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GENDER-BODY-SEXUALITY IN SPATIALIZING: PRODUCING BODIES-IN-THE-FIELD IN RESEARCH

Gênero-corpo-sexualidade no espacializar: Produzindo corpos-em-campo na pesquisa

Género-cuerpo-sexualidad en la espacialización: Produciendo cuerpos-en-campo en la investigación

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine spatiality in research work based on the body, gender and sexuality relations established between research subjects and the researcher in an ethnographic theoretical-empirical study. Taking as our starting point theories about spatiality and materiality, we have developed conceptually the notion of bodies-in-the-field as a possible way to produce knowledge not about, but with specific individual lives. This approach also allows us to understand the body based on organizational practices and to break with processes that silence and hierarchically situate specific bodies and produce theoretical and empirical gaps in research, insofar as it aims to give visibility to and problematize the researcher body in the production of space. In Organizational Studies, this approach is relevant to an ethical and political research agenda concerned with fostering dialogue with and recognition of different bodies, genders, and sexualities, thus expanding the possibilities of organizational practice.

Keywords: space, spatiality, body, reflexivity, practices.

RESUMO

Este artigo objetiva desvelar a espacialidade no trabalho de pesquisa a partir das relações de corpo, gênero e sexualidade entre sujeitos pesquisados e pesquisador a partir de um estudo de cunho teórico-empírico de base etnográfica. Tomando como ponto de partida teorias sobre espacialidade e materialidade, desenvolvemos conceitualmente a noção de corpos-em-campo como um possível caminho para a produção de conhecimentos não sobre, mas com específicas vidas. Tal movimento permite ainda compreender o corpo a partir das práticas de organização e romper com processos de silenciamento e hierarquização de específicos corpos que configuram lacunas teóricas e empíricas na pesquisa, na medida em que propõe visibilizar e problematizar também o corpo pesquisador na produção do espaço. Nos Estudos Organizacionais, esse movimento torna-se relevante para uma agenda ética e política de pesquisa preocupada com a construção de diálogos e reconhecimentos com diferentes corpos, gêneros e sexualidades que permitem ampliar possibilidades de praticar organização.

Palavras-chave: espaço, espacialidade, corpo, reflexividade, práticas.

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene como objetivo develar la espacialidad en el trabajo de investigación a partir de las relaciones de cuerpo, género y sexualidad entre investigados e investigador. Realizamos para esto un estudio etnográfico de carácter teórico-empírico. Tomando como punto de partida las teorías sobre la espacialidad y la materialidad, desarrollamos conceptualmente la noción de cuerpos-en-campo como una posible vía para la producción de conocimiento no sobre sino con vidas específicas. Dicho movimiento permite también entender el cuerpo desde las prácticas de organización y romper con procesos de silenciamento y jerarquización de cuerpos específicos que configuran brechas teóricas y empíricas en la investigación, en la medida en que propone visibilizar y problematizar también el cuerpo investigador en la producción del espacio. En los estudios organizacionales, este movimiento adquiere relevancia para una agenda de investigación ética y política preocupada por la construcción de diálogos y reconocimientos con diferentes cuerpos, géneros y sexualidades que permitan ampliar las posibilidades de practicar la organización.

Palabras clave: espacio, espacialidad, cuerpo, reflexividad, prácticas.

INTRODUCTION

Attempts to apprehend spatial production practices in organizational research imply, to some extent, thinking of spatializing as a material practice and, therefore, an embodied one (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012). Understanding the body based on organizational practices is still an incipient field in Organizational Studies (Rezende, Oliveira, & Adorno, 2018), which is why we sought to use the theoretical-empirical study we conducted, and our reflections on its subject, to dialogue with that field. Our aim is thus to contribute to this dialogue by problematizing the production of the researcher body in the spatial experience of the field of empirical research. To this end, we focus on organized spatial experiences that challenge heteronormativity and the cisgender norm as the only practices that confer intelligibility to the relations involving body, gender and sexuality (Bento, 2017; Souza & Parker, 2020).

