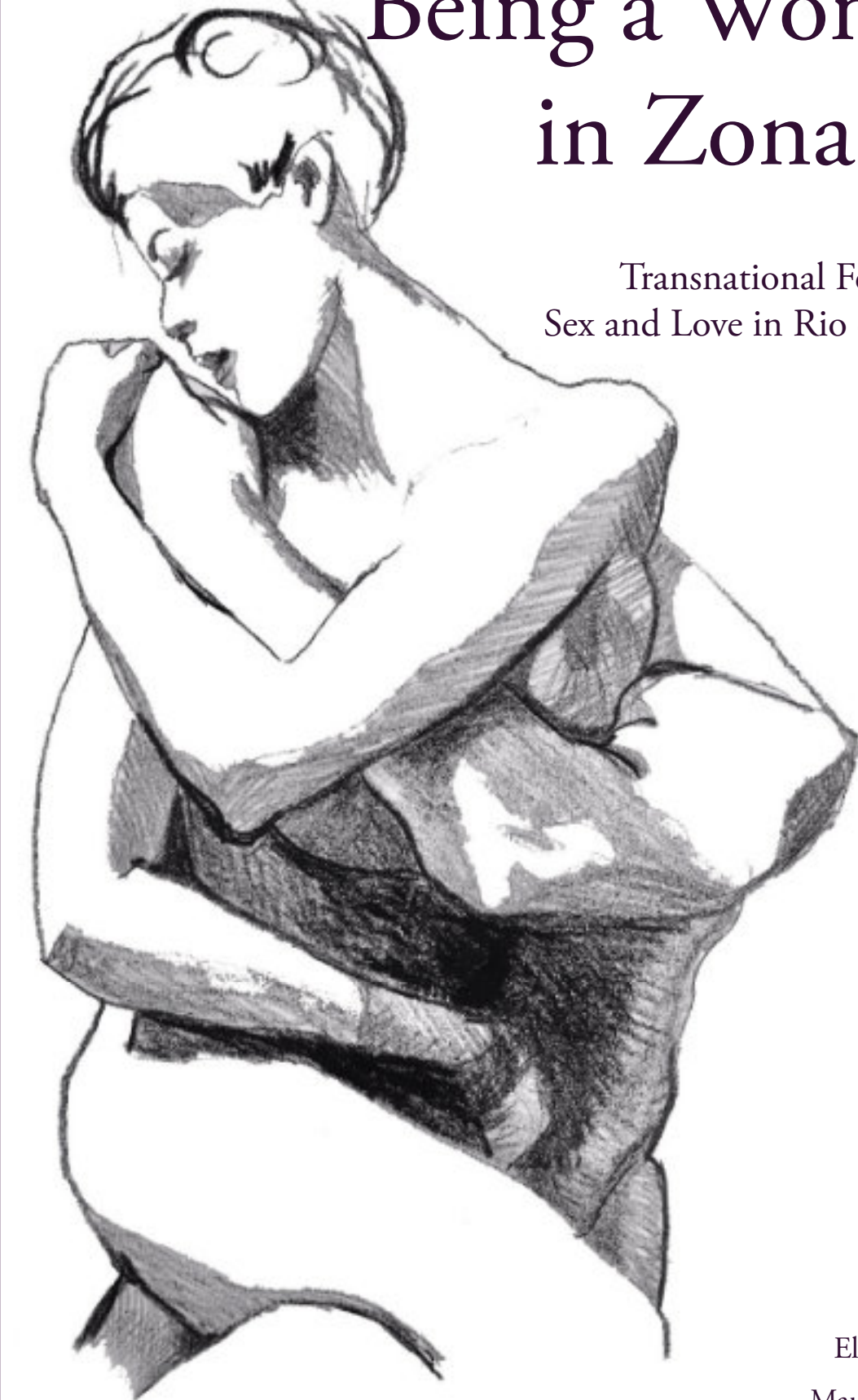


# Being a Woman in Zona Sul

Transnational Femininity,  
Sex and Love in Rio de Janeiro



Elise Fellingner  
Maurice Gispen

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ELISE FELLINGER

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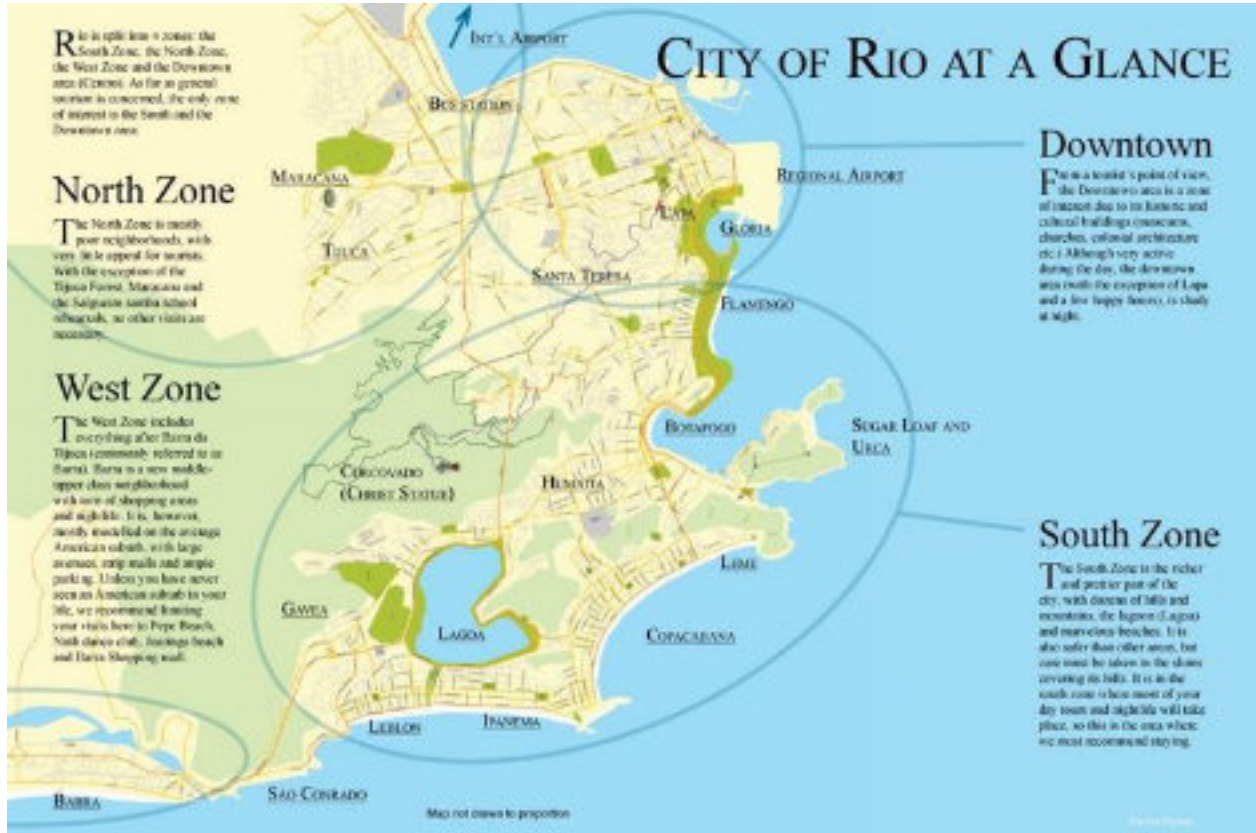
# 1. Map of Brazil<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tes.com/lessons/abrDrhnLIR19jQ/amazon-rainforest>, opened on 24 June 2019 and edited by P. Gispen.



## 2. Map of Rio de Janeiro<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> <http://ontheworldmap.com/brazil/city/rio-de-janeiro/map-of-rio-de-janeiro-neighborhoods.html>, opened on 24 June 2019.

# Introduction

*Maurice Gispen & Elise Fellingner*

On the 1st of January 2019, Jair Bolsonaro was inaugurated as Brazil's new president. Bolsonaro is an extreme right-wing conservative politician and known for making sexist comments, leaving many women feel insecure about their rights (Baird 2017). "I have five children. Four boys. After that I had a moment of weakness and a girl came", Bolsonaro said during a lecture in Rio de Janeiro on the 4th of April 2017.<sup>3</sup> According to Bolsonaro, this comment was meant as a joke. However, calling the birth of his daughter a weak moment stands in line with essential ideas on women's position in Brazil's society, namely as weak and subordinate to men. As a response to Bolsonaro's conservative stance and his sexist insults, various feminist movements have spoken up against the recently elected president. Statements, such as *#EleNã* (not him) were used in protests to show a collective discontent with conservative, right-winged political spheres in Brazil.

Within this political, cultural and social environment of upcoming right-wing politics and left-wing female resistance, we analyse how *carioca*<sup>4</sup> women and female tourists construct, perform and experience femininity, sex and love in the Southern part of Rio de Janeiro, Zona Sul.<sup>5</sup>

To make sense of the concepts gender, sex and love, the meaning *carioca* women and female tourists ascribe to 'being a woman' is analysed as a process in relation to social, cultural, historical and political structures tied to Zona Sul (Abu-Lughod 2014; Beauvoir 2010; Butler 1988). An important underlying social, cultural and political structure that continues to shape the meaning of femininity and masculinity in Brazilian society is called *machismo*. *Machismo* confirms male domination whereby women are seen as subordinate and are expected to accept male authority (Baldwin & deSouza 2011; Merkin 2009). Consequently, women are expected to be decent, self-sacrificing and prudish (Del Priore in Baldwin & deSouza 2011; Santos 2018).

In order for women to resist structures of female subordination and to move beyond static ideas on gender, we analyse how they ascribe meaning to gender and sexuality. The process of

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<sup>3</sup> <https://exame.abril.com.br/brasil/piada-de-bolsonaro-sobre-sua-filha-gera-revolta-nas-redes-sociais/> opened on 16 June 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro identify themselves as '*carioca*'

<sup>5</sup> Zona Sul, the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro consists of the neighborhoods: Botafogo, Catete, Copacabana, Cosme Velho, Flamengo, Gávea, Glória, Humaitá, Ipanema, Jardim Botânico, Lagoa, Santa Teresa, Laranjeiras, Leblon, Leme, São Conrado, and Urca.

including a female perspective can be seen as a personal and a social process that might be a step towards gender equality (Gonzales 2014).

The goal of this research is to (re)present narratives from different perspectives of women as individuals who perform and (re)define gender, express sexuality and interpret the meaning and importance of love. We wish to empower women to find answers within themselves and to represent their sexual identity. Therefore, we analyse how *carioca* women and female tourists experience gender, sex and love in transnational, intimate relationships.

Moreover we seek to contribute to sexuality studies by highlighting the importance of subjective sexual experiences in relation to intimacy. Rachel Spronk (2011) argues that within anthropology attention is often drawn to either gender inequality or diverse sexual preferences. Therefore, this thesis provides a better understanding of interactions between subjective sexuality, intimacy, and social, political, cultural and historical dimensions that shape ideas from which women perceive and construct their sexual identity.

We analyse the construction, representation and performance of female sexual identity in Zona Sul with the following question: *“How do carioca women and female tourists experience a sense of sexual identity in local and transnational intimate relationships in Zona Sul, Rio de Janeiro?”*

To understand cultural variations of sexual identity construction, we conducted research on how *carioca* women and female tourists construct and perform their sexual identity in an intimate relationship with Brazilian or non-Brazilian men. This is operationalized with four sub questions about the topics femininity, sex and love.

The first question, *“What meaning do female tourists and carioca women ascribe to femininity in the social, cultural and political context of Rio de Janeiro”*, is useful to help understand norms, values and expectations on how to behave as a ‘feminine woman’, within the specific context of Rio de Janeiro.

The second question, *“How do beauty ideals shape notions of femininity for carioca women and female tourists in Rio de Janeiro?”* elaborates on the social, cultural and political expectations on how to appear as a ‘woman’ and how these expectations are negotiated by both groups.

The third question, *“How do carioca women and female tourists perceive masculinity in an intimate relationship in Rio de Janeiro?”*, is necessary because we believe that femininity and



masculinity are two sides of the same ‘gender coin’. In other words, the way in which femininity is perceived and performed is constantly intertwined with meanings that both groups ascribe to masculinity.

The fourth question “*How does intimacy (sex/love) contribute to understand the construction of sexual identity for carioca women and female tourists?*”, enables us to understand the meaning of intimacy as both a conscious and unconscious process in (transnational) intimate relationships with Brazilian or non-Brazilian men.

In this thesis sexuality is approached from three different angles. Namely, as a way to express gender; as the bodily experience of sexual activity; and as a social and cultural way to perform intimacy (Csordas 1993; Spronk 2011). In doing so, gender is understood as the socio-cultural meaning that is ascribed to ‘woman’ (and ‘man’). The notion of ‘woman’ is understood as something that one might *become* rather than something one *is* (Beauvoir 2010). Within this process of becoming a woman, one is able to perform gender while at the same time this performance is limited to the political, social, cultural and historical environment in which one is located (Butler 2011; Hall 2013). Furthermore, *intersectionality* (Crenshaw 1989) is used as a framework to understand how different axes of identity (e.g. gender, class, race, nationality) in the context of Rio de Janeiro constitute a sense of sexual identity for both *carioca* women and female tourists. In doing so, we seek to move beyond ‘woman’ as an essential, static and universal category by acknowledging differences *between* and *within* groups of women (Abu-Lughod 2014; Ang 1995; Haraway 1988; Rich 1984). In addition, we focus on local and transnational relationships as processes in which the cultural meaning of sexual identity is in constant movement in relation to another sexual being (Vertovec 2009; Walsh 2009).

