show that an essential way for *funkeiras* to counter men's degrading songs about women is responding to MC's sexual demands with sarcasm and aggressiveness. Heterofemininity was historically subordinated to masculinity: "men and patriarchal institutions regulate women's sexualities in a heteronormative context" (p.184, Moreira, 2017). Through the explicitness of its lyrics, women MCs subvert to the subordination of women's heterosexual desires.

#### 4.5. Societal rejection

Through the inductive approach I followed, I saw emerging various dimensions I had to categorize in a fifth theme. It builds on the rejection of Funk by different actors in Brazil's society, and forms of repression are applied on him. This topic differs from other themes because it focuses on these entities' efforts to criminalize and limit the dissemination of the genre. Furthermore, it unveils the reasons that account for this active discrimination. Indeed, it seems arguments such as the presence of gang factions and escalating violence in Bailes Funk are a façade behind what truly motivates the repression of the popular genre. UK quality newspapers seem in the dataset more dominant in this theme's disclosure. The dimensions I have named that encompass Funk's societal rejection are: "political discriminatory actions", "social discriminatory actions", and "military police discriminatory actions".

##### 4.5.1. Political discriminatory actions

In relation to political discriminatory actions, I refer to the regulations that have been voted by the Brazilian government to legally prejudice the dissemination of Funk, more specifically in Rio de Janeiro. This dimension seems dominant in 2005-2010, an obvious observation as the popular genre's recognition as an official form of culture in 2009 led to the administrative protection of popular genre and the penalisation of any hatred generated against it. It symbolizes how Funk is repressed through the decree of discriminating laws. This phenomenon manifested itself through the enactment of various ludicrous regulations complicating the organization of Bailes Funk, that starting from 2000:

In 2000, the Rio state assembly passed a law setting strict conditions under which bailes could take place: such as obligatory metal detectors and start-to-end military police presence. "They are demands that are not made for parties with any other type of music," says Orlando Zaccone, head of the police in Rio's 19th Precinct. "And of course, the law demanded the impossible." (The Observer, 2005)

The enactment of these regulations by the government can be interpreted in different ways. Not only they were limiting the dissemination of the genre, but they were as well



restraining the hosting Bailes Funk to illegal areas (the favela), and subsequently preventing the presence of favela youth in the city and as well as its social integration: “These measures are absurd. If we want an integration between the favela and the asphalt<sup>3</sup>, regulations need to be identical for everyone concerning safety” (O Globo de Brasil, 2009). In addition, the political sphere in Brazil mainly consists of religious men (mostly evangelists) who represent the important number of pious people present in the country: their values are opposed to the dissemination of this popular genre that symbolises sin. Therefore, these laws were also voted in response to the social pressurization there was on banishing this genre that promoted immoral behaviour:

In Sao Lourenco, a city north of Rio, Mayor Jose Neto has banned Brazilian rap and funk music from being played at street parties. He says the music promotes violence and vulgarity and offenders will face up to six months in jail. (The Telegraph, 2010)

Furthermore, the government refrained itself from giving any support to the articulation of the genre:

The government never gave 1 reais for the *bailes*. It is a culture that the people in the favela produce, promote and consume. There is no notice, no incentive law. The State acts like the father that abandons his son and 20 years after comes back to say that he doesn't talk right, doesn't dress right, does wrong things. The government should get closer, understand and regulate the culture. Not send the police. (O Globo do Brasil, 2009)

These political actions led to the criminalization of this popular style of music, which generated less acceptance towards its diffusion, working as a vicious circle. However, the cultural recognition of Funk in 2009 has limited the vote of discriminatory regulations against the genre from deputies, which legitimized it and led over the years to the veto of various projects to ban Funk.

#### 4.5.2. Social discriminatory actions

This dimension refers to the social prejudices Funk suffered from that led to the late legitimization and industrialization of the genre. In the dataset this theme seems to be prominent in periods where Brazil was facing consequent socioeconomical issues. Furthermore, the development of Funk in the favelas under the control of drug factions

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<sup>3</sup> The asphalt aka *asfalto* refers to middle-class and rich areas of the city, that have roads in asphalt instead of dirt like in the favelas.