The hierarchy of bodies in organizations routinely demarcates privileged places with cis, normal, neutral bodies; at the same time, it constantly produces marginalized (non)places with trans, abnormal, abject and tokenized bodies. Organizational research is not immune to these processes, as being in the field is an embedded experience that produces embodied knowledge (Gherardi & Perrota, 2014); the researcher's interpretations and judgments are deeply related to the ability to perceive their body (Bispo & Gherardi, 2019). Nevertheless, the place of the body that assumes the authorship of the research is still naturalized by the myth of the neutral researcher, customarily understood as being male, white, cis and heterosexual (Fonseca, 2007; Grossi, 1992; Oliveira, 2018, 2019).

We understand, therefore, that the researcher body remains invisible. This approach downplays the presence of bodies in discussions about research spatiality and materiality, even though this researcher body is undoubtedly not neutral in the field, as it expresses sexuality and gender, and is also racialized (Oliveira, 2018, 2019). This leads us to realize that this denial of their own presence in the field obscures the practice of the researcher occupying exclusively a privileged place, one who speaks with authority about the lives of others (Clifford, 2008) and whose recognition remains restricted to certain bodies, genders and sexualities normatively recognized. Indeed, we understand that this practice realizes the right of recognition only for bodies that do not escape the norm and that, by reproducing and reinforcing the norm, it creates a kind of barrier to the recognition of those bodies erased or debased by the norm (Butler, 2018), revealing a hierarchical and excluding dynamics in the relations between bodies-in-the-field.

Furthermore, the naturalization of the researcher body around specific bodies, genders and sexualities also results in a disregard for relationships between different (non)hegemonic bodies in the research field. Such practice organizes the silencing of the diverse social relationships and positions existing between researchers and research subjects. Through this political action of conferring imperceptibility on specific bodies, relationships woven in the field – for example, between cis/trans, white/non-white, heterosexual/non-heterosexual people inhabiting the research

space – continue to be unrecognized in their own terms, in their own (non)hegemonic bodies, genders and sexualities (Smith, Higgins, Kokkinidis, & Parker, 2018). These relationships, by not conforming to the field of appearances regulated by particular understandings of science, truth and research, constitute non-places in the field spatiality.

With the exercise in reflection materialized in this article, our objective is to investigate spatiality in ethnographic fieldwork based on the relations of body, gender and sexuality between research subjects and researchers. We therefore adopt a praxeological and performative approach to spatializing, understanding it as a dynamic and relational practice of spatial production based on interactions between humans and non-humans who participate in organizational practices (Vasquez, 2013). We understand, therefore, that spatiality, the ways of producing/practicing space, is manifested from the perspective of the subjects within social contexts in which modes of social interaction and relation organize the lived world (Certeau, 1998), that is, practices that cannot exist without a body. In this sense, in order to address the theoretical problem presented here, which permeates an important ethical and political agenda in research, and which involves breaking with processes that result in theoretical and empirical gaps in research, we seek to problematize the spatiality of research fieldwork by focusing on the meeting between the cis researcher and the travestis and trans research participants.

The reflections we discuss here originated from a research that, at first, did not have the specific theoretical focus of this article, but in which the first author's fieldwork was conducted with a civil society organization in the southeastern region of Brazil. This organization runs the first reference center in the state of Espírito Santo for travesti and trans women, considered the population in which situations of vulnerability are most prevalent among all the components of the LGBTQIA+ community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning, intersex, asexual or allied and other sexual and gender minority individuals), since they seek nonconforming life possibilities in terms of the regulatory practices that produce coherent identities and truths about gender norms and, therefore, is exposed to a higher risk of objectification, harassment, pathologization and violence than those with bodies considered normal (Butler, 2018). To this end, the two authors of this article revisited reflexively the ethnographic data collected during the researcher's participation as a volunteer in a specific project of the organization, and a corpus was composed as a result of this dialogue.

In the course of this methodological path, we understood that the silencing and hierarchy processes that organize the absent presence of certain bodies in the field entail risks of stigmatizing, objectifying and reifying our understanding of the other. With an ethical and political agenda, we propose, in this article, to discuss the production of visibility of the researcher-body and of the bodies-in-the-field as a possible way to produce knowledge not *about* but *with* specific lives. We thus understand fieldwork as spatially produced in the relations between bodies that interact materially and symbolically. In this sense, the practice of spatializing the fieldwork helps us to situate the body not as a tool, but as a research agent.