In order to explore these themes we have conducted ethnographic research for a period of three months in Zona Sul, Rio de Janeiro. Zona Sul is known for its touristic beach culture, where both upper- and lower class *cariocas* live alongside the many tourists. We have conducted complementary research in which *carioca* women and female tourists relate to each other because both groups share the identity ‘woman’. While the meaning they ascribe to femininity, sex and love while being in Zona Sul can be constructed in relation to axes of identity (e.g. nationality, ethnicity, class) in which these groups differ. *Carioca* women, on the one hand, are embedded in structures of *machismo* of their home country, Brazil. Female tourists, on the other hand,

experience to be temporary visitors in the current political spheres of an upcoming right-wing policy versus left-wing feminism, while being away from their home country.

Maurice focused on how female tourists - as non-Brazilian women - give meaning to their sexual identity while being abroad. A total of fifteen female tourists, between twenty and thirty-five years old from mostly northern western European countries<sup>6</sup>, participated in this research.<sup>7</sup> Maurice came in contact with most female tourists through Facebook-page 'International Girls Gone Rio' and at an international language party '*Mundo Lingo*'. Many female tourists who participated in our research already knew each other. This enabled Maurice to have group conversations and to apply the *snowball method*. Many female tourists, being in their twenties, were in Rio de Janeiro looking for adventure, love and fun not specifically looking for marriage or long-term settlement with *carioca* men.

Elise focused on how *carioca* women, between nineteen and forty-seven years old, perform and experience their sexual identity as local inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro. Taking different generations of *carioca* women into account provided different insights on growing up within structures of *machismo* and processes of female liberation. A total of twenty five *carioca* women have participated in this research. The majority of our participants together were white, highly educated, left wing, middle- or upper class women. This was not a conscious decision, however it shaped our research towards a more left-wing-oriented perspective for which we suggest other approaches in the conclusion. Many *carioca* women were aware of their privileged position and linked their being in their early twenties to growing up with ideas of *machismo* while being influenced by left activism on social media. Monica, a 25-year-old *carioca* woman became Elise's gatekeeper. She introduced Elise to five *carioca* women who belonged to the same upper class, social environment.

Femininity, love and sex can be sensitive topics to talk about. To make sure we created a comfortable environment to do so, we did not directly ask for an interview. Rather we asked if they were 'willing to share their story'. This technique enabled us to get to know women on a more personal level, to some extent more than others, and to create an informal sphere. Often, this

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<sup>6</sup> Jennifer, Sophia, Anita and Anja are from The Netherlands; Jolina, Sarah and Nora are from Sweden; Charlie and Sasja are from Germany; Josephine and Charlotte are from France; Cleo is from Denmark; Anushka is from Russia; Eline is from Finland; and Kim is from Japan.

<sup>7</sup> Anuska, Jolina, Kim, Charlie and Josephine stayed in Rio de Janeiro for a couple of weeks; Jennifer, Cleo, Eline, Frederique, Sasja and Nora stayed in Rio de Janeiro for three months; Sophia, Anita, Anja and Sarah stay in Rio de Janeiro for two years or more.

resulted in in-depth conversations on various levels, where our participants asked us critical questions as well.

Participant observation was one of our main methods, which we mostly used on Copacabana beach, during carnival parties and on the streets of Zona Sul. Participant observation can best be described as a strategic method in which the researcher takes part in daily activities in order to grasp underlying socio-cultural dynamics of everyday life. This method enabled us to see the invisible or to understand the unexplainable (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011); such as what is considered feminine and how women actually perform or resist certain gender expectations.

We often shared our own personal experiences during interviews - based on participant observations - in order to understand how *carioca* women and female tourists reflected on our experiences as women in Rio de Janeiro. Interviews made us aware how, for example, becoming friends with *carioca* men in daily life is difficult, because often, if not always social interactions between men and women are assumed to be sexual.<sup>8</sup>

We conducted around sixty informal conversations, open- and (un)structured interviews depending on the setting. We obtained informed consent from all participants, either before or during an interview, which we always double checked afterwards.

Elise conducted mostly structured interviews because most *carioca* women did not have a lot of time to spend. This made the time that Elise had with *carioca* women costly. Female tourists on the contrary had a lot of 'free time', as most of them were on holiday in Rio de Janeiro. Maurice was therefore able to see female tourists more than once on the beach or at carnival parties for example. This created an informal setting that made it easier to build *rapport*, wherefor Maurice could rely more on key informants<sup>9</sup> than Elise. Elise on the contrary often conducted interviews in a *lanchonetes* (lunchrooms), which created a rather formal setting: according to '*carioca* standards', informal social life often takes place at the beach, while meeting at a *lanchonetes* indicates a more formal meeting.

Differences in building *rapport* - or even a friendship - enabled us to critically evaluate the pros and cons of meeting in either a formal or informal setting. For example, Elise was more able to focus on interview questions, which could result in interviews with a less personal character.

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<sup>8</sup> Cleo, Charlie, Eline, Sophia

<sup>9</sup> Cleo, Nora, Sophia, Jennifer and Anita all became key informants in the field.

Maurice was able to build a kind of friendship with most of her participants, which made it challenging to distinguish friendly conversations from data.

After our first week we became aware of an ethical dilemma as a result of our presence as white, blond, European women in Zona Sul. This mere appearance is often idealized by both *carioca* women and men because it is regularly associated with wealth and a relatively 'better life'.

Maurice realized how she became her own subject of research as a non-Brazilian woman in Rio de Janeiro, which made many conversations both personal and academic. Some questions therefore may have been suggestive, since Maurice took personal experiences into account when talking with female tourists. Yet, sharing personal experiences made female tourists comfortable to tell their intimate personal details. Consequently the conversations could be seen as a reciprocal process for both Maurice and female tourists.

Elise experienced how she embodied 'the European ideal' as aspired by many *carioca* women and men. As a result, *carioca* women could view Elise as a threat.<sup>10</sup> Elise tried to overcome this by listening patiently during interviews, showing genuine interest in their personal stories.

In the following chapters, we elaborate on the theoretical and practical fundamentals of this research. In chapter one, a theoretical framework is set out which thoroughly analyses the concepts gender, sexuality, sexual identity and transnational relationships. In chapter two, gender norms are illustrated within the context of contemporary structures of *machismo* which can be understood from several historical processes. Chapter three elaborates on how *carioca* women and female tourist (re)define femininity in the social, cultural, political sphere of Zona Sul. Chapter four sets out processes in which *carioca* women break down sexual taboos and female tourists being sexually framed while perceiving Rio de Janeiro as a sexualized city. Chapter five analyses different perceptions of love, whereby a distinction is made between rational and emotional love. In the final discussion we elaborate on the paradox of political spheres versus temporary tourism; aversion versus attraction of both *carioca* and non-Brazilian men; and diverging perceptions on rational and emotional love. To conclude, we stress the importance of taking into account three notions of time that may influence a sense of sexual identity. The appendix presents two summaries, in English and Portuguese, and two personal reflections on our experiences as anthropologists and individuals in the field.

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Dóris, 19 February 2019.

# Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework

## 1.1 Gender *Maurice Gispen*

*“One is not born a woman, but rather, becomes a woman”*

- Simone de Beauvoir (1986 in Beauvoir 2010)

This quote of Simone de Beauvoir (1986 in Beauvoir 2010) does not only present the constructed and dynamic notion of ‘woman’ as a gendered identification; it also suggests how identifying as a woman is a form of (self)representation which does not necessarily have to be a stable, biological given (Butler 1988). Representing and experiencing gender is something that is constructed by individuals and various actors in social and cultural life (Butler 1988; Mahmood 2001). The underlying idea of what it means to be a woman or a man and the cultural markings that are ascribed to ‘woman’ or ‘man’ in complex socio-cultural dynamics, can be conceptualized through the notion of gender.<sup>1</sup> (Butler 1988). Beauvoir (2010) approaches gender constructions as an active process, in which ‘the body’ is the actual embodiment of social, cultural, historical and economic situations. Gender identifications thus need to be placed in a specific partial, spatial and temporal location in order to make sense of its meaning (Abu-Lughod 2014).

Judith Butler (1988, 1990, 1997, 2004, 2011) theorized gender as *performative*. Her definition developed over the years. She started with analysing gender as a construct that is performed as something that can be ‘acted out’ by individuals. According to Butler’s performativity paradigm, meaning is ascribed and given to the body. This occurs within cultural ideologies about what this gendered body is, must be or might become. (Butler 1988). In other words, what it actually means to be a ‘man’ or a ‘woman’ is constructed within specific social, cultural contexts about ‘how to be’ feminine or masculine. However, Butler (2002, 2011) herself and multiple scholars (e.g. Boucher 2006; Schep 2012) criticized this approach on the performative notion of gender. Her concept of performativity opened up many debates within feminist theory, about how women (and men) could be seen as active agents in the construction of their own gender identity, instead of passive objects. Yet performativity is considered a somewhat exclusive perspective (Butler 2004, 2011; Boucher 2006; Schep 2012). Gender

identifications and its construction do not necessarily have to be a conscious process, they may also happen on an unconscious level in which men and/or women position themselves. Thereby, gender identifications and the performance of gender might be limited to the social, cultural, historical and economic environment in which an individual is located (Butler 2011; Schep 2012). Specific female beauty standards, expectations on how to behave as a woman or meanings ascribed to femininity can be sensitive for different interpretations. What is considered beautiful or empowering in one country or culture, might be regarded ugly or restricting in another (Abu-Lughod 2014; Mahmood 2001). Thus, performativity can be seen as exclusive in a sense that not everything is possible to perform. The actual performance may be limited to existing norms in socially and culturally constructed spaces (Boucher 2006; Schep 2012). Certain norms and expectations are constituted within dominating power structures in society, which might influence the extent of performance, as well as ideas about how one wishes to perform gender (Butler 1997; Schep 2012).

In understanding the performative, constructivist aspect of gender, the *intersectionality* (Crenshaw 1994) perspective is also relevant. Intersectionality can be explained as a constantly changing and developing theory, a concept, a social cultural movement or a method (Davis 2008; Crenshaw 1994; Yuval-Davis 2006). Intersectionality might offer a deeper understanding of differences *within* groups and *between* groups by “asking the other question” (Davis 2008, 70). The other question - which at first sight might seem needless to ask - provides an insight into phenomena that are not necessarily visible on the surface. Within this thesis, intersectionality is used as a framework that provides a deeper understanding of certain phenomena, by looking at different axes of identity that intersect in social cultural life (Crenshaw 1994; Wekker 2016). For example in understanding women’s position in Rio de Janeiro, we might want to look further than the notion of gender. Women’s position in society then could be understood more thoroughly when an intersectional perspective is applied; by looking at multiple axes of identity to move beyond the notion of ‘woman’ as a unified group. From an intersectional point of view understanding women’s position in society, groups of women could be divided in for example ‘middle class women’, ‘women of colour’ or ‘European women’. Because by solely looking at gender as a significant layer of identity, one might miss other relevant axes (e.g. nationality, age, class or ethnicity) that contribute to understand a certain phenomenon. Including various other axes of identity might offer a more multilayered understanding of an individual, in which gender is just one aspect of



identity. Intersectionality thus functions as a lens of looking at both individual and collective identities, that seeks to move beyond the visible, essential and self-evident understanding of everyday-life (Crenshaw 1994; Wekker 2016; Yuval-Davis 2006). Moreover, Stephanie Shields (2008) and Nira Yuval-Davis (2006) describe intersectionality as the relational and “mutually constitutive” aspect of identification. In other words, the existence and meaning of a social identification - such as ‘woman’ - is reinforced and constructed in relation to other identifications such as man, Brazilian, or heterosexual.

All in all, processes of identification risk being taken for granted because of dominant notions about certain social identifications. Essentialized identifications such as ‘woman’ might leave little or no room for differences within this social category (Ang 1995; Shields 2008; Rich 1984; Yuval-Davis 2006). A social identification such as ‘woman’ can be seen as a naturalized, visible, straightforward and simplistic description of a much more diverse and complex group. Intersectionality thus, offers a tool in which ‘womanhood’ is not a taken-for-granted biological category, but rather as a dynamic process in which social, cultural, historical, political and economic factors need to be taken into account (Crenshaw 1989, 2014; Wekker 2016; Yuval-Davis 2006). In doing so, underlying differences within and between various groups of women become evident. What makes a woman a ‘woman’ might be related to other axes of identity as well as to a social, cultural, political and historical environment. Because ‘woman’ can be understood as a relational category, which is defined and constructed by underlying mechanisms that influence its meaning and definition (Ang 1995; Haraway 1988; Rich 1984).

In conclusion, gender identifications cannot be seen as straightforward categories or as a universal biological given, rather they form a constructed ideology that needs to be (re)considered in relation to its specific location (Abu-Lughod 2014; Butler 1988). This is exactly what Donna Haraway (1988) named *situated knowledges*, Ien Ang (1995) the *politics of difference*, and Adrienne Rich (1984) the *politics of location*. In the following section, sexuality as a complex relational concept of gender is discussed.

## **1.2 Sexuality and Sexual Identity** *Maurice Gispen*

Within anthropology, gender and sexuality are often intermingled concepts (Rubin 1984; Vance 1991). However in understanding gender, the study of sexuality needs to be considered as well

(Rubin 1984; Vance 1991). Because gendered behaviour - what is culturally considered feminine or masculine - might contradict with how someone *sexually* behaves (Gordon & Silva 2015). Gender can be understood as the cultural meanings, expectations and standards that are ascribed to being a 'man' or a 'woman' (Butler 1988). Sexuality can be described as a more personal idea about who you are, want to be or might become as a sexual being (in relation to others) (Rubin 1984; Spronk 2011; Vance 1991). For a long time women's sexuality was primarily associated with female reproduction and normative gender roles (e.g. mother or wife). Female sex and sexuality were not specifically associated with erotics, pleasure or sexual desire (Henry 2004; Giddens 1992). Restricted and normative ideas about sexuality reflected male dominance, women's subordination and hegemonic gender ideologies (Haraway 1988; Henry 2004; Vance 1991).