incentivized to criminalize the perception and articulation of the genre illustrated by an increase in violence in Bailes Funk. UK quality newspapers seem dominant in this dimension. It indicates that there is a social and industrial discrimination of Funk that is partly incentivized by the demonization of the genre by the media. It feeds social rejection by the middle-class and elites, that exiled the genre in the favelas. There have as well been various attempts to criminalize Funk by creating petitions or pressuring politicians to act: “Members of a popular Facebook group called “Funk is garbage” collected more than 20,000 signatures and presented a bill to the Senate that would, if accepted, criminalise funk music” (Al Jazeera America, 2017). Furthermore, the fact that it constitutes a mass phenomenon is withheld, and its cultural effect in the favelas is discredited: ““There is huge resistance. Funk involves one million young people each weekend but people still belittle it,’ said Freixo” (The Guardian, 2009). This fear for the genre seems to be related to deep social and racial boundaries that do not target Funk specifically but the community that is represented through this popular style of music: “For Vera Malaguti, of the Rio Criminology Institute, fear of funk shows that Brazil still has the mindset of a slave society. ‘Mass youth movements are always criminalised by the white minority,’ she says” (The Observer, 2005). As Vera Malaguti says, Funk is not what people fear but a way for people to repress the marginalized communities they do not want to mix themselves with, which is a concerning issue. This is also an effect one can see through the elitization of the genre which on one hand implicates the social acceptance of this popular style of music, but also contributes to a consistent discrimination of the community that it represents:

Many music genres faced prejudice in their early years, but we need to understand that the campaign against funk in Brazil is something more sinister than a harmless conservative reaction to a new music style. It is yet another manifestation of racism against poor, black Brazilians living in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. (Al Jazeera America, 2017)

This quote from Al Jazeera America in 2017 reflects the social fight there has been on Funk takes deeper roots than the rejection controversial musical tones and explicit lyricism. Social actions taken against the genre directly target the favela and its population that mainly consists in poor black people. Furthermore, the escalation of hate directed towards this community seems linked to periods when Brazil is going through socioeconomical struggles, such as the elevation of crime rate or the entering in an economic depression. Therefore, we could interpret these factors have an impact on the social loathe against Funk that is generated.

#### 4.5.3. Military Police discriminatory actions

This dimension concerns all discussions depicting the repression conducted by law enforcement Funk has been victim of in its manifestations. It seems in the dataset to be prominent in the period 2015-2020, what could be due to various factors. First, technological advances allowed people to film and report discriminatory actions that were before unseen due to a lack of coverage by the media. Moreover, after the forceful eradication of drug factions in Rio de Janeiro from 2008 to 2011 by the BOPE<sup>4</sup>, corrupt military police officers have replaced these gangs and taken control of the favelas. They resumed their predecessors' illegal activities to promote themselves into the new leaders of the slums. Therefore, they have also gained control on the host of Bailes Funk and their cultural dissemination in these poor neighbourhoods.

UK and Brazilian newspapers seem dominant in this dimension's disclosure. They entail there is a strong assimilation of Funk fans with criminals amongst police officers, that can be observed through the discriminatory comments they have made to the medias, as well as the raid operations they have conducted:

Last year one of Rio's most powerful military policemen, Colonel Marcus Jardim, provoked outrage among the city's *funkeiros* with his views. "Funk parties in the favelas are meetings for scumbags," he told reporters, claiming drug traffickers used the parties to sell more drugs. "I do not have the power to prohibit these dances but I can make their realisation more difficult." (The Guardian, 2009)

The previous six murders [of MCs] remain unsolved, and Daleste's family do not expect the police to find his killer because they, like many others, believe the murderer has links with the police. Under suspicion is a rogue group of ex-police officers and serving officers from Brazil's military police who are alleged to have formed death squads that target and kill with impunity. These squads are widely referred to in Brazil as *grupos de extermínio* or Milicia and operate in the Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro areas. (The Independent on Sunday, 2013)

These quotes show how resilient is the stigmatization of the Funk community in the ranks of law enforcement authorities, that have even formed illegal militias to persecute and eliminate MCs. Furthermore, the discriminatory regulations that had been enacted by the State enabled the PM to have excessive control over the hosting Funk balls. Even though Funk was recognized as an official form of culture in 2009, the repression it suffers from the

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<sup>4</sup> The Special Police Operations Battalion (in portuguese *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais* aka BOPE) is the police tactical unit of the Military Police of Rio de Janeiro State (PMERJ), specialized in urban warfare.

law enforcement persists: “one year ago, residents of the *Rocinha*<sup>5</sup> accused the PM Riot Squad to have arrived at a Baile Funk in the *Roupa Suja* locality shooting at civilians, what ended in the death of eight people” (O Globo de Brasil, 2019). Indeed, the approval of this bill is no solution to the “challenge to persuade police authorities to accept funk as an art form rather than a criminal activity” (The Guardian, 2009). In the end, we can suppose by looking as well at other dimensions that this repression of the genre is in fact directed not on popular genre but at the population living in the favela. Therefore, what is discriminated through Bailes Funk is actually the poor African community living in the slums. The PM are ruling on these areas by endorsing fear through violence.