SPATIALIZING AS A MATERIAL AND EMBODIED PRACTICE

In this section, we articulate the theoretical framework that underlies our understanding of spatializing practice as material and embodied, an understanding that is the basis of our discussions of the production of bodies-in-the-field. Our starting point is a micropolitical approach to practices, which has its foundations in the theories of [Certeau \(1998\)](#), for whom space is a product of the way it is inhabited and an effect of operations that orient, situate, temporalize and make function the mobile elements of which it is composed, providing intelligibility to the lived world ([Certeau, 1998](#)). These operations are the so-called practices, the ways of making of social subjects that are historically, socially and temporally produced, and whose procedural and everyday character rarely marks out well-defined boundaries. Practices organize spaces in networks formed by social experiences resulting from the paths taken by social subjects who, with their bodies, illuminate their ways of making that are cyclically shaped by the trajectories that alter, invent and practice spaces ([Certeau, 1998](#)).

Studying space through practices allows us to apprehend organized life in a socially and culturally situated way, based on shared experiences, configuring and materializing social relations, interactions, capacities, precognitive forces, body movements, affective intensities in the encounter ([Beyes & Steyaert, 2012](#)). Thus, with this information that situates the spatial organization process and implies (re)thinking space as open and multiple, practiced and everyday, we point out that this article addresses the spatial becoming and the activities that people do together, collectively and socially, in the encounters of the ethnographic fieldwork. In other words, we situate the place from where we perceive and how we perceive what takes place during field research in the socially organized encounter with other people and things, and also how the various research spaces are socially organized, embodied and produced by their own organization. These are the bases of our attempt to problematize the spatial experience of fieldwork, engendered by organized and embodied social relations that constitute the practiced ethnographic world.

In essence, we see our concerns as part of this conceptual panorama in which the apprehension of spatial production practices in organizational research implies situating spatializing – textually represented in its verbal form in order to emphasize the procedural dynamics of the phenomenon – among material practices and, for that very reason, as a performative, varied and embodied practice ([Beyes & Steyaert, 2012](#)). These efforts put us in dialogue with studies engaged in disrupting certain assumptions recurrent in organizational theory that are based on the dualistic object/subject, nature/science, body/mind, masculine/feminine logic ([Dale, 2000](#)) and in remedying the little attention given to the material and social dimensions in the production of organizational spaces ([Fantinel & Davel, 2019](#); [Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010](#); [Weinfurtner & Seidl, 2019](#)).

In this vein, some studies investigate the relevance of the body in action, in different contexts of spatial production, where both the involved bodies and the relations between bodies in the practice of space show how the lived space is significant in practice and can contribute

conceptually to approach the ways in which organization members configure and reconfigure workspaces while carrying out their professional activities (Best & Hindmarsh, 2019; Munro & Jordan, 2013). By examining this spatial dynamics, and conducting a visual reading of the bodily gestures and movements and of the places participants use to determine how they should move in space during meetings with their clients and audiences, these studies corroborate the centrality of the participants' bodies in interaction to the experience in such contexts. In fact, the authors, by not adopting an approach to space limited to architectural aspects, managed to investigate, through embodied practices of space, senses and meanings emerging from spatial arrangements, as well as from bodies and objects, a process underpinned by relations established between those sharing the spatial experience.

The connections we present here make it possible to situate the body in action back in the social space and to understand the varied spatial productions made by the practitioners; social spaces, therefore, are also bodily spaces (Dosse, 2004). For Certeau (1998), the body is a social production through which spaces are constituted. In this sense, we argue that talking about practices is talking about the body. This understanding allows us to say that organization is constituted in a spatialized way and that any act of organizing is an act of creating a space for human action (Dale & Burrell, 2007; Hernes, 2004). It is the performative occurrence of spatializing that points to an ontological approach according to which reality is fluid and continuously transformed, where movement gains centrality, as it is always present in the inhabited space. More than that, actually: it is a practice that is constituted in the presence of the body in the spatial organization, questioning how bodies “do what they do” and “what doing does” (Gherardi, 2009).

In addition to the specific contexts of the empirical research, the studies cited above call our attention to many other practices through which the involved parts organize their bodies together with each other in order to establish the dynamics of the organizational space. In our reflections, we chose to take a step back and discuss not a specific empirical context, in which one of us conducted ethnographic fieldwork, but to use this experience to discuss the very constitution of the field in organizational research, when different relationships between “bodies-in-the-field” can reveal the dynamics of the production of spatial experience. Among these dynamics, we chose to focus on practices of production of differences and inequalities in spaces, with special attention to the gender dimension, as will be explained in the next section.