Influential events such as the AIDS epidemic around the 1980s, changing gender roles as a result of secularization and radical feminist protests about birth-control, pornography and sexual liberation, started various debates about sexuality (Rubin 1984; Henry 2004). Subsequently, sexuality was no longer primarily bound to the needs of reproduction, but rather sexuality became a discourse of individual identification and pleasure (Giddens 1992; Spronk 2011). Sexuality, became only a "small portion in a larger sexual universe" (Vance 1991, 45). This larger sexual universe is about sexual pleasure, attraction and desire, love and intimacy (Vance 1991). In this thesis sexuality is used as a concept in order to move beyond the notion of sexuality as something that is only experienced through the physical body. Sexuality is analysed as a dynamic meaningful construct that relates to the body, as well as to a more abstract notion of one's sexual identity (Foucault 1982, 2009; Holland *et al.* 1994; Spronk 2011).

To understand different dynamics of sexual identification, as both the bodily experience and the more abstract ideas about sexuality in relation to others, Michel Foucault's understandings on sexuality are used. He explores sexuality from a *constructivist* and *discursive* point of view (Foucault 2009; Hall 2013). Firstly, his constructivist approach emphasizes how sexuality, like gender, is a social cultural construction created within discourses of power and culture (Foucault 2009; Giddens 1992; Vance 1984 1991). Discourse is, according to Foucault, a system in which knowledge and meaning are produced. To understand discourse, he places the physical body at the centre of this productive system as the beginning of meaning construction, for example how to sexually behave or how to be or become a sexual being (Hall 2013; Foucault 2009; Spronk 2011).

Heteronormativity, the objectification of female bodies in pornography and performing plastic surgery for the perfect sexual body, can be seen as embodied ways to 'define' sexuality.

However, the physical body and the more abstract ascribed meaning outside of the body are not clear-cut entities, but rather complex intermingled ideas that challenge the essentialist and constructivist notions on sexuality (Giddens 1992; Holland *et. al.* 1994). Secondly, Foucault analyses sexuality as discursive process, as a circulating system of meaning construction. He argues how this system is not necessarily a hierarchical process, but rather a discursive process between subjective agents and power structures that both reinforce, accommodate and resist dominant notions on sexuality (Giddens 1992; Hall 2013; Holland *et. al.* 1994). Foucault states that 'the body' is caught up in this circulating system, in which individuals themselves produce 'regimes of truth' (Hall 2013). This shows how sexuality may transform into a form of personal sexual identification. From here, sexuality is approached in three different ways.

Firstly, sexuality is understood as a way to express gender; i.e. what is sexually considered 'feminine', 'sexy', 'charming' or 'elegant'. Gendered and normalized ideas about how to be or how to behave as a woman might contrast or stand in line with how to sexually behave (Gordon & Silva 2015; Vance 1991). Therefore sexual behaviour can be seen as a way to both challenge and accommodate certain expectations. Physical sexual desire for example, is often more accepted for men, while emotional involvement in intimate relationships is associated with women (Spronk 2011).

Secondly, sexuality is seen as the bodily experience of sexual activity or as the actual physical sensation of having sex. This covers the way in which an individual experiences and perceives erotic, physical and sexual contact (Holland *et. al.* 1994). The bodily experience of sex can be seen as a starting point through which cultural meaning is transmitted or constructed (Csordas 1993; Spronk 2011). Csordas (1993) argues that only implicit cultural ideas 'come to being' through the body. This means that the body both carries and produces cultural meanings (Gordon and Silva 2015). Such cultural meaning comes into existence by intersubjective intimacy, in other words physical sexual interaction between two (or more) people. A deeper understanding of this process is needed to move beyond sexuality as solely physical (Csordas 1993; Spronk 2011).

Thirdly, if the bodily experience brings cultural meaning into existence, sexuality can also be understood as a more socio-cultural way to perform intimacy on both erotic (sexual) and

romantic (love) levels with others. This can be seen as the more abstract and invisible understanding of sexuality, because it exists in the mind and outside of the body (Csordas 1993; Spronk 2011). Diamond (2004) argues that both love and sexual desire can be experienced together. However, he argues, that these concepts should not be approached as one and the same. Sexual desire conceptualizes the need or drive to engage in sexual activities, whereas romantic love involves emotional feelings of attachment between intimate partners (Diamond 2004).

Moreover, these discussed discourses of sexuality and the formation of a sexual identity cannot be seen as merely conscious, visible or individual processes (Spronk 2011). Spronk (2011) argues that the physical body - as a sexual object - only becomes a sexual subject through intimacy. Thus, in order to understand a sexual being as an active subject within the discourse of sexual identification, intersubjective relationships and sexual activity with other sexual beings, need to be (re)considered (Gordon & Silva 2015; Spronk 2011). In the following section, the formation and construction of one's sexual identity is elaborated on in relation to 'transnational relationships'.

### **1.3 Transnational Relationships** *Elise Fellingner*

When understanding the rapid movement and development of sexual identities in a globalized world, the physical body and its ascribed meaning can be viewed in active interaction with other meaningful bodies outside of one's country of origin (Tornqvist 2012). Globalization, as the ever-changing and ever-moving flow of goods and ideas around the world, resulted in the mixture of cultural ideas (Appadurai 2010; Urry 2001). Cultural ideas are thus in motion all the time. New social orders and cultural environments are constantly being reconstructed through the interaction of new collective and subjective understandings (Appadurai 2010). In this research, 'transnational relationships', as the intimacy of love, sex or both, can be seen as an embodiment of interaction between sexual identities and its reciprocal transformation.

Vertovec (2009) defines transnationalism as the global intensification of relationships that go beyond distances and national borders. Transnationalism can be examined as a social construction, a cultural reproduction and a reconstruction of place (Vertovec 2009). Identities and places are thus constantly transformed by the interplay between global media communications, representations, and transnational relationships (Vertovec 2009). Examining interpersonal

relationships in the context of transnationalism, allows to observe 'culture in action' as cultural meanings change within new cultural contexts (Walsh 2009).

Definitions of relationships are multi-interpretable, as relationships may also indicate connections with friends or family (Walsh 2009). In an attempt to distinguish romantic relationships with friendly and familial relationships, Walsh (2009) argues that romantic relationships can be distinguished from friendships by connecting love to sexuality. In practice, this includes a desire for sexual activity (Ben-Ze'ev 2004 in Walsh 2009, 430). However, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, love and sexual desire can both intertwine or co-exist separate from one another (Tennov 1979 in Diamond 2004). Within this inquiry, transnational relationships may include intimacy based on love, based on sexual desire, or a combination of both.

Desire can be approached in two ways. Firstly, as a literal concept which can be defined as sexual emotion that flows within the physical body and highlights the possibilities of natural romance to emerge (Tornqvist 2012). Secondly, desire can be approached as an abstract concept. In line with Deleuze & Guatarri (1968 in Roberts 2007), desire as an abstract concept stresses the naturalness of transformation that individuals constantly undergo. Individuals involved in transnational relationships can serve as an example of this transformation as they are lifted out of their original context, their country of origin, while extending the context itself and transforming their (sexual) identities in relation with local individuals (Appadurai 2010; Piscitelli 2016; Roberts 2017). A woman travelling from The Netherlands to Brazil would thus separate her (sexual) identity from the context in which it has been developed. Her sexual identity is transformed yet remains embedded in the cultural meanings of sexuality in The Netherlands. Consequently new meaning is ascribed to the sexual identity of a Dutch woman in Brazil as it is (re)shaped in interaction with local meaning (Piscitelli 2016). Desire as a sexual emotion can thus function as an initiator of transnational relationships, creating an interaction from which individual identities naturally transform according to the abstract notion of desire.

A desire that exists to get involved in romantic or sexual activity, partly derives from the constructed ideas of another 'sexuality', whether male or female, before the search for foreign love or sex begins (Piscitelli 2016). John Urry identifies this constructed idea that exists within and outside the mind, as *the gaze*. The gaze is a lens - influenced by social, cultural, historical and economic constructions - through which an individual 'gazes' at someone else (Urry 2001; Hall

2013). It is important to note that these gazes flow reciprocally, which stands in line with Foucault's discursive approach as noted in the previous section. Constructed images that one has about the other do not only flow from the travelling individuals, such as tourists, to the inhabitants of the country of destination. These inhabitants often have comparable images of foreign travellers (Banyopadhyay & Nascimento 2010).

In addition to the existence of reciprocal gazes, the transformation of individual (sexual) identities are also reciprocally influenced. An individual within a transnational relationship who has left the familiar context, may experience a transformation of his/her sexual identity in relation to local sexual meanings and actual sexual activity. On the contrary, this individual is capable of transforming notions of sexuality experienced by local men or women within the new context (Piscitelli 2016).

Transnational relationships that are situated within structures of power and unequal relationships that result from these structures of power, pose ethical questions (Tornqvist 2012). In what way do transnational relationships differ from sex tourism or romance tourism? From an ethical point of view, there is probably little difference to be seen, as transnational relationships exist within the same power structures (Tornqvist 2012). Transnational relationships based on love, sex and romance are embedded in powerful processes of economic injustices and exoticized projections, that occur in meaningful post-colonial spheres (Tornqvist 2012). The economic trade that defines 'sex tourism' may not be as obvious when speaking of transnational relationships. However, processes of transnational love, sex and intimacy are too diverse to be seen as complete commercialization (Günther in Oppermann 1998). Therefore, definitions that allow for personal, noneconomic, transnational love and sex are worth considering (Günther in Oppermann 1998). While some individuals may travel to experience love and sex abroad, it would go too far to define such transnational relationships as solely conscious. This way to approach transnational relationships would fail to include the possibility for these intimate processes to emerge naturally. From this point of view, transnational relationships as a concept, differs from sex tourism and romance tourism in the way that the first leaves room for unconscious processes.

In conclusion, transnational relationships can be seen as the interaction of sexual identities within different cultural contexts. Within this interaction, a reciprocal transformation occurs through conscious or unconscious processes of romantic intimacy, sexual desire or a combination of both.



# Chapter 2 Context

## 2.1 Revolutionary *Carioca* Women in a Man's World *Elise Fellingner*

Tropical beaches, sex and tourism might perfectly describe what Rio de Janeiro is globally known for. The beaches in Zona Sul have been a central meeting point in the social lives of *cariocas*, which contributed to striving for bodily perfection (Dorneles de Andrade, 2010; Freeman 2002). The ideal Brazilian female body has a big butt, a small waist and a golden tan; a mixture between black beauty assets with white features (Jarrin 2017). This ideal illustrates how the gendered body in Brazil is not a universal standard but rather a constructed notion about what this perfect female body might be within the context of Rio de Janeiro. Female beauty ideals can be traced back to the colonial time in Brazil, when women were eroticized for their racial identity (Edmonds 2010; Jarrin 2017). A desire for 'exotic' local women led to interracial relationships between European men and indigenous black women, creating a 'whiter' nation and a racially diverse country. Brazil's *mestiçagem* (racial mixture) can thus be seen as the result of sexually framing black women. (Bandyopadhyay & Nascimento 2010; Edmonds 2010; Jarrin 2017).

The perception of 'the ideal Brazilian woman' partly results from a male gaze. Throughout the 20th century, Brazilian men presented Brazilian women as seductive in silent films, objectifying the female body as a fetishistic desire (Bicalho 1993). On the one hand, the female Brazilian body is being sexualized, while on the other hand, women are expected to fulfill a more decent and family-oriented role in daily life in comparison to men (Santos 2018). Women are assumed to be subordinate to men in society which can be seen as a reflection of the underlying social and cultural structure *machismo*. *Machismo* can be defined as a cultural ideology that essentializes gender roles in relation to appearances and behaviour (Deyoung & Zigler in Torres & Solberg 2010, 167). Within this inquiry, *machismo* may lead to gender inequality since its expectations for women - as being housewives or mothers - do not correspond with contemporary female rights such as equal opportunities for men and women (Henry 2004; Santos 2018).

Throughout history, women have tried to challenge static and conservative gender expectations. In the 1970s, Brazil experienced a period of feminism and sexual liberation. (Goldenberg 2005). Actress Leila Diniz was spotted on Ipanema beach wearing a bikini which was unusual at that time and could be considered revolutionary. The idea of a revolutionary woman

like Leila Diniz thus challenged traditional images of what a Brazilian woman should look like (Goldenberg 2005). The sexualized female body of *carioca* women - which can be seen as a result of structures of *machismo* or the colonial and male gaze - emphasizes that *carioca* women should not be seen as passive objects subordinated to the power of beauty (Jarrin 2017). Rather, from a discursive point of view (Foucault 1982) *carioca* women can be seen as both active subjects in the embodiment, performance and representation of their sexual identity, in relation to others. Moreover, *carioca* women can be seen as power structures themselves who contribute to constructed idea(l)s, challenging and reinforcing normative notions of female sexual identity (Edmonds 2010; Foucault 1982; Jarrin 2017).

Recently, various feminist movements arose in Brazil as a response to right wing, conservative political spheres and underlying structures of *machismo*. *Machismo* has often been associated with female unsafety, male aggression and domestic violence (Merkin 2009). Violence against women is not just based on speculations, since statistics show that every hour and a half, a woman is killed as a result of domestic male violence in Brazil (Couto 2018). A female activist and politician, Marielle Franco, who strived against male violence, women's subordinate position in society and economic inequality, was murdered in March 2018.<sup>11</sup> Various feminist movements in Brazil responded to her murder. Franco, a black lesbian woman born in a *favela* (slum), symbolizes a struggle of many (black) women in Rio de Janeiro.