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<sup>5</sup> The *Rocinha* is the biggest favela in Rio de Janeiro.

## 5. Conclusion

This research aimed to answer the question “*how is Funk represented by Brazilian, US, and UK news media in the past 15 years?*”, as well as the two sub-questions “*Is there a difference in how it is represented between Brazilian and English language media? How has the representation of Funk developed over the years?*”. The method consisted in a qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis of Brazilian and foreign quality newspaper articles selected through a purposive sampling method. The dataset was examined while following an inductive approach to supply answers to this query. Doing so, this research’s findings showed that meanings given to the cultural representation of Funk seem to differ in dominance depending on the context of time and whether it is reported by local or foreign media. Based what I observed, I found that themes relating to the genre’s “criminalization”, “societal rejection” and relation to “misogyny & gender-role preferences” seem to be less prominent during the period 2010-2015, what could be interpreted as the aftereffect of Funk’s nomination as an official form of culture by the State of Rio de Janeiro in 2009 (Law No 5543). Moreover, topics in relation to Funk’s “cultural legitimization” and “social & racial representations” seem to be increasing in prominence through time. The sum of these observations suggests that although the popular genre has reached commercial success and gained a spot in the music industry, the sociopolitical changes it incentivized through its cultural legitimization weren’t efficient enough to stop the stigmatization of this popular style of music and its fans. Furthermore, UK and US quality newspapers seem to portray Funk in a more sensational way, certainly to immerse foreign readers in the ambience of *bailes*. They heavily discuss the function criminal organizations play in the diffusion of the genre, and appear more prominent than Brazilian quality newspapers in discussing the exaggerated erotization present in this popular style of music’s lyrics and live performances. These observations suggest foreign media cover controversial aspects of the genre because they are more spectacular. Furthermore, they form part of the collective imaginary of Funk at the international.

Regarding the development of themes representing Funk during the period 2005-2010, dimensions surrounding its criminalization, patriarchal & sexist aspects, and the sociopolitical discriminatory actions it suffered from seem to dominate. Conversely, the cultural consolidation of the genre and discussions on its social marginalization through racial discrimination seem to be prominent topics as well. Therefore, while quality newspapers legitimized Funk as a form of culture, they also discussed its controversial facets such as the involvement of drug factions in its dissemination. They also debated the strong social and political attempts to administratively criminalize the genre. These representations reflect the interest society developed for this popular style of music with intellectuals and political activists fighting against its stigmatization.

Furthermore, during the period 2010-2015, following the popular genre's enactment as an official form of culture in 2009, two themes that seem to dominate are its "cultural legitimization" and "social & racial representations". Indeed, dimensions referring to Funk's "international cultural impact", "digital cultural impact" and "cultural commercialization" seem more prominent, what could be interpreted as the aftereffect of new administrative legislations promoting and protecting the popular style of music. Concomitantly, in numerous articles the professionalization of Funk is said to have been incentivized by the emergence of the Sao Paulo scene that greatly contributed to its commercialization, as well as technological advances reducing costs of productions. These developments enabled the integration of the genre in Brazil's music industry, and seem to also have had an impact on social boundaries. Indeed, other represented dimensions such as "funk working as a social tool for the favela", and "cultural recognition and industrial growth impact" are dominant during the period 2010-2015, and seem to encourage the social inclusion of marginalized communities living in slums. Nevertheless, this observation is also interpreted to other factors such as Brazil's economic growth and the sociopolitical reforms led by the ex-President Lula that helped millions of people get out of poverty. Just as well, the pacification process conducted from 2008 to 2011 in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo diminished the presence of drug factions in the favelas, who also lost their level of influence over the genre. Therefore, it also lowered Funk's assimilation to crime.