SPATIALIZING GENDERED BODIES IN ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE

In conducting the ethnographic fieldwork that served as the basis for these reflections, our aim was to discuss the production of space in a specific organizational context. A context in which the flow of the fieldwork (Cavedon, 2014) reveals unexpected dimensions, as will be discussed later in this article. We understand such dimensions – which situate socially and historically bodies, genders and sexualities, and problematize heteronormativity as the underlying logic of what is

naturalized in spatial production – as insufficiently addressed in the hegemonic literature on organizational space. There is little discussion about the fact that these bodies that spatialize and are spatialized are not neutral: they occupy places and non-places for reasons related to gender and sexuality, as well as to race (Rezende et al., 2018; Tyler & Cohen, 2010). We sought therefore to overcome limits to achieve an understanding that involves a situated rationality and an intelligibility specific to the corresponding relations between body, gender and sexuality (Bento, 2017; Souza & Parker, 2020).

In Organizational Studies, this approach becomes relevant insofar as gender, sexuality and race are social categories that constitute a material and symbolic practice of constituting social relations in the everyday life of organizations (Oliveira, 2018), a situation that becomes even more exacerbated when relationships are established in the field with people who express genders and sexualities that escape the norms (Oliveira, 2020).

Theorizations of research spatialities, therefore, leave gaps: first, by disregarding body/gender/sexuality in spatial production, where the researcher body remains invisible; second, by not questioning heteronormativity as the underlying logic of what is naturalized in spatial production. This limitation can be explained by the already addressed loss of critical power of the practice lens in scientific productions that disregard that the relationality between the social world and materiality with different modes of action has a political character, since the performance of social subjects is interconnected with the logics arising from circumstances external to them, thus reproducing a situated rationality within the confines of normative standards or subverting it through new productions (Gherardi, 2009; Oliveira, 2018, 2021).

With these limitations, it is not difficult to agree with Thanem (2011) when the author warns organizational scholars not to forget that the body acts in these situations in the face of hegemonic normative social standards. Nor with Rezende et al. (2018), when they claim that understanding the body on the basis of organizational practices still represents an incipient field in Organizational Studies. This is why, based on the reflections we engaged in when conducting a theoretical-empirical study, we sought to dialogue with this field, in order to think about organized experiences that challenge both heteronormativity and cisgender norms as the only practices that confer intelligibility to the corresponding relationships between body, gender and sexuality (Bento, 2017; Souza & Parker, 2020).

It is important to emphasize here that we understand heteronormativity as a set of dispositions (discourses, values, practices) through which heterosexuality is instituted and experienced as the only natural and legitimate possibility of expression (Warner, 1993). These dispositions compose an arsenal that regulates not only sexuality but also gender. Heteronormative dispositions are aimed at naturalizing, imposing, sanctioning, promoting and legitimizing a single sex-gender-sexuality scheme: that centered on heterosexuality and strictly regulated by gender norms (Butler & Trouble, 1990), which, underpinned by an ideology of sexual dimorphism, has a structuring effect on social relationships.

With respect to cisgenderism, in turn, we emphasize that various trans activists and transfeminist movements have already argued that the cisgender norm is one of the normative

foundations of cultural, social and political practices that produce expectations regarding the universalization of human experience (Leal, 2018; Nascimento, 2021; Simakawa, 2015). The notion of a cisgender norm, proposed by researcher Julia Serano (2016), materializes in a system of constant oppression that forces the gendering of the lived world, that is, that forces everyone to identify themselves and be easily recognizable by the male/female binary world, and which is organized around a cis presumption, allowing cis privilege to proliferate, albeit in an invisible way, because it is naturalized (Serano, 2016).

That said, we sought to respond to and reinforce the invitation to think of the body as matter (Breton, 2002; Shilling, 2003), since, despite the fact that certain bodies lack specific representations, their existence as a material reality is undeniable (Preciado, 2020). For example, travestis bodies are not represented as professional administrators or leaders of organizations and, even when performing such activities, they are often made invisible by suppliers, banks, customers, etc. During fieldwork, the first author collected a report from the studied organization's leader:

people don't believe that I, a travesti, lead the projects here at Gold. I do accounting, finance work, I do business with the bank, I [handle] human resources for the Association, Gold doesn't have an accountant, a manager [that has] the figure of a man, nor of a cis person. It's me, a travesti! They do not accept that a travesti occupies this place.