From an intersectional perspective, her death demonstrates how the difficulties of being a woman in Rio de Janeiro, relates to class, race and sexuality (Crenshaw 1989). Moreover, Franco's death has evoked collective anger and frustration which made many Brazilian women feel empowered in their struggle against sexual harassment, sexism and social exclusion (Palmeiro 2019). As a result, Brazilian women fight for female safety and gender equality with the use of online and offline protests such as Facebook hashtag #IFightAgainstRapeCulture (Couto 2018) and the recent #NãoéNão. Women stick the frase *não é não* (no is no) on to their bodies in the form of temporary tattoos, especially during Carnival, to speak up against sexual assault while protecting themselves from that same threat.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Until today the murderer still has not been found.

<sup>12</sup> <https://g1.globo.com/es/espírito-santo/noticia/2019/02/22/nao-e-nao-campanha-para-carnaval-sem-assedio-e-lancada-em-vitoria.ghtml> opened on 11 May 2019.

## 2.2 Female Tourists as Objects and Subjects of Sexual Desire

### *Maurice Gispen*

While Brazilian women may be eroticized and objectified, young Brazilian men often tend to be fascinated by blond European women (Piscitelli 2016). A desire for blond European women is closely linked to the historical values attributed to European whiteness in Brazil, since whiteness represents both the physical appearances and the relatively privileged social positions that white foreigners occupy (Moutinho 2003 in Piscitelli 2016). The idealization of female tourists, related to local beauty ideals, demonstrate how different axes of identity, such as ethnicity, gender and nationality, intersect (Crenshaw 1989; Wekker 2016). Because being a white woman might symbolize a certain life-style which is assumed to be related to ethnicity or nationality. As a result, desire - within transnational love or sex - that arises from various gazes, can be seen as a reciprocal process (Urry 2001). Female tourists can be objectified by Brazilian men while simultaneously female tourists may attribute sexual intensity to Brazilian masculinities. Contrarily, these masculinities may be perceived negatively by Brazilian women (Piscitelli 2007). In Andriana Piscitelli's (2016) research on sexual transnational relationships between European women and Brazilian men, European female travelers perceived local men as sexually active and physical in communication. Sexual interactions with Brazilian men were perceived as liberating by female travelers (Piscitelli 2016). As a result, female tourists created new perceptions of their own sexual identity.

Transnational relationships between Brazilian and non-Brazilian men or women can be analysed through three approaches to sexuality as mentioned in the second paragraph. Firstly, sexuality in the context of female tourists in relation to Brazilian men whereby European female travellers expected local men to adjust their masculine behaviour, according dominant gender norms. As men obey to these expectations, the temporary, spatial and partial notion of gender is emphasized (Abu-Lughod 2014; Butler 1988). Female tourists expected Brazilian men to run a household that would conflict with local notions of masculine behaviour. These women aim to enjoy local sexualized masculinities while challenging non-sexual masculinities.

At the same time, they want Brazilian men to perform their masculinity during sex while yet at the same time opposing to be subordinate to these masculine men in non-sexual settings (Piscitelli 2016). This shows how difference between gender and sexuality lies within cultural

meaning. Secondly, sexuality can be approached as the bodily experience of sexual activity. Piscitelli (2016) shows that female travelers experience sexual activity in a different way while sharing intimacy with Brazilian men, since female travelers state that they have more sex with Brazilian men in comparison to men from their home countries.

Thirdly, individual sexual identities are embedded and transformed because female tourists perform intimacy with Brazilian men (Csordas 1993; Das 2007 in Piscitelli 2016; Gordon and Silva 2015). Sexuality can thus be understood as a socio-cultural way to perform intimacy on both sexual and romantic levels.

The more tacit notion of intimacy and its cultural variation, comes into existence as a result of physical contact and love. The cultural variation of the meaning of love and emotion can be illustrated by the Portuguese words *saudades*, *amor*, *paixão* and *apaixonado*. These words have a specific meaning which only makes sense in Portuguese and in the context of love, sex and intimacy in Brazil. *Saudades* cannot be translated directly into any other language which shows that its meaning originates from a context within the framework of interpersonal connections in Brazil (Rebhun 1999). *Saudades* is roughly translated to ‘to miss’, although the meaning of the word is ‘heavier’ than to simply miss someone or something (Rebhun 1999). Another specific Portuguese concept is *paixão*<sup>13</sup> (passion). The Portuguese meaning of *paixão* translates to: “Feeling an intense attraction, that is also sexual, for someone.” Moreover, the Portuguese meaning of *apaixonar*<sup>14</sup> (being in love) translates to ‘being full with passion’. Within this meaning, being in love can be understood as a feeling of passion that fills the body. Being in love is thus considered to be a physical feeling. Even though ‘being in love’ is a multi-interpretable concept, the literal meaning in Portuguese relates more to *paixão* than it does to ‘*amor*’ love, which relates more to an emotional feeling of affection.

These concepts illustrate vivid emotion in interaction which supports the idea that the physical body is not only a physical object, but also an expression of the self within a social world. In addition, these Portuguese terms filled with cultural meaning are utmost relevant in an attempt to understand love and sex in Rio de Janeiro, because these concepts come alive in interpersonal interactions (Csordas 1993; Rebhun 1999; Spronk 2011).

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.dicio.com.br/paixao/> : online Portuguese dictionary. opened on 15 May 2019

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.dicio.com.br/apaixonar/> : online Portuguese dictionary. opened on 15 May 2019

## Chapter 3

# What Makes a Woman Feminine?

*This chapter focuses on the construction ‘woman’ (Beauvoir 2010; Butler 1988) in relation to (re)defined notions of femininity in the social, cultural and political spheres of Zona Sul. We illustrate how gender is performed within the specific boundaries of cultural gender norms in Rio de Janeiro. In doing so we present an analysis on how female tourists give meaning to femininity, linked to cultural norms that exist in their home countries while being in Zona Sul. Carioca women seek to redefine femininity as a resistance to static and conservative ideas about gender linked to structures of machismo and female unsafety. While female tourists seek to define femininity from a personal perspective rather than a political one.*

### **3.1 Femininity Under Construction as Female Tourist** *Maurice Gispen*

One my first day in Copacabana I enter the beach. One of the young guys working on the beach immediately runs towards me to help me carry my beach chairs. The chairs are not heavy at all; but, carrying something as a woman in Rio de Janeiro - while there is a man around to help you - seems inappropriate.<sup>15</sup> A small gesture that might mirror larger structures of male-female dynamics in a city that is marked by *machismo* (Baldwin & DeSouza 2011). Being confronted with different norms, values and expectations on how to behave as a woman, made female tourists think about their position as a woman in Rio de Janeiro as well as in their home country. In this chapter I analyse how female tourists make a distinction between physical and non-physical meanings ascribed to femininity while being in Zona Sul, which illustrates how ‘woman’ can be seen as a concept that is constructed in its spatial and temporal location (Abu-Lughod 2014; Butler 1988; Mahmood 2001).

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<sup>15</sup> Fieldnotes, Copacabana beach, 23 January 2019.

What is physically considered most feminine is a ‘curvy’ body, a woman’s body with hips, boobs and a rounded ass.<sup>16</sup> “What is more feminine than a body that looks as if it can carry a child? A momma’s body is femininity for me, with hips and breasts”, said Nora<sup>17</sup> while walking on the boulevard of Copacabana. Nora is a 29-year-old woman from Sweden, she came to Brazil to see her Brazilian love in São Paulo. Unfortunately he did not feel the same way about their love as she did. Therefore Nora went to Rio de Janeiro to enjoy the rest of her time by herself. Our first conversation is during a long walk through Santa Teresa - the neighborhood where she lives and works in a youth hostel. When I see her I immediately wish I had met her in an earlier stage of my fieldwork. She appears to be a warm-hearted, open and joyful woman. I have deep conversations with her in a same kind of way as with friends at home. Nora’s idea about a curvy woman’s body as feminine is also what other women consider most feminine.<sup>18</sup>

Anita, Cleo and Josephine feel as if a curved woman’s body - like Nora describes -with a bit of fat on the butt or cellulitis on the hips is more accepted in Rio de Janeiro in comparison to European countries such as The Netherlands, Sweden or France; because regardless of which body type, all *carioca* women seem to wear a tiny tanga bikini with pride.<sup>19</sup>

The way in which female tourists understand physical femininity can be seen as a result of a certain European gazes. In other words, a lens through which one ‘gazes’, is coloured by cultural, social, historical and political background of the observer (Urry 2001). Therefore, certain gazes makes female tourists perceive a ‘curved female body’ as less accepted in Europe compared to Rio de Janeiro and view *carioca* women to be more self-confident with their ‘natural female forms’ (e.g. hips, wide waist, breast).<sup>20</sup> The meaning of femininity might thus be constructed in the way female tourists ‘gaze’ at *carioca* women, because physical femininity and self-confidence represent subjective perceptions rather than solid truths (Ang 1995; Haraway 1988; Urry 2001).

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Cleo from Denmark, 14 April 2019; Interview with Nora from Sweden, 11 April 2019; Interview with Josephine from France, 8 March 2019; Interview with Jennifer from the Netherlands 10 March 2019; Interview with Kim from Japan 22 February 2019; Interview with Jolina from Sweden, 19 February 2019.

<sup>17</sup> All names used are pseudonyms.

<sup>18</sup> Multiple interviews with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February - 31 March 2019; Interview with Frederique from France 8 March 2019; Interview with Jennifer from The Netherlands 10 March 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Josephine from France, 08 March 2019; Interview with Anita from the Netherlands, 25 February 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Josephine from France, 08 March 2019; Interview with Anita from the Netherlands, 25 February 2019.



During samba classes in Copacabana I meet Anita, a 28-year-old woman from The Netherlands, who lives in Rio de Janeiro for the upcoming two years. She has already been living in Rio de Janeiro for five months. Anita just broke up with her *carioca* boyfriend with whom she lived together for a couple of months. One week later we meet again at Ipanema beach, around the corner of her apartment. We look around and experience ourselves how we feel on the beach while being surrounded by *carioca* women and men. She compares Dutch women to *carioca* women as the following: “Dutch women are much more clumsy, here they [*carioca* women] always look pretty, wear high heels, walk straight showing their booty [butt]. Even the more curvy, more fat women feel sexy. That is what I really like and how it should be.”<sup>21</sup> By saying this Anita emphasizes how she aspires the way *carioca* women appear. Even though Anita is not a local, she does feel the pressure to live up to local beauty standards. She does this by wearing fake eye-lashes and nail polish. Because Anita experiences how *carioca* women care more about their physical appearances, she decided to perform her gender according to her perception of Brazilian standards on femininity (Butler 2011; Beauvoir 2010; Urry 2001)

Cleo a 25-year-old blond woman from Denmark, feels as if she is considered ‘perfect’ for most *cariocas*. As a blond, white, European woman, who experiences constant (sexual) attention from *carioca* men, she critically evaluates her position in Rio de Janeiro, “Being European and blond for them is like a kind of trophy. I don’t have to do anything to look good, because I am always up here. One guy told me he thought I was well-educated, but I also think they [*carioca* men] associate blond with barbie and a kind of porn and sex.”<sup>22</sup> This idea of being a trophy is apparently not only about the physical appearance of being blond and white, but also about underlying connotations that these characteristics might carry, such as being rich or well-educated.

Anita for example is sometimes seen as a Brazilian because of her well-spoken Portuguese and her Asian physical appearance (which is more common among Brazilians from São Paulo). After she broke up with her *carioca* boyfriend three months ago, she decided to use Tinder in Rio de Janeiro. Many men were much more interested in dating her after she told them she was from the Netherlands.<sup>23</sup> From an intersectional perspective, the experiences of Cleo and Anita might illustrate how ideas on femininity or male-attention can be related to multiple axes of identity

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Anita, 25 February 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Anita from The Netherlands 12 March 2019/

(Crenshaw 1989; Wekker 2016). In other words, the sexual attention that Cleo and Anita receive from *carioca* men might be because they are interested in their *intersecting* axes of identity, namely their gender as ‘woman’; their nationality as ‘Dutch’ and ‘Danish’ and their class, which is assumed to be highly educated, wealthy and rich.