During the period 2015-2020 themes reflecting on Funk's "criminalization", relation to "misogyny & gender-role preferences" and "societal rejection" seem to have gained again in dominance in quality newspaper articles. However, most dimensions referring to the "cultural legitimization" and "social & racial representations" of the genre are still prominent. As the Funk industry started to follow a more commercial orientation, its production and distribution became mainstream, what contributed to the "elitization" of its fans. Even though this shift in taste contributed to the legitimization the genre, it did not promote social inclusion, as the middle-class and elites still segregated the favela youth by attending expensive *bailes* economically out of reach for people living in the slums. Therefore, the commercialization of the Funk industry weakened this popular style of music's social function. In addition, the crime rate elevation in cities like Rio de Janeiro due to Brazil's economic depression in 2015 pushed back the favela youth in the slums. Therefore, there is no real social progress done by the cultural acceptance and legitimization of Funk. What changed is the reappropriation of the genre by elites and middle-class due to its commercialization. Conversely, this popular style of music was still represented as repressed in poor communities. The oppression of the genre by law enforcement authorities goes as far as the creation of illegal militias that are believed responsible for the killing of various MCs, many of them shot on stage while performing. In sum, we notice a recriminalization of the genre in the period 2015-2020. However, there

seems to have been a progress in the discussion of gender norms within Funk due to the rise of globally recognized women MCs that promoted equity.

Furthermore, these findings show this research contributes to discussions surrounding the cultural representation of popular music by news media through time. Indeed, this study identified various dimensions that relate to the legitimization of popular genres, and the influence foreign media have on their national appreciation. Longhurst's (2007) argument that newspaper articles that discuss popular music include a "political" and "aesthetic" dimension corroborates with the findings. It was observed that quality newspapers take responsibility in assessing the articulation of these two concepts, which suggests are a way to assess and consolidate the cultural legitimacy of a genre (Janssen et al., 2015).

Furthermore, it seems UK and US media portray Funk in more sensational ways because they are addressed to readers that are not living in Brazil. I observed in foreign articles I sampled journalists seem to heighten spectacular and controversial aspects of the genre. They have a fascination for the relationship Funk shares with crime, what could be done in order to romanticize the poor and gain in attractiveness (Karnani, 2009; Nisbett, 2017). Moreover, foreign news media were shown to share a common imagery of Funk Bellos (2004) argues to be linked to blackness, poverty, crime and "booty-shaking". However, I discovered through my findings the presence of a fifth aspect that discusses social repression and discriminatory actions. Indeed, there are often conflicts that emerge from the dissemination of new popular genres. Their level of repression depends on which actors reject the genre and the level of power they have on its diffusion. In the case of Funk, this study showed that politicians, the military police, and the elites and middle-class have acted against this popular style of music's dissemination. They had an influence on the representation of the genre that forced it to seek for international recognition in order to legitimize its cultural value.

In addition, I observed through my findings that the cultural legitimization of popular music and the broadening of its audience doesn't necessarily contribute to the social integration of the marginalized communities it represents. Scholars argued musical boundaries linked to social boundaries can vary over time and across space (Pachucki et al., 2007). Indeed, a genre can broaden itself and therefore increase the diversity of the social groups that form part of its audience. However, in the case of Funk, the elite and middle-class reappropriated themselves the genre and still segregated the favela youth by relying for instance on economic differences. Therefore, I argue that the commercialization of Funk contributed in lowering the cultural function this popular style of music initially fulfilled. Furthermore, it divided social movements within Funk.

There are limitations to this study from the perspective of data collection. Indeed, it is

focused on established newspapers, but could have included other types of media. For instance, blogs and online forums also contribute to the cultural representation of popular music. This study is exploratory and therefore the empirical research done needs to be corroborated by further analysis that could shed more light to the representation of Funk's aesthetic and political dimensions. Furthermore, a quantitative approach measuring the frequency of themes that are used to portray the popular genre would confirm observations that have been made in this study and substantiate the outcome of the theories that have been elaborated.

Nevertheless, this research has enabled the examination of the impact of Funk's cultural recognition through quality newspapers and contributed to the literature by analyzing the difference between local and foreign media representations. Moreover, it questioned the efficacy of Brazil's policies in fighting against Funk's stigmatization. By looking at the findings, we could question if the enactment of Funk as an official form of culture has been an effective amendment that prevented the social and administrative stigmatization of the genre. Furthermore, the context of time in the findings also suggests there could be a relationship between Brazil's sociopolitical context and the appreciation of this popular style of music by society. Research on this topic could assess whether Funk's discrimination could be linked to the economic wealth of the country.