Given such material reality, we argue that understanding spatializing implies recognizing it in its procedural, material and embodied aspects, which presupposes situating this practice in its imbrications with phenomena inscribed in bodies, such as gender and sexuality, which, despite being the focus of this article, are certainly not restricted to these two dimensions.

In this sense, these dimensions have already been empirically evidenced as agents in spatial production, since the knowledge about one's own sexuality embodied in the employees of an organization is an integral part of how workspaces are experienced and negotiated (Riach & Wilson, 2014). Since spaces are produced in experiences shared by subjects (such as clients and employees, for example), modes of interaction, intentions and effects get confused, mixed and can reveal tensions related to sexuality and other particular orientations that affect the dynamics of space occupation (Riach & Wilson, 2014).

Moreover, it is worth noting that the spatial production of gender is permeated by naturalized, segregating and/or exclusionary relations experienced by certain particular bodies in organizations. These relations are not restricted to the symbolic level, but have a marked presence in the material reality; an instance of this is the configuration of bathrooms in organizations, which naturalizes, in most cases, the convention of a male/female binary separation. Spatial organization, in this case, presents itself as if non-cisgender people (those who do not identify with the biological sex assigned and determined at birth, or who prefer not to have their gender assigned) simply do not exist. This example illustrates how spatial arrangements guide gender separations and exclusions and reveals the patterns of our everyday, repetitive organization of the body in space, allowing us to investigate both the way we relate to each other through socially and historically ordered gender categories and how space is an integral part of this organization (Skoglund & Holt, 2020).

Understanding the practice of spatializing sexualized and gendered bodies in organizations has helped us to gain important insights in our investigation of the different relations experienced in organizational research, which leads us to adopt in our study a critical point of view regarding more orthodox approaches in Organizational Studies, shaped by rationalist and cognitivist assumptions. Through this critical approach, which allows for the investigation of the relationality between the social world and materiality, we can reveal the differences and inequalities in the spatial experiences of different bodies, genders and sexualities in the field.

We defend therefore a spatial analysis that, instead of silencing the hegemonic heteronormative cis spatial standard, considered neutral and correct, takes another path: first, by acting to make visible, reveal and understand the researcher body as a constitutive element of this mode of cis production of the fieldwork space. Next, by highlighting spatial production practices that challenge heteronormativity and the cisgender norm as the only practices that confer intelligibility to the corresponding relations between body, gender and sexuality in organizational research, in a movement in which different material relations between bodies-in-the-field are evidenced.

In following this path, we relied fundamentally on our reflections arising from field experiences during an ethnographic research conducted by the first author of this article with an organization composed of individuals engaged in spatial practices aimed at breaking with the spatial violence of gender and sexuality. However, despite the fact that these discussions originated from an ethnographic research, we would rather that the dialogue we propose here do not remain restricted to ethnographic fieldwork production, as we understand that the concerns addressed here are not limited to the ethnographic work. In this sense, we emphasize that our reflections lead us to broaden our approach to fieldwork production, understanding it as spatially produced in the relationships between bodies that interact materially and symbolically. We discerned the connections we discuss here through the practice of spatializing the fieldwork, an approach that helps us to situate the body not as a tool, but as a research agent.

SPATIALIZING BODIES-IN-THE-FIELD IN ETHNOGRAPHIC WORK: REFLECTIONS ARISING FROM AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Ethnographic work permeates a kind of research that aims to cause a reconfiguration of the hegemonic *narratives* themselves, in order to “make/unmake the opposition between the self and the other, to construct/deconstruct the exotic-familiar dichotomy,” which contribute so much to the perpetuation of these hierarchies (Fonseca, 2007, p. 49). This is not possible by denying differences and asymmetries in the encounter with others, requiring instead a reflexive exercise of recognizing differences and studying the complex ways in which these differences intersect (Abu-Lughod & Lutz, 1990). This makes us think that the representation of “artificial man” – universal, white, masculine, disciplined – is related to studies on organizations and management (Gatens, 1996; Souza, Costa, & Pereira, 2015) as the search for researcher neutrality in the fieldwork is related to ethnographic methods.