From a European point of view, female tourists feel as if men and women in Rio de Janeiro are treated less equal in comparison to European countries such as the Netherlands or Sweden<sup>24</sup>, as if Brazil *still* needs to undergo a process of women’s liberation and emancipation similar to Europe’s past feminist waves (Henry 2004). Nora and Jolina, who are both from Sweden and Sophia from The Netherlands, try to move beyond clear-cut ideas about what is masculine or feminine. In doing so, Nora, Jolina, and Sophia understand individuals more in terms of feminine or masculine ‘energies’. Feminine is mostly seen as more gentle, kind, sensitive, emotional and empathic; while masculine is considered more dominant, in control, outgoing and direct.<sup>25</sup>

Jolina is a 25-year-old woman who went to Rio de Janeiro for two weeks after she broke up with her Swedish boyfriend with whom she missed a certain sexual passion. Because of her background in psychology and intrinsic interest in sexology she had an open-minded, critical and inspiring vision on herself as a woman. She argues how each individual needs both masculine and feminine energies, “it is like yin and yang, you need both to be balanced.”<sup>26</sup>

Jolina describes how she was always more in touch with her masculine energies in past relationships. At this moment in her life she wishes to be more connected with her feminine energies, as she describes the following: “I was always the one who dominated, but sometimes I just want the man to dominate me and let me have my female energy ... I want to be treated like a woman. That is something that men here do.”<sup>27</sup>

Jolina thus understands her own gender identity as fluid, changeable and dynamic (Beauvoir 2010; Butler 1988). However her statement, that men in Rio de Janeiro really treat women like a ‘woman’, might also refer to certain difficulties when thinking in terms of ‘energies’; because in Rio de Janeiro ideas on what makes a ‘woman’ a woman seem to be more essentialistic

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Anja from the Netherlands, 14 February 2019; Interview with Josephine from France, 8 March 2019; Interview with Charlie from Germany, 21 March 2019; Interview with Jolina from Sweden, 19 February 2019; and Sophia from the Netherlands 20 May 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Sophia from The Netherlands, 20 May 2019; Interview with Nora from Sweden 10 April 2019; Interview with Jolina from Sweden, 19 February 2019; and interview with Kim from Japan, 22 February 2019

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Jolina from Sweden, 19 February 2019

<sup>27</sup> Jolina from Sweden, 19 February 2019

and static (Del Priore in Baldwin & deSouza 2011; Santos 2018).<sup>28</sup> In other words, performing both masculine and feminine energies in a society where feminine is often ascribed to ‘woman’ and masculine to ‘man’ can be challenging, because *machismo* might limit the extent of one’s gender performance (Butler 2011; Boucher 2006; Schep 2012)

Nora and Sophia experience how their *carioca* partners are in balance between their feminine and masculine energies. Both Nora and Sophia think this is because they have been raised in more leftist or feminine environments in Rio de Janeiro, which enabled their partners to think beyond static gender norms that are often associated with *machismo*.<sup>29</sup>

On the rooftop of the building, I meet 29-year-old Sophia, a blond, colourful and open woman from The Netherlands. She is a graduated conservatory student, and is now doing her masters as a f utist in Rio de Janeiro. She invited me to come to one of her performances in an old fabric in neighborhood Santo Cristo.<sup>30</sup> Right before she starts playing I meet her. Sophia’s perfectly spoken Portuguese amazes me, but she tells me how good it feels to speak Dutch again after months of only speaking Portuguese. Since one month she is in a relationship with a *carioca* man with whom she fell in love, exactly at a moment in her life where she did not expect it to happen. She describes the behaviour of her boyfriend as the following:

“He has a *verfijnde* (tender, delicate, refined, elegant) feminine side, the social aspect. He is very communicative, and likes to talk with everybody; that is something really feminine. He also likes to talk about his feelings. But he also has very goal-oriented mentality which I consider more masculine ... In Brazilian culture there are a lot of stereotypes, he was for example really surprised that I am good at working with computers ... but many of these expectations and stereotypes are nice as well, for example when a man asks you to dance or helps you carry your bags.”

Sophia seeks to embrace the differences in backgrounds with her boyfriend, because an individual is never able to choose the environment in which one is born. Sophia argues that certain gender expectations have both bright and dark sides, for example a gendered expectations for *carioca* men

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Charlie from Germany, 21 March 2019; interview with Anja from The Netherlands, 14 February 2019

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Nora from Sweden, 11 April 2019; Interview with Sophia from The Netherlands, 20 May 2019

<sup>30</sup> Fieldnotes of my first meeting with Sophia in Fabrica Behring in Santo Cristo, 2 February 2019.

is to pay the bill for women. Sophia thinks this is gentle but she also feels as if ‘owes’ a man something afterwards on a sexual level<sup>31</sup>. Charlie also describes fixed gender norms in Rio de Janeiro as both negative and positive. For example that *carioca* men are expected to hold the door for women, which she experiences as friendly but also as a gesture that emphasizes how women are weaker than men.<sup>32</sup>

It seems as if female tourists balance between a definition of feminine at home and a new experienced definition of ‘femininity’ in Rio de Janeiro. Being able to adapt to, change in or think about how to be, what to become or how to behave as a woman illustrates how gender can be performed (Butler 1988). Even though female tourists are able to consciously decide how to behave, the extent of performativity is somewhat limited to Rio de Janeiro’s norms, values, meanings and expectations ascribed to gender (Boucher 2006; Butler 2011; Schep 2012).

### 3.2 The Resistance of Reconsidered Femininity *Elise Fellingner*

When preparing fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro, I received some tips from women who I met in the Netherlands about how to behave in such a ‘dangerous city’. I was urged not to take the subway or the bus due to safety reasons, instead I should take Ubers with solely female drivers. Moreover, going outside after sunset in Rio de Janeiro was a no-go, especially for women. The warnings continue when arriving in the field. Various *cariocas* I meet in Zona Sul, whether at a party or at the supermarket, argue that being a woman in Rio de Janeiro equals being unsafe.<sup>33</sup>

In this paragraph, I illustrate how *carioca* women perform femininity in trying to move beyond existing structures of *machismo* within Brazilian society (Butler 1988, 2011). Many *carioca* women seem to be inspired by Europe’s women’s liberation. However, they face a dilemma, striving for gender equality, female safety and female independence while being limited to political, cultural and social structures that shape Brazilian society (Butler 2011; Schep 2012).

Many *carioca* women link female unsafety to *machismo*.<sup>34</sup> *Machismo* emphasizes the idea that men are strong and powerful, while women are weak and subordinate to men (Merkin 2009).

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<sup>31</sup> Sophia from The Netherlands, 22 March 2019.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Charlie from Germany, 21 March 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Fieldnotes, Copacabana, 23 January 2019 - 20 April 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019; Interview with Paula, 26 March 2019; Interview with Bianca, 25 March 2019; Interview with Amara, 7 March 2019; Interview with Amanda; 1 March 2019; Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Pauliny, 10 March 2019.

The perception of female subordination in practice is given by Isabela. Isabela is a 26-year-old, kind, pretty *carioca* woman with chocolate brown hair. When looking at her, the first thing I see is the piercing in her lip. I meet Isabela in Santa Teresa, where we eat *açaí* and *pão de queijo*, traditional Brazilian snacks. We are standing in the middle of a narrow street uphill, with a wall-painting of Marielle Franco on the background, when she starts talking about the issues of female fragility and female subordination:

“Brazil is not safe right now. Women are being harassed, raped and murdered. If I walk down an alley at night and a guy approaches me, I hope he is only going to steal my phone. If you say ‘no’ to a man he won’t listen. For them, no is not no. No still has options. Only if you say that you have a boyfriend a guy will back off. Not because he respects you or your relationship. But because he respects men.”<sup>35</sup>

Isabela illustrates how women seem to depend on men as protection since women are not respected on their own. Consequently, Isabela and other *carioca* women feel safer in the presence of a man they trust<sup>36</sup>. It is within the sphere of *machismo*, intertwined with female unsafety and female subordination, that femininity has come to be associated with weakness and fragility.<sup>37</sup> Isabela - while walking down an alley at night, feeling fragile and weak for being a woman - (unconsciously) performs her gender by confirming existing characteristics ascribed to ‘woman’ in relation to structures of *machismo* (Beauvoir 2010; Butler 1988, 2011).

The characteristics that are ascribed to ‘woman’ within structures of *machismo* are perceived as something static and biological in Brazil, as argued by Cármen, a 47-year-old feminist artist. I meet Cármen at her studio that is filled with paintings she makes about women’s bodies. When speaking with Cármen, one could easily feel intimidated. She sits on the edge of her seat with her legs crossed while giving me a serious look from behind her huge glasses that do not fit her small face. Cármen emphasizes the inflexibility of redefining gender in Brazil: “What men and women should look like and how they should behave is already defined in Brazil, a man is a man and a woman is a woman.”<sup>38</sup> Therefore, she emphasizes the biological differences that exist

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Isabela, 28 January 2019.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Bianca 25 March 2019; Interview with Amara, 7 March 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Eva 25, March 2019.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Cármen, 12 February 2019.

between men and women which she relies on while striving for gender equality. According to her, women should not lose their femininity in their fight for gender equality which she believes is the case in The Netherlands. To her, being a woman means being elegant, very emotional and taking care of yourself by using makeup and shaving your armpits. I noticed that it was mostly *carioca* women in their thirties and forties who stressed the importance for women to take care of themselves and to be elegant.<sup>39</sup>

On the contrary, various *carioca* women in their twenties seek to break free from gender expectations they experience while being a woman in Rio de Janeiro, such as being elegant, fragile and dependent of male protection.<sup>40</sup> Such conservative gender expectations lack individual uniqueness and female independence I was told.<sup>41</sup> *Carioca* women, who share the same gender identity ‘woman’, seem to strive for equal gender relations in Brazil while the meaning they ascribe to femininity may diverge as a result of differences in age (Crenshaw 1989).

A way to resist conservative expectations to being a woman, is to consciously redefine the meaning of femininity. The urge to reconsider gender expectations becomes clear when meeting Eva. Eva is a blond, white, 20-year-old left-wing feminist. She seems quite shy at first, but she can be fierce and determined when talking about a fair and equal Brazil. She stands up against friends, family members and her boyfriend when they make sexist or racist comments. Eva redefines the meaning of femininity by arguing that practicing combat sports makes her feel feminine<sup>42</sup>. Hence, she stresses the association of femininity with strength instead of weakness.<sup>43</sup> Eva, Giulia and Luna understand being feminine as being strong, confident, independent and being yourself, which stands in contrast with machistic views on femininity (Merkin 2009).<sup>44</sup> Thus, by redefining femininity, Eva, Giulia and Luna perform gender beyond the expectations that exist within society (Butler 1998).

However, the ability to actually perform redefined notions of femininity may be limited to the society in which women are located (Boucher 2006; Schep 2012). The limitations that exists in Rio de Janeiro can be formulated as internal and external. On the one hand, *carioca* women are

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Amanda, 1 March 2019 ; Interview with C armen, 12 February 2019 ; Interview with Bianca, 25 March 2019.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Interview with Amara, 7 March 2019.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019; Interview with Luna, 28 March 2019.



internally limited to perform femininity as they wish since they grew up within structures of *machismo* and its accompanied expectations (Beauvoir 2010; Schep 2012; Butler 1988, 2011). Therefore, *carioca* women either consciously or unconsciously perform femininity according to certain gender expectations associated with structures of conservatism and *machismo* (Beauvoir 2010; Abu-Lughod 2014). On the other hand, *carioca* women may face external limitations in performing their redefined femininity. Various *carioca* women told me that they are afraid to walk the streets alone.<sup>45</sup> The fear of being attacked and the constant confrontation with male dependency and male domination shows that Rio de Janeiro may not provide possibilities for *carioca* women to present themselves as strong and independent. As a result, many *carioca* women believe that Brazil is too limited for the liberation they aspire to accomplish.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, many *carioca* women dream of moving to a European country to escape reality in Rio de Janeiro.<sup>47</sup> Various *carioca* women envision Europe and Europeans as (sexually) liberated. Europe has become an ideal and a main topic of conversation. An idealization of Europe and Europeans was something I experienced in interaction with *carioca* women who expressed their excitement to have me as a blond European friend, while I was often asked to elaborate on my life in The Netherlands.

However, the way *carioca* women imagine life in Europe may lack a notion of relativity. During dinner with key informant Luna I notice the contradictory image she seems to have about Europe as an ideal. Luna criticizes *cariocas* who believe that everything outside of Brazil is better, while rolling with her eyes. At the same time she seemed genuinely surprised and disappointed when I tell her that I would not describe The Netherlands as a racism and sexism free zone. How *carioca* women envision Europe may thus conflict with how Europeans experience life in Europe. Furthermore, the way European women embody cultural and political structures of female and sexual liberation in their own countries, seems to conflict with cultural meaning that is ascribed to the female body in Rio de Janeiro. A confrontation during Carnival on Copacabana beach might illustrate such conflictive meaning construction.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Interview with Paula, 26 March 2019; Interview with Bianca, 25 March 2019; Interview with Amara, 7 March 2019; Interview with Amanda; 1 March 2019; Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Pauliny, 10 March 2019.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Andréa, 1 February 2019 ; Interview with Amara, 7 March 2019.

<sup>48</sup> Fieldnotes, Copacabana beach, 3 March 2019.

It is a crowded day at the beach. Tourists from all over the world have come to Rio de Janeiro to experience the well-known Carnival, thus ‘partying all day and night’. While many streets in Copacabana are filled with drums, glitters and costumes, the vibe on the beach is what Brazilians would describe as *tranquilo* (relaxed). Usually, the beach has a clear subdivision in locals and tourists. Locals sit close to the *barraca* (small beach huts), where cocktail shakers keep an eye on their belongings while tourists sit close to the sea, where phones and wallets are being robbed. On the third day of Carnival, this division is hardly visible due to the high amount of people present. Suddenly, all the attention is drawn to a tall woman walking up to the shower that is located in front of the *barraca*, in the centre of the beach. Her identity is obvious, she is a *gringa* (foreigner). It is not her hair, her height or her eye color that gives it away, it is the fact that she unleashes the strings of her bikini top, takes off her top and rinses it. Her nipples are showing. Being topless on Copacabana beach, as a woman, is highly inappropriate and legally forbidden. I notice how groups of *cariocas* are laughing extravagantly while pointing and staring. Two *carioca* women approach the woman to continue laughing and pointing behind her back. I take a sip from my coconut water while realising that I just witnessed a clear example of cultural conflicts to how the female body should be demonstrated.

This example shows how, even though European women’s liberation is aspired by *carioca* women; the way *carioca* women give meaning to femininity and a rising female (sexual) liberation is constructed within Brazilian society (Abu-Lughod; Mahmood 2001). Whereby, it is not necessarily the process that European women underwent that *carioca* women aspire. Rather, (sexually) liberating women in the individual and collective battle against *machismo* may be tasks that can only be fulfilled by *carioca* women themselves.