## 6. References

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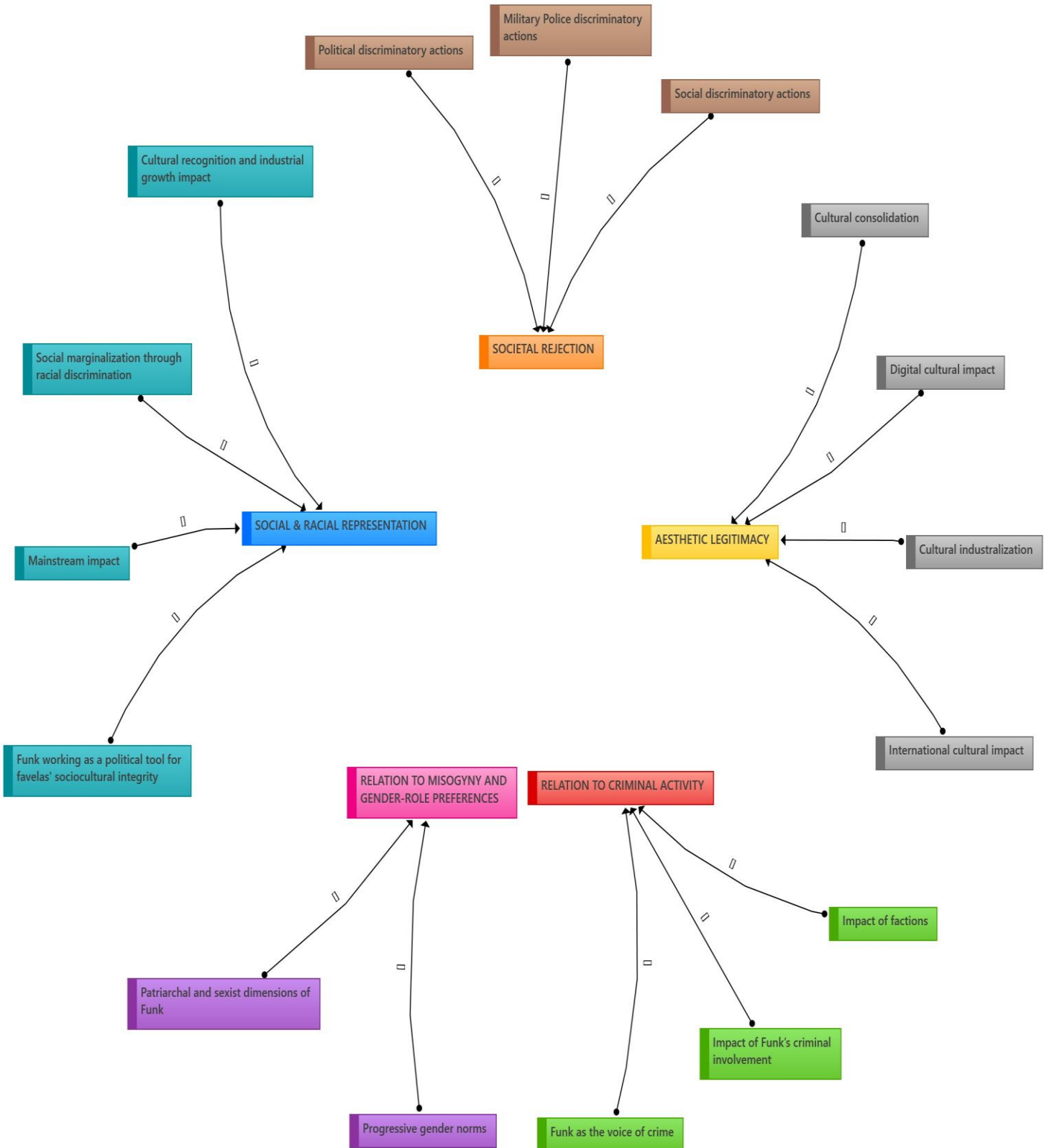
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## 7. APPENDIX A: CODING TREE



## 8. APPENDIX B: SAMPLED ARTICLES REFERENCE LIST

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