It was with this concern in mind that we made use of the ethnographic encounters and experiences of the first author of this article with a civil society organization located in southeastern Brazil, called *Grupo Orgulho, Liberdade e Dignidade – GOLD* (Pride, Liberty and Dignity Group). This association, led by a travesti, has as its mission the promotion and defense of Human Rights. Although the research is still in progress, for this text we focused on a specific period of fieldwork, between the last quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020, when a series of meetings were being held to develop a project called “*Aconchego*” (Coziness) and the researcher in the field was present in that space as both a volunteer citizen and a researcher. Among its activities, the project aimed to provide a welcoming space for trans people in a situation of vulnerability, a place where they could simply stay safely and comfortably to spend the afternoons, access the internet, study, etc.

The space included a room with sofas, cushions, rugs and colorful armchairs; a trans pride flag hanging on a wall; a bookcase with a book collection aimed at fostering the appreciation and recognition of and the respect for trans and travesti identities and expressions. A second room, more reserved, contained a table, three chairs and books, and was intended for meetings between the population served and the professionals participating in the project, necessarily involved with LGBTQIA+ activism and with the travesti and trans cause, namely a white non-binary psychologist and a Black social worker. The project aimed to meet the most diverse demands, such as providing information on the process of name and gender rectification, as well as on other rights necessary for the full exercise of citizenship; providing testing for sexually transmitted diseases; holding educational workshops and support group meetings; assisting family members; even supplying basic food baskets and distributing donated clothes for those in situations of greater vulnerability.

The meetings at GOLD allowed the researcher in the field to recognize similarities with other bodies-in-the-field, destabilizing false cultural agreements according to which cis and trans people are believed to be somewhat different from each other. Moreover, this allowed the researcher to gain access to body practices used for trans expression or concealment (often by referring to the travesti identity, for example, during meetings some would say things such as “Come here, travesti! It’s the travesti who’ll decide!” or by breaking with masculine words, constantly altering and inflecting them for gender, as in “*essa corpa não me define*” (this body does not define me), in which the masculine noun “*corpo*” (body) is replaced with a novel feminine form – “*corpa*” – or in “*bom dia a todes*” (good morning everyone), in which the masculine and feminine forms “*todos*” and “*todas*” are replaced with the novel neutral form “*todes*,” in a logic of invention of non-binary words; in addition to other uses of the body, as in wearing male and female clothing and accessories with no concern for the sex-gender-sexuality scheme, trans women with a beard, trans men with makeup, non-binary female or male person) and recognize himself as a historical subject who, as an effeminate homosexual man, since childhood also developed his ways of expressing/disguising/hiding behaviors and standards socially interpreted as feminine.

In this movement of seeking the other, the researcher sometimes eventually found himself (Grossi, 1992). On the other hand, and at the same time, even though it was possible to recognize commonalities among the bodies-in-the-field, certain feelings of oddness were already perceptible in the first meeting with the social project's travesti coordinator, reinforcing that "foreignness does not start at the water's edge but at the skin's" (Geertz, 1999, p. 21). The researcher recorded in his field diaries that, in one of the first face-to-face meetings with the project leader, he found it strange and had difficulties to naturalize the fact that the organization's main activities were carried out by a travesti, whether they be administrative tasks, fundraising or the search for other forms of support from entrepreneurs and national and international institutions; and also that that travesti body occupied the institution's presidency, directing more than 10 ongoing projects.

Another feeling of oddness occurred during a voluntary service activity carried out with trans people, when the researcher felt embarrassed during an exchange of glances with a trans woman, which generated an intrusive thought that sexualized the gendered body of that woman, followed by a reflexive exercise: "I think she is desiring me as a man and seducing me. Oops! Stop! You cannot forget that the fact that she is a trans woman does not imply sexual desire for another man, not even for a gay man, since gender and sexuality are concepts that cannot be confused," which immediately led the researcher to remember the limits of judgment, as in Butler's (2015) argument that "recognition cannot be reduced to making and delivering judgments about others" (p. 63). These internal processes required from the researcher in the field the exercise of self-reflection about his position as a cis researcher and the risks he would face of reproducing unequal social processes and relations that privilege some and continually subjugate others, causing situations of abjection during the fieldwork.

We understand, therefore, that understanding these processes contributes to understand spatializing as a material and embodied practice that, being the subject of reflection during fieldwork, makes it possible to reflect on the production of bodies-in-the-field, an expression that situates the researcher and the research subjects not as beings that have bodies, but that are bodies (Flores-Pereira, Davel, & Almeida, 2017) and are also agents active in the research context. We highlight, with the hyphenation, the procedural character of the production of such bodies in the research context, that is, in the spatializing of the field.