*How femininity is performed or, even more importantly, constructed, perceived and imagined by female tourists, might contrast or stand in line with ideas on femininity by carioca women. On the one hand female tourists make a distinction between physical and non-physical femininity. Namely, a curved female body is often associated with femininity and being emotional, kind and sensitive as feminine behaviour. Female tourists experience an array of possibilities in which they can decide whether to behave feminine or not. On the contrary, carioca women aim to redefine the meaning of femininity in their resistance to female unsafety and subordination. But cultural and political*

*structures of machismo in Brazilian society may form limitations for carioca women to perform femininity as strong, confident and independent women.*

## Chapter 4

# Breaking Down Sexual Taboos in a Sexually Framed City

*This chapter illustrates how (transnational) sexual interactions, the experience of being sexualized and existing taboos in society shape the meaning of being a woman in Rio de Janeiro. Female tourists perceive Rio de Janeiro as a sexualized city, while at the same time carioca women experience a taboo on talking about female sexual experiences. Moreover, we illustrate how female tourists deal with being an object of sexual desire of carioca men (Piscitelli 2016), while carioca women seek to reclaim their sexual identity in intimate relationships with non-Brazilian men. Both paragraphs elaborate on female sexual objectification and sexualization by carioca men, as both groups often experience to be objects of sexual desire by carioca men.*

### 4.1 Talking about Sex with Carioca Women *Elise Fellingner*

“They expect us to know our bodies while no one told us about it”<sup>49</sup>, Eva told me while she dug into her past to help me discover how she developed as a sexual being. It was quite a special moment since talking about sex was something Eva rarely did.<sup>50</sup> Despite the city's sexual character, which is illustrated in the following paragraph, talking about sex is considered a taboo in Rio de Janeiro, especially for women (Baird 2017).

In this paragraph, I elaborate on how *carioca* women seek to sexually liberate themselves from expectations related to conservative gender roles (e.g. mother or wife) and structures of *machismo* in Brazilian society (Baird 2017; Santos 2018). Firstly, *carioca* women reflect on their sexual development within these expectations, whereby a paradox is pointed out of experiencing to be both sexualized and sexually restricted. Secondly, *carioca* women seek to break down the taboo for women to talk about sex by sharing their stories. While doing so, *carioca* women show

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019.

how they experience sex in intimate relationships with Brazilian men and non-Brazilian men. Whereby they ascribe new meaning to their own sexuality as *cariocas* in contact with other sexual beings (Csordas 1993; Spronk 2011; Tornqvist 2012).

Many *carioca* women experience a lack of sexual education both at school and at home.<sup>51</sup> Eva told me she never felt comfortable to talk about sex with her parents or her friends. On the one hand, she experienced that her female friends would mostly pressure her into sexual activity throughout her adolescence.<sup>52</sup> Her parents on the other hand seemed to ignore her development as a sexual being. According to Eva, talking about sex in Brazil is only accepted for men.<sup>53</sup> She relates this to expectations for women to present themselves as sexually reserved in comparison to men (Baird 2017; Santos 2018).<sup>54</sup> Consequently, Eva, Sonia and Luna describe a paradoxical process of being sexualized at an early age, while having developed their sexuality relatively late.<sup>55</sup> For example, Luna told me stories about being catcalled by older men when she was only ten years old, while walking on the streets holding her mother's hand. Such experiences made Luna, Sonia and Eva feel like sexual objects at a young age, while the lack of opportunities to talk about sex made them feel restricted in growing up into sexual beings.

A visit to a local sex shop in Copacabana presents another paradox of emphasizing female sexual pleasure in a rather conservative society, where female sexuality is mainly linked to reproduction (Baird 2017; Santos 2018).<sup>56</sup> ‘*Desejo e Sedução*’ is located on the Avenida Nossa Senhora de Copacabana. The high amount of people moving from one side of the street to another and the many homeless men and women begging for money on the way often distract me from finding my destination. But this time it is not the chaotic character of Copacabana, but the mysterious location of the sex shop that confuses me. Maurice and I are strolling through the shopping mall where the sex shop should be located, but it is nowhere to be found. Just before we are about to give up, we notice an old woman, sitting outside on a chair. She is holding a sign that says: ‘sex shop downstairs’. The sex shop that belongs to *carioca* woman Cecília, is located in the corner of the basement. Cecília is a 37-year-old, kind woman with dark brown hair who seems oddly comfortable explaining the use of sex toys. “Have you seen those?” she asks while pointing

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019 ; Interview with Luna 22 March 2019; Interview with Amara, 7 March 2019.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Interview with Paula, 25 March 2019.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Interview with Sônia, 26 March 2019; Interview with Luna, 28 March 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Fieldnotes, Copacabana, 6 February 2019.

towards the variety of dildo's hanging on the pink wall. Some in the shape of a penis, others in the form of a seemingly non-sexual object such as an underarm. I am amazed. But before I dare to imagine this city and its people as sexually free, Cecília explains that most *cariocas* are not that comfortable talking about sexual pleasure like she is:

“Many people are ashamed, sex is still a huge taboo in Brazil, but I am trying to break that with this store. You see, most sex shop owners have tinted windows because so many people feel ashamed to enter a sex shop, but I have normal windows to get rid of this shame.”<sup>57</sup>

Cecília’s protest against sexual shame seems rather contradictory when considering that her store is hidden in the basement of a shopping mall, which Cecília links to feelings of shame in relation to existing taboos.<sup>58</sup> But I was about to understand that *carioca* women take baby steps on the road to sexual and female liberation since they take existing norms into consideration.<sup>59</sup> Breaking free from cultural, social and political restrictions and expectations is not an easy task, since many *carioca* women are raised with a taboo on talking about sex.<sup>60</sup>

Consequently, many interviews started a bit awkward at first, which emphasizes the difficulty to start conversations about sex. An example is an interview with Giulia, a 25-year-old *carioca* woman. She is short and skinny which makes her look a lot younger than she is. Her story is interesting. She has been with the same man for eight years but they recently broke up. Everything she tells me about her personal life, makes me feel like she is a press officer, elaborating formally on her break-up to the media, which is me. I decide to share my own story with her when she carefully asks: “What about you?”<sup>61</sup> which makes her trust me more. She tells me that she loves her ex-boyfriend, but that she missed a spark, a chemical reaction, a sexual liberation in her mid twenties.<sup>62</sup> Giulia’s story appeared to be one out of many.

*Carioca* women view themselves as sexual<sup>63</sup>, which is seen as being physical in communication and expressing their emotions; a cultural characteristic they feel often lacks in

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Cecília, 6 February 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Cecília, 6 February 2019.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Cecília, 6 February 2019.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Interview with Luna, 28 March 2019.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Luna, 28 March 2019.

non-Brazilian men<sup>64</sup>. Some *carioca* women are able to view themselves as more sexual in relation to non-Brazilian men who they perceive as non-sexual which is seen as a lack of passion and emotion.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, *carioca* women ascribe new cultural meaning to their own sexual identity, such as being physical and emotional, which comes into existence in sexual interaction with non-Brazilian men (Csordas 1993; Piscitelli 2016; Spronk 2011).

“A sexual ‘vibe’, can be felt (or not) through a touch and observed in the way men behave during sex”<sup>66</sup>, I was told by Érika. Érika 24-year-old, kind and enthusiastic *carioca* woman who I meet during a samba class. She has been living in Stockholm for the past couple of years - and know back in Rio de Janeiro for a couple of weeks - which allows her to generally distinguish Swedish men from Brazilian men<sup>67</sup>. “Swedish men can’t give me the passion I need. They are very nice, gentle and honest but there is no passion. They are very passive. Even their touch is not the same as the touch of Brazilian men.”<sup>68</sup> Érika argues that Swedish men lack that specific cultural trait of *carioca* sexuality in their attitudes.<sup>69</sup> Érika notices a difference in behaviour and physical touch between non-Brazilian men and *carioca* men after being intimate with both. Therefore, Érika illustrates that the meaning of (non) sexual characteristics, such as passive or passionate behaviour, comes into existence in relation to another sexual being (Csordas 1993; Spronk 2011; Tornqvist 2012).

Dóris, a 31-year-old short woman with dark hair and square glasses, has a similar story. I meet Dóris at a party where she moves a bit with her legs on the beat while stressing that she cannot dance. She seems quiet but despite her reticence, she is determined to find someone who can satisfy her sexual needs. Dóris tells me that she has lost a bit of her sexual identity in her relationship with an American man since he “never wanted to have sex.”<sup>70</sup> By linking (a lack of) sexual activity to her sexual identity, the dynamic construct of ‘sexuality’ can be seen as belonging to the physical body as well as to the way in which one expresses sexually (Foucault 1982, 2009; Holland et al. 1994; Piscitelli 2016; Spronk 2011).

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Luna, 28 March 2019; Interview with Érika, 14 February 2019; Interview with Pauliny, 10 March 2019.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Luna, 28 March 2019; Interview with Érika, 14 February 2019; Interview with Pauliny, 10 March 2019.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Érika, 14 February 2019.

<sup>67</sup> Fieldnotes in Copacabana, 14 February 2019.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Érika, 14 February 2019.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Érika, 14 February 2019.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Dóris, 19 February 2019.

As a result, Dóris broke up with her American boyfriend to look for someone that may allow her to express her sexuality, both in the form of sexual activity as well as in the way she aims to present herself as a sexual being. The struggles that both Érika and Dóris experienced in their relationships with non-Brazilian men stresses the importance of passion in an intimate relationship, both in the sense of having sex in the desired amount, as in the sense of feeling a chemical spark in a touch.<sup>71</sup> By reclaiming their sexuality, while linking it to the need for female sexual pleasure, *carioca* women function as active agents in resistance to dominant, conservative structures that oppose female sexual pleasure and desire (Foucault 2009; Hall 2013; Spronk 2011).

In sum, *carioca* women find themselves to be sexually framed while simultaneously being expected to present themselves in a conservative manner by reserving their sexuality. In order to resist these expectations in social and cultural spheres of sexual taboos, *carioca* women either speak openly about sex, reclaim their sexual identity or both.

## 4.2 Feeling Sexual as Female Tourist in Zona Sul *Maurice Gispen*

*“Era uma vez, a novinha que fazia um boquete bom ...  
Ela sentava pro pai. E me pedia: ‘por favor não goza não’”*

(There was a time, that a young girl gave a delicious blowjob ...  
she came to sit with daddy and asked me please don't come ...) <sup>72</sup>

During one of the carnival *blocos*<sup>73</sup> in Santa Teresa, a popular *favela funk*<sup>74</sup> song plays. The rhythm, baseline and lyrics of this song seem to excite everyone on the streets to dance. If it is not the tropical heat, the few clothes everyone is wearing or the sweating bodies that make the sexual vibe, it is definitely the music. Although the lyrics of *favela funk* are hard to understand for non-*cariocas*, a certain sexual energy comes alive that is sensible in every language. Almost every *carioca* from all ages, gender or social class, knows the lyrics by heart and dances along in a sexily

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019; Interview with Luna, 22 March 2019; Interview with Pauliny, 30 March 2019.

<sup>72</sup> Mc Cabelinho - Era uma vez <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dm5gNA5by6A>

<sup>73</sup> Parties on the street during carnival, with live street bands. Most of the times the *blocos* start at a central point of a neighborhood after which they will walk and dance around with the live band for three hours or more.

<sup>74</sup> *Favela funk* is a Brazilian music genre, which is known for its sexual lyrics and erotic rhythm.



manner with hips and butt. When we ask *cariocas* what the lyrics mean, a sexual energy is confirmed.<sup>75</sup> This section elaborates on how and why Rio de Janeiro is framed and perceived as a sexual city by female tourists. Following is analysed how female tourists experience to be an object of and subject to sexual desire of *carioca* men, which is (de)constructed in (sexual) interactions with European- and *carioca* men (Appadurai 2010; Piscitelli 2016; Roberts 2017).

Many female tourists associate Rio de Janeiro with ‘sex’. Charlie, Frederique, Cleo and Sarah relate this sexualized image to a more clear-cut division between men and women, the sensual music culture and the tropical heat, that allows everyone to wear less clothes than in most European countries.<sup>76</sup>

Cleo is in Rio de Janeiro to clear her head about her current relationship with her Colombian boyfriend. We talk a lot about our personal experiences, while she openly shares her emotions and thoughts on her relationship and struggles as a blond European woman in Rio de Janeiro. Cleo relates Rio de Janeiro’s sexualized image to political issues by comparing Denmark to Brazil: “I think we have a more relaxed relationship with sex in Europe. We experience sex more natural. I think the relationship here is more complex. Sex and the body is the only thing to possibly focus on, if you live in a country where there is corruption and poverty.”<sup>77</sup> Cleo thus relates the sexualized image, sexual behaviour of *cariocas* and an erotic vibe in Rio de Janeiro to socio-economic inequality and political issues such as corruption. Europeans, on the contrary, are considered to be more rational, ‘outside of the body’ thinkers, because Europeans seem to be more focused on individuality, career and the future.<sup>78</sup>

It is a sunny afternoon on Copacabana beach, when a middle-aged man approaches Cleo, “*Linda, tudo bem? Muito bonita!*” (beautiful, how are you? Very pretty!) She looks at him with disgust and turns her head to me “Uugh! These are the kind of men I absolutely don’t want the attention from!”. While there are some *carioca* men from whom she does not want the attention, in general she feels good about it, “In Denmark I am normal but here everyone thinks I am special! I love the attention!”. In only a second her face turns serious, “Oh sorry, this is so bad to say!” After apologizing to me for saying this, she explains the so-called *Law of Jante*; which can best be

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<sup>75</sup> Fieldnotes during carnival in Santa Teresa, 1 March 2019.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Charlie from Germany, 31 March 2019; interview Cleo from Denmark, 16 February 2019; interview with Frederique from France, 28 March 2019; interview with Sarah from Sweden, 27 March 2019.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February 2019.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Sophia from The Netherlands; Interview with Anita from The Netherlands ; Interview with Frederique from France ; Interview with Cleo from Denmark

described as an unwritten social cultural rule in Denmark which states that ‘no one is better than anyone’. Cleo wants to motivate herself and other women to be more open and honest about their feelings. In doing so she enjoys the attention she gets as a blond European woman without downplaying herself for enjoying it.<sup>79</sup>

Cleo feels attracted to physical characteristics of many *carioca* men: tanned, muscular and wide-shouldered. She experiences being an object of sexual desire of many *carioca* men, while at the same time she also feels attracted to these men. She notices how for (*carioca*) men it is more accepted to express their sexual desire towards women. Cleo tries to deconstruct this norm by expressing her sexual desire for *carioca* men in the same way they do with her. While walking on the boulevard of Copacabana two Brazilian men pass us; they are tanned with muscular bodies, wearing small swimming pants. Cleo turns around to them and screams: “*Ai ai ai! Bonitos! Prrrr, Gostoso*” (handsome, good-looking, delicious). The men look shocked, since it appears to be less usual for women to approach men in such a direct manner. At the same time they seem to feel flattered by this blond woman catcalling them.<sup>80</sup>

These two illustrated social interactions show how Cleo can be seen as both an object of desire as a blond, European woman (Piscitelli 2016), as well as a subject to sexual desire because of the way she expresses her desire towards *carioca* men (Gordon & Silva 2015; Spronk 2011). For this reason Cleo can be seen an active agent that both performs her gender and deconstructs normative gender expectations while being in Zona Sul (Abu-Lughod 2014; Butler 1988, 2011; Foucault 2009)

Another aspect that could be related to the sexualized image of Rio de Janeiro, is what most female tourists experience as a strong sense of passion within Brazilian culture. This passion is almost tangible in many aspects of everyday life, such as samba music, the way *cariocas* communicate or dress at the beach<sup>81</sup>. Many female tourists compare flirting, kissing or having sex with *carioca* men with men from their home country. For example how *carioca* men try to please women more by trying to withhold their orgasm as long as possible;<sup>82</sup> communicate more

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<sup>79</sup> Multiple interview with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February - 31 March 2019.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February 2019.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Jennifer from The Netherlands, 10 March 2019; interview with Nora from Sweden, 10 April 2019; interview with Sophia from The Netherlands, 27 March 2019; and fieldnotes 22 January - 23 April 2019.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Frederique from France and Sasja from Germany, 28 March 2019; and interview with Sarah from Sweden, 27 March 2019.

physically;<sup>83</sup> want to have sex without a condom more often;<sup>84</sup> or behave more self-confident while flirting.<sup>85</sup> Many *carioca* men appear to behave more passionate and flirtatious, which is experienced as both something positive and negative<sup>86</sup>. It is considered positive in a sense that women feel flattered to be approached in such a way and they sometimes miss this kind of behaviour with non-Brazilian men who are seen as more passive and less passionate.

Anita for example would like a partner to be a combination of a passionate, flirting *carioca* man and a more sweet, less possessive and less jealous Dutch man.<sup>87</sup> Nora also likes the more passionate and romantic behaviour of *carioca* men, but she thinks that after a couple of years she probably would be running back to the sweet, soft Swedish men.<sup>88</sup>

A negative aspect, for Charlie, Cleo, Sophia and Eline, is that it feels as if every social interaction with *carioca* men is about sex.<sup>89</sup> This makes it hard for women to make friendly contact without feeling as if men want something more, in a sexual way.<sup>90</sup> Cleo sometimes feels frustrated about the way *carioca* men approach her:

“I am kind of giving up on the idea here in Brazil that you can actually have male friends. Because everybody is hitting on you, if you are a woman they will be hitting on you ... A typical thing for these guys in Brazil is that even though you cut it out in little fucking pieces, they will still try to kiss you. You have to tell them a thousand times: ‘I have a boyfriend, please do not have any expectations of our contact .... I am not interested in anything!’ Even though you cut it out in pieces for them and tell them over and over, for those kind of guys they still try it.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with Nora from Sweden, 10 April 2019.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Sophia from The Netherlands, 22 March 2019 ; interview with Frederique from France, 28 March 2019.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Anita from The Netherlands, 25 February 2019; interview Josephine from France, 8 March 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Anita from The Netherlands 25 February 2019; multiple interviews with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February - 31 March 2019; and interview with Sophia from The Netherlands 22 March 2019.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Anita from the Netherlands, 25 February 2019.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Nora from Sweden, 11 April 2019.

<sup>89</sup> Multiple interviews with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February - 31 March 2019; Interview with Charlie from Germany, 21 March 2019; Interview with Sophia from the Netherlands, 22 March 2019; Interview with Eline from Finland, 26 March 2019.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Anita from The Netherlands, 25 February 2019; multiple interviews with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February - 31 March 2019; Interview with Eline from Finland, 26 March 2019; interview with Sophia from The Netherlands, 22 March 2019.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Camilla from Denmark, 28 February 2019.

Nora experiences the sexual, flirtatious way of communicating as both fun and exhausting sometimes,

“I feel much more comfortable here because I am always considered the most beautiful. But I also feel that I am a sexual desire all the time, sometimes I just think ‘stop eating with your eyeballs!’... I don’t know if I will feel attracted to Swedish guys when I am back home. Here they are more open, more friendly; they [*carioca* men] just intrigue me more. But if I would really live here I think I would eventually miss the sweet Swedish guys. Sometimes this being desired all the time is too much!”<sup>92</sup>

Being an object of sexual desire does not seem to fulfill female tourists on the long-term. Only when sexual desire results in more long-term intimacy including feelings of love, desire becomes more than a superficial physical emotion (Piscitelli 2016; Tornqvist 2012). However Jolina, Nora and Cleo seem to enjoy being an object of sexual desire while being in Rio de Janeiro for the same reason - they know it is just temporary.<sup>93</sup>

*This chapter elaborated on sex as both a literal and abstract concept that shows sexuality as a subjective experience (Spronk 2011). We have illustrated how carioca women and female tourists understand themselves as sexual beings in relation to others to go beyond sexuality as solely an abstract concept, to emphasize the diversity of sex and sexuality (Spronk 2011). Both groups experience being an object of sexual desire of carioca men. Female tourists experience being sexualized as blond, white, European women only for a limited period of time. At the same time female tourists seem to frame Rio de Janeiro and carioca men as sexual, passionate and erotic. On the contrary carioca women experience being sexualized since their childhood while they experience Rio de Janeiro as restricting, rather than sexual, because of existing taboos. Since carioca women deal with these restrictions on the long term, opposed to female tourists, they seek to reclaim their sexual identity while openly talking about sex.*

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<sup>92</sup> Interview with Nora from Sweden, 11 April 2019.

<sup>93</sup> Multiple interview with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February - 31 March 2019; Interview with Nora from Sweden 11 April 2019.

## Chapter 5

# Looking for Love Beyond Sexual Passion

*In this chapter, we seek to move beyond the idea of an intimate relationship as friendship combined with sex (Walsh 2009). Because we want to emphasize how the concepts love and sex are negotiated by both carioca women and female tourists in (transnational) intimate relationships. Whereby sex can be intertwined with love and vice versa; while at the same time one can have sex without love or love without sex (Tennov 1979 in Diamond 2004). We elaborate on the way carioca women and female tourists distinguish rational love from emotional love, in relation to another sexual being.*

### 5.1 Love Rationally *Elise Fellingner*

At a birthday party in Ipanema, one of Rio de Janeiro's wealthy neighbourhoods in Zona Sul, I gain some insight on the influence that political ideologies have on the personal lives of *carioca* women. I am with Daphne, a 40-year-old blond *carioca* woman who has been living in The Netherlands for many years and currently on holiday in Rio de Janeiro. Although she is often confused for a *gringa* because of her blond hair and blue eyes, Daphne stresses that she is one hundred percent *carioca*.<sup>94</sup> Daphne and I are sitting on the balcony of her mother's fancy apartment in Ipanema when her friend Isabela walks in. "Sit down Isabela! How have you been?", Daphne asks. "I'm good, I am actually dating again", Isabela responds. Daphne's face lightens up for a second before she asks: "Has he voted for Bolsonaro?" I begin to laugh, but Daphne was not joking. "That is the first thing you should ask before you decide to date the guy." Isabela nods. Daphne and Isabela are both left-wing feminists and thus the answer to Daphne's question should be 'no' if she wants to continue to date him. "What does it say about a guy if he voted for Bolsonaro?", I ask. "Then you can not continue dating him for sure. You can expect the guy to be racist, homophobic who doesn't have any respect for women in general. He will probably be

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<sup>94</sup> Fieldnotes, Ipanema, 10 March 2019.

aggressive as well, physically or mentally. If he doesn't hit you, he will probably manipulate you.’’<sup>95</sup>

This conversation about dating with Daphne and Isabela shows that love, just like femininity and sexuality, is embedded in multiple underlying cultural, social and political structures and expectations. In the eyes of many left-wing upper class *carioca* women, a partner should be educated, left-wing (or at least anti-bolsonaro) and most importantly, not a *machista*.<sup>96</sup> The generalized vision of Brazilian men as *machistas* who are jealous, possessive, aggressive, disrespectful and unfaithful is commonly shared among middle- and upper class *carioca* women (Baldwin& DeSouza 2011).<sup>97</sup> I came to understand how socio-economic class relates to *machismo* in Rio de Janeiro during an interview with Bianca (Baldwin& DeSouza 2011). I meet Bianca at a cafeteria where we share a pizza. Bianca a 36-year-old woman who is a cultural anthropologist herself, is very aware of restricted femininity within structures of *machismo*. She does not wear any makeup though she stresses that she feels the pressure to look good as a woman, which she relates to wearing makeup and painting her nails. When talking about *machismo*, Bianca argues that all Brazilian men are *machistas*. Therefore, it is not the question *if* a Brazilian man is a *machista*, but a question of *the amount of machismo* present in a man.<sup>98</sup>

“My boyfriend shows signs of *machismo* but not so much because he is educated. Sometimes he shows his possessive side by putting his hand on my shoulder in front of other men and I tell him that he shouldn't. He knows that he acts like that because of underlying structures of *machismo* and he therefore he apologizes and assures me that he will pay attention to his behaviour, to better himself.’’<sup>99</sup>

Bianca, thus, stresses that the higher education of her boyfriend, enables him to reflect on his behaviour. Therefore, she argues that he expresses *machismo* on a minor level in comparison to most Brazilian men. During my three months of fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro, I have not met anyone

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with Daphne and Isabela, 10 March 2019.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Informal conversation with Daphne and Isabela, 10 March 2019; Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Paula, 26 March 2019; Interview with Nicole, 5 March 2019; Interview with Pauliny, 10 March 2019.

<sup>97</sup> Fieldnotes in Copacabana, 28 March 2019.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Bianca, 25 March 2019.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Bianca, 25 March 2019.

who is currently in a relationship with a person they would describe as a *machista*. Nevertheless, I have met several women who have had relationships in the past with a person they would describe as a *machista*.

One of them is Maria, a kind, 25-year-old woman who took me to the theatre, several bars and carnival parties where she would hold my hand so that I would not get lost. We are having a drink while I ask her if she has ever dated a *machista*. She instantly gives me a serious look. “I was very young when I was in a relationship with a *machista*. I didn’t understand myself as an individual. In this way, I supported *machismo*.”<sup>100</sup>, Maria told me. She seems to be ashamed to tell me she used to date a *machista*, since starting a relationship with a *machista* is ‘not done’ for many middle- and upper class *carioca* women. Because then, they would support *machismo*<sup>101</sup>, putting a restraint upon their female identity as independent women.

In addition, several *carioca* women have argued that a woman supporting *machismo* is a *machista* herself.<sup>102</sup> Many *carioca* women currently find themselves in the process of eliminating as much characteristics related to *machismo* from their personality as much as possible, such as judging other women<sup>103</sup>. A relationship with a *machista* would hold them back from developing their sexual identity based on their redefined meaning of femininity. Therefore, many *carioca* women choose a partner who expresses *machismo*, existing within every man and woman on, at least, a minimum level. In other words, *carioca* women look for a partner who is educated, left-wing oriented, middle- or upper class and most importantly; aware of his/her machistic characteristics and willing to change it.

Another way in which *carioca* women seek to escape structures of *machismo* is the choice to date non-Brazilian men. In this way, *carioca* women try to make sure that they will be respected as independent individuals. Érika argues that she does not want a man to cheat on her.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, according to her, she cannot be with a Brazilian man. Piscitelli (2007) has argued that Brazilian women may link North American men and European men to a higher level of gender equality while devaluing local Brazilian men who they perceive as possessive, aggressive and unfaithful.

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<sup>100</sup> Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Patricia, 21 February 2019; Interview with Amara, 7 March 2019; Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Paula, 26 March 2019.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Amara, 7 March 2019; Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019; Interview with Luna, 22 March 2019; Interview with Paula, 26 March 2019.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Érika, 14 February 2019.

Pauliny, for example, a 41-year-old *carioca* woman, was sure that Dutch men would not be as jealous, aggressive, intrusive and possessive as any Brazilian man<sup>105</sup>. This perception of non-Brazilian men as ‘better’ than Brazilian men underscores the European ideal that exists in the minds of many Brazilians. Being in a relationship with a foreign partner, and perhaps the prospect of moving to another country as a result, is viewed as a solution to the difficulties of being a woman in Brazil (Piscitelli 2007).<sup>106</sup> Although key informant Luna was a *carioca* woman herself, she was able to consciously reflect on this European ideal:

“There exists the idea here that everything that is foreign is better. Therefore, women think that men from Europe or the United States are better as well. So, women want a foreign man, but also because of *machismo*. They are tired of Brazilian men. Tired of the *carioca* mentality. Women believe that any man from any other place must be better. We are so used to *carioca* structures that we think that nothing can be worse than staying here, loving here”<sup>107</sup>

Pauliny was an example of a woman Luna was talking about. Pauliny is a kind *carioca* woman with short brown hair and brown eyes. She is ready to settle. She has installed her Tinder account in a way to only get in contact with Dutch men. In this way, she could start a relationship with a Dutch man who she assumes to be kind and respectful, because of his nationality. When meeting her ‘perfect man’ she would move to the Netherlands.<sup>108</sup>

The possibility to rationally choose a partner, or reject one, derives from what *carioca* women understand as love. Many *carioca* women define *amor* (love) as a solid construction, something that can be built over a long period of time and comes from really knowing someone.<sup>109</sup> Within this construction, sharing something intimate like inside jokes is what is often seen as a sign of love.