Immersion in fieldwork also allowed us to understand how interactions with other people in the organization affect and are affected by expressions or concealments of trans personification, and the feelings and bodily experiences that arise when bodies express or hide transgenderism in the interaction with others in organizational space. In the same vein, participating as a volunteer embedded in this reality directed the researcher's gaze to certain spatial aspects, such as materialities, interactions and uses of bodies, which enabled a process of denaturalization of conventional organizational practices permeated by cis heteronormative logics and interdicted materialities.

These relational dynamics refute ontological principles of coexistence in the field, and, in contact with differences, highlight ethical aspects and a "political work" that, although they can be discussed in relation to ethnographic work (Oliveira, 2020; Schwade, 1992), are not

exclusive to ethnographies. This point was addressed by Oliveira (2018) when she presented an account of her fieldwork in a multi-situated study conducted in Brazil and Canada situating herself as a black female ethnographer, which made it possible to highlight how race influences manifest themselves spatially organized in ethnographic research experiences. In support of her argument, Oliveira reports everyday racist practices that reproduce stigmas, segregation and the occupation dynamics of different spaces that, in various situations involving the research participants, highlight the fact that a researcher being black influences how research is conducted in organizations, revealing how the materiality of race was manifested daily in the space of ethnographic production. In the same vein, Grossi (1992) argues that this process of construction of the ethnographic field and production of the ethnographic text is influenced by the construction and social positioning of researchers, illustrating this social positioning through a gender approach.

This scenario clearly shows us the importance of highlighting the ethical and political character of fieldwork-based scientific production. This awareness materialized for us during fieldwork with trans people in a process of self-knowledge and remembrance, in which the article's first author recalled some of his own spatial experiences as a child whose behavior was read as effeminate, with enormous potential for gender transgression, as a male teenager seen as "sensitive" and therefore marked as different, and as a gay adult whose masculinity was seen as lacking in various spaces (including organizational ones), but who has learned gender performativity in a heteronormative manner to the point of being capable of expressing social neutrality, maintaining the convenience and acceptability of a "normal" man in other spaces. In this way, in the encounters with the research participants, but also due to what he experienced and could not experience, amid bridges and walls, the fieldwork trajectory made visible a network of spatial practices, both cis heteronormative and trans(gressives).

In this sense, we emphasize that Certeau's theoretical framework is fundamental for providing a micropolitical lens that allows us to understand the social dynamics spatialized in situated and circumstantial power relations. Fieldwork evidenced the ephemeral and destabilized character of spatial production, as well as of the production of the "other." Note that, for Certeau, place and space, both own and other, are always being produced, since they lack any fixed or a priori position. We are interested here in the destabilizations and subversions that open to us the multiple possibilities of occupying place and space, of constructing ourselves as we are or as another.

Finally, the field experience that generated such reflections was made up of ethnographic encounters permeated by gender relations, allowing us to understand how gendered, sexualized and embodied relations between cis and trans people are part of the spatiality experienced in a context of organizational field research. We sought to demarcate contexts that make (in)visible certain social – and therefore cultural – relations by investigating unequal places where spaces, organizational practices and bodies are engendered as a possible path for the production of knowledge, which, in the empirical research described here, revealed situations involving cis bodies considered neutral and trans or travestis bodies, which carry marks distinguishing them

from reference standards and whose predominant representations only affirm their existence “as a specimen belonging to a taxonomy of deviation that ought to be corrected,” lacking adequate references in city spaces, media spaces and even in spaces of citizenship (Preciado, 2020, p. 224). It is thus empirically evidenced that the spatializing of the field is constituted in recognizably hierarchical gender relations, which in the case of the research we discuss here involved travestis and trans people, but which is not limited to this specific context.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this article, in which we bring reflections that were provoked by and arose during the first author’s field experience, we aimed to discuss how relations involving the researcher’s body, gender and sexuality, in this case a gay, cis man, influence the spatiality of fieldwork in ethnographic research. To this end, we problematized the spatializing of the ethnographic field in the encounter between researcher and research participants, highlighting the dynamics of gender-body-sexuality expressions in this process through what we call production of bodies-in-the-field. Following this path, we argued that is fundamental to understand spatializing as a material and embodied practice, and we aimed to highlight the fact that the – situated and gendered – bodies are agents active in the research.

Based on this material, embodied and interconnected understanding, our reflexive effort is aimed at breaking with previous judgments or representations and at producing spaces of recognition for all practitioner bodies and practices that, together, establish the organizational space dynamics and institute an ethical and political agenda that emerges at the limits of our intelligibility schemes. This is a space of reflexivity, where, in the context of ethnographic research, we ask ourselves how to dialogue and recognize when we find ourselves in a situation of producing research not about the other, but with the other.

Exploring research spatiality alternatives to a neutral, hegemonic – and also cis and heteronormative – scheme is relevant for Organizational Studies insofar as body, gender and sexuality are constituted as spatial, material and symbolic practices that engender social relations in the everyday life of organizations, these “are spaces that matter” in ethnographic research production (Oliveira, 2018; Tyler & Cohen, 2010). These are relevant questions, since these social categories determine the position researchers and subjects have in the field (Musante & DeWalt, 2010), and that become even more important not only in ethnographic work, but in some way also in qualitative approaches in general, which are known to promote greater engagement of researchers in fieldwork, and emerge as a central dimension in ethnographic work, since it takes social relations themselves as its lived world (Grossi, 1992).

Bearing these goals in mind, we join efforts with those who seek to deconstruct the myth of researcher neutrality, thus implying the political character of fieldwork, whose context is part of the ethnographer’s socio-historical constitution and can serve as a heuristic tool in research analyzes (Grossi, 1992; Oliveira, 2018). We argue that this effort to deconstruct the myths around

ethnographic research and the ethnographer expresses an ethical commitment to unveil certain processes and relationships in the construction of the fieldwork space, to accept responsibility for what we do and say and to be self-reflexive about our position and relations in the field (Cunliffe, 2016; Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013).

This is an inherently unpredictable effort to face the oddness and the constant surprise, which may lead to a crisis of the credible, a movement of breaking with customary standards of reference, values, thoughts and actions (Ferraço, Soares, & Alves, 2017). This is an ethical practice, as Butler (2015) argues, “it may be that only through an experience of the other under conditions of suspended judgment do we finally become capable of an ethical reflection on the humanity of the other” (p. 64). We also argue, therefore, that conducting research (and spatializing) together with the other within an ethical agenda implies recognition of the other; in this case, this means allowing oneself to practice with bodies-in-the-field, a movement of opening oneself to otherness and reflexivity.

To that end, during fieldwork, we return to and articulate our concerns with Certeau's (1998) theorizations, considering the subjects in their everyday life as practitioners (would they be ordinary bodies?), which implies capturing them not in essence, but in acts, relations and interactions. This study focuses on everyday practices of reflection, not of cis people about trans people, but with cis and trans people, in order to understand the lived world of production of knowledge, not only theoretical but also methodological, and the production of social life in different contexts, believing that the researcher's attitude in the field makes all the difference, in the sense of building bridges with informants, highlighting the importance of reflexivity not only in ethnography, but in research in general.

Along this path through spatiality and materiality, we have developed conceptually the notion of spatiality with bodies-in-the-field, which reflects a research attitude involving reflexive practices of breaking with the denial, invisibility, abjection and stigmatization of bodies, genders and sexualities. Spaces inhabited by bodies-in-the-field allow us to discover inequalities in spatial experiences, material and representational injustices, as well as forms of exclusion. Moreover, they materialize the right to recognition for bodies, genders and sexualities seen as deviating from hegemonic norms, extending visibility to less hierarchical and less exclusionary spatial dynamics.

We highlight, with this effort, a research agenda that promotes the opening of more ethical avenues, as well as of paths for the investigation of less violent modes of spatial organization in organizational research, which is concerned with the inherent complexity of lived experiences not restricted to normative standards and with ways of fostering dialogue with and recognition of different bodies-in-the-field, thus expanding the possibilities of organizational practice. This effort points to an urgent and necessary task of shaking up the hegemonic research practices that have been accepted as valid in methodological terms and that support the maintenance of cis-heteronormative (but also male, white, without disabilities) research without leaving any opening to divergent spaces, in terms of the bodily, sexual, gender and racial relations practiced while conducting a research.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Romulo Gomes and Letícia Dias Fantinel worked on the conceptualization and theoretical methodological approach.

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