Therefore, intimacy and love can exist within several sorts of relationships (Walsh 2009). “I can feel love for my family and my friends because we have built it over time. We know each

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<sup>105</sup> Interview with Pauliny, 30 March 2019.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Pauliny, 30 March 2019.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Luna, 22 March 2019.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Pauliny, 10 March 2019.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Eva, 25 March 2019; Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019; Interview with Luna 22 March 2019.



other,’’<sup>110</sup> Maria told me. As a result, love can be separated from ‘being in love’. Being in love is experienced as a rather physical feeling<sup>111</sup>. Within the perception of love as something that is built, *se apaixonar* (being in love), relates more to the definition of *paixão* (passion) than it does to love. The difference between love and passion in an intimate relationship became clear when talking with Maria:

“There is a difference between love and passion. Passion moves people but it is temporary. It doesn’t last. Love lasts but it needs more time to develop but it is also worth more than passion. And to reach love, you pass through passion. But in every relationship, respect is the most important thing. Love and respect last.”<sup>112</sup>

With this quote above, Maria was able to put into words what many *carioca* women understand as the difference between love and sexual passion. *Carioca* women view themselves as passionate people who are moved by their feelings.<sup>113</sup> Especially in relation to non-Brazilian men and women, *cariocas* view themselves as more passionate and emotional than, which may lead to a lack of sexual passion in transnational relationships with non-Brazilian men as elaborated in chapter four.

However, as Maria states, respect is the most important thing. Love and respect have more value to *carioca* women than passion or being in love because love and respect are seen as long-term constructions, while passion and being in love are temporary feelings.<sup>114</sup> Consequently, intimate relationships may lack a sexual connection if it is based solely on love and respect (Diamond 2004). This stands in contrast with what Walsh (2009) understands as an intimate relationship - love combined with sexual desire - many *carioca* women are able to put aside their sexual desire if the relationship fulfills their emotional needs.

Therefore, *carioca* women seem to approach love as a rational decision rather than a physical feeling, which relates more to sexual passion. *Carioca* women stress that *paixão*, as a

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<sup>110</sup> Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019; Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Sônia, 26 March 2019; Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019; Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Daphne, 27 February 2019.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Sarah, 9 March 2019; Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Daphne, 27 February 2019; Interview with Amara, 7 March 2019.

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Maria, 13 March 2019; Interview with Giulia, 11 March 2019; Interview with Sônia, 26 March 2019.

physical feeling of sexual desire, may lead to feelings of *ficar apaixonado* (being in love). Being in love may occur naturally and unconsciously as a result of sexual desire or attraction (Piscitelli 2016). However, what makes an intimate relationship last, according to *carioca* women, is not a sense of passion but a sense of love.

Therefore, *carioca* women consciously decide to date a highly educated, left-wing, middle- or upper class Brazilian man or a non-Brazilian man, who is already perceived as more respectful towards women. By doing so, *carioca* women love rationally to perform their redefined meaning of femininity as strong, confident and independent women, accompanied by respectful men. Therefore, Isabela may be in love. She may feel passionate about a guy, but if a guy voted for Bolsonaro, the (imagined) prospect of not receiving respect from a potential partner outweighs any physical feeling, keeping her from starting to build a loving relationship.

## 5.2 The House of Love *Maurice Gispen*

“*Um dois três! Um dois três! um dois três!*” (One two three!), shouts our samba teacher while she rapidly moves her feet on the rhythm of the music. It is one of the many hot summer days in Copacabana, where I take samba classes with Anita and Anushka.<sup>115</sup> It was only a couple days later that Jennifer tells me: “a well functioning relationship is about the art of dialogue. To constantly dance the samba together.”<sup>116</sup> But how can you dance the samba together if you do not know the steps?

This section elaborates on how sexual desire might result in an intimate relationship - that moves beyond desire as solely a physical reaction to attraction (Tornqvist 2012). Next I analyse what is considered most important by female tourists in order to make a loving transnational relationship ‘well-functioning’. This is based on the experiences of female tourists in current or past relationships with both European- and *carioca* men. This should illustrate how female tourists experience and redefine their sexual identity as loving partners in a transnational relationship (Tornqvist 2012). Furthermore I elaborate on the distinction, as expressed by Jennifer and Sasja, between ‘rational’ and ‘emotional’ love, in order to give reason to ‘being in love’ or ‘loving someone’ as distinguished by Cleo and Nora.

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<sup>115</sup> Fieldnotes of three samba classes in Copacabana, 4 - 20 February 2019

<sup>116</sup> Interview with Jennifer from the Netherlands,

Jennifer a 29-year-old Dutch woman, who appears to be intelligent, extravert and self-critical. I meet Jennifer at a pre-carnival *bloco*. She just broke up with her Brazilian boyfriend, with whom she had been together for almost a year. She came to Rio de Janeiro to see him after five months of being separated, however the distance between Brazil and The Netherlands killed the relationship. Jennifer is a woman with a clear vision on her past- and future relationships, “I never had any Dutch boyfriends, I had a Moroccan boyfriend and a Brazilian one. I think Dutch men are way too soft. I am a woman with power, I would just run them over. It is something about the unknown and exotic that attracts me to have boyfriends from other cultures.” For Jennifer it is this (supposed) cultural difference that makes it exciting to be in a relationship with a man who is not from her home country.<sup>117</sup> Jennifer’s attraction to non-Dutch ‘exotic’ men might illustrate how sexual desire could eventually be a trigger for love to emerge (Piscitelli 2016; Tornqvist 2012).

Cleo uses ‘building a house’ as a metaphor to explain how she wishes her intimate relationship to be: “A relationship is like building a house. If the lower part [referring to the foundation of a house] is not well built the house will never hold. The lower part are your ground values, they need to match. My ground values are honesty, respect and trust.” Cleo seems to represent most female tourists by saying this, because honesty, respect and trust were often mentioned as the most important values in an intimate relationship<sup>118</sup>.

Conflicting core values made it hard for both Jennifer and Anita to be in a relationship with a *carioca* men. Jennifer for example, experienced how honesty in Rio de Janeiro is not as important as it is in The Netherlands and how it is more accepted among *carioca* men to cheat. For Jennifer communication is *the* key to make a relationship work, only then one is able to overcome (cultural) differences that might exist.<sup>119</sup> Thus, what seems to make a transnational relationship well-functioning is to bring certain core-values - such as respect, honesty and trust - in harmony. Because even though the cultural background of their partner differs from a female tourist own cultural background, there might be room to balance expectations, values and wishes in an intimate relationship. In other words, the individual ‘gazes’ flow reciprocally whereby both female tourists as well as *carioca* men are capable to adapt to new ideas, values or expectations in a transnational relationship (Hall 2013; Urry, 2001; Piscitelli 2016; Robert 2017).

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<sup>117</sup> Multiple interview with Jennifer from The Netherlands, 8 February - 10 March 2019; interview with Nora from Sweden, 10 April 2019

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February 2019.

<sup>119</sup> Multiple interviews with Jennifer from The Netherlands, 8 February - 13 March 2019.

Jennifer, Anita and Sasja for example, experienced how jealousy is a much more vivid emotion among *cariocas* in comparison to European men.<sup>120</sup> This influenced their behaviour in the sense that they became more jealous as well while being in a relationship with *carioca* men.

Sasja who is a 28-year-old woman from Germany, has had previous polygamous relationships in Germany. At the moment she is in a relationship with a *carioca* man, but she is not certain about the future of their relationship since she would be leaving Rio de Janeiro in three weeks. Sasja believes you can feel love, have love or be in love with more than one person at the same time which she illustrates by saying the following:

“Love and relationships are like living rooms for me. Someone lets you inside of their living room and you can observe how they live, maybe stay in the living room with them for a while. Other people can enter the room as well. But I don’t want to be in one living room, I want to see and experience how other people live as well.”<sup>121</sup>

Sasja notices with her *carioca* boyfriend how her ideas on polygamy disturb their relationship because of feelings of jealousy that arose. Sasja decided to let go of the idea of polygamy, because she wants to protect their relationship.

As illustrated above, female tourists experience how certain expectations, norms and values shape their personal gaze - such as non-Brazilian-or European - within a transnational relationship (Urry 2001). For example for female tourists the meaning of honesty and jealousy slightly changed, because these values became more present in a relationship with a *carioca* men in comparison to previous relationships they had with non-Brazilian men. In other words, transnational relationships and being in a new environment, may result in new ways of looking at love and intimate relationships (Vertovec 2009).

Nora, Cleo and Jolina relate a lack of sexual passion in an intimate relationship to a lack of ‘being in love’<sup>122</sup>. This is exactly what Portuguese language distinguishes. Namely, *amor*<sup>123</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Interview with Anja from The Netherlands, 14 February 2019; interview Anita from The Netherlands 25 February 2019; multiple interviews with Cleo from Denmark 16 February - 20 March 2019; interview with Sasja from Germany, 3 April 2019.

<sup>121</sup> Interview Sasja from Germany, 3 April 2019.

<sup>122</sup> Interview Nora from Sweden, 10 April 2019; Interview with Jolina from Sweden, 19 February 2019.

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.dicio.com.br/amor/> : online Portuguese dictionary. opened on 15 May 2019

(love) as an emotional feeling of love and affection, *paixão*<sup>124</sup> (passion) as strong sense of passionate and sexual attraction, and *apaixonado*<sup>125</sup> (being in love) as a physical sensation of being full with (sexual) passion. In other words, not ‘being in love’ can result in a lack of this sense of sexual passion in the body. However being together with the person they love, seemed to be more important than actually being in love.

Likewise Jennifer and Sasja made a distinction between being in love ‘rationally’ or ‘emotionally’<sup>126</sup>. Emotionally loving is described, as a ‘head over heels’, unconscious and somewhat childish form of falling in love. Rational loving is described as a more conscious process of falling in love with a partner one wishes to have.

Being together with someone *without* being in love, may be viewed as the same as rationally loving, because a person consciously decides why and whether or not to be with someone. On the contrary, being together *while* being in love, might relate more to this notion of falling in love emotionally. Because then, ‘being together’ does not have to be a conscious decision per se, but rather something that happened as a result of more tacit feelings, emotions and attractions.

Moreover, Nora and Sophia experience how *carioca* men say ‘*te amo*’ (I love you) much easier than men from the Netherlands and Sweden.<sup>127</sup> Sophia thinks *carioca* men say ‘*te amo*’ because they listen more to their intrinsic emotions, “I think that has something to do with the Brazilian mentality, because *cariocas* live more in the present. In the Netherlands, we always think about the next step, in the future.” Saying ‘*te amo*’ then might be related to an emotional feeling - rather than to a rational thought - which does not necessarily have to mean this person is *in love* or actually wants to built on a future relationship.

Whether or not love occurs consciously or unconsciously, rationally or emotionally, what marks most love stories of female tourists is its temporality. Some women stay for weeks<sup>128</sup>, others for three months<sup>129</sup>, some women even for years<sup>130</sup>; but even though many women did not want to

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.dicio.com.br/paixao/> : online Portuguese dictionary. opened on 15 May 2019

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.dicio.com.br/apaixonar/> : online Portuguese dictionary. opened on 15 May 2019

<sup>126</sup> Multiple interviews with Jennifer from The Netherlands, 8 February - 10 March 2019; Interview with Sasja from Germany, 3 April 2019.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Sasja from Germany, 3 April 2019; Interview with Jolina from Sweden, 19 February 2019; Interview with Nora from Sweden, 10 April 2019; Interview with Frederique from France, 28 March 2019.

<sup>128</sup> Anuska, Jolina, Kim, Charlie and Josephine stayed in Rio de Janeiro for a couple of weeks

<sup>129</sup> Jennifer, Cleo, Eline, Frederique, Sasja and Nora stayed in Rio de Janeiro for three months.

<sup>130</sup> Sophia, Anita, Anja and Sarah stay in Rio de Janeiro for two years or more.

leave, they knew they were in Rio de Janeiro for a limited period of time. This sense of temporality, in which female tourists are not in their country of origin, might offer them a certain freedom of being in love with or feeling love for *carioca* men.

Thus, being in Rio de Janeiro for a limited period of time might offer female tourists the possibility to extent or even transform their sexual identity while being in a transnational intimate relationship (Appadurai 2010; Piscitelli 2016; Roberts 2017). Both Cleo and Sasja use a house as a metaphor to illustrate their ideas on love in an intimate relationship. A house - as a place you can enter and stay in as long as you wish - could symbolize the sense of temporality and permanence that female tourists experience in transnational intimate relationships with *carioca* men.<sup>131</sup>

*This chapter illustrated how for both carioca women and female tourists, love is seen as something that can be built over time, depending on values women have towards a potential partner. For carioca women, love is embedded in structures of machismo, wherefore they consciously decide with whom they want to build a loving relationship. Female tourists experience to be less part of a social, cultural, political sphere linked to machismo since they are in Rio de Janeiro for a limited period of time. Therefore, the meaning of love is understood from a temporal perspective, in relation to the core-values from their home country. For both groups, respect, honesty and trust are the most important values. However, in practice, love seems to differ. On the one hand, carioca women approach love rationally, not as a result of emotional or physical attraction but as a way to engage with someone who can offer them respect. On the other hand, female tourists allow themselves to be moved by their feelings, thinking about what love is instead of what it could be.*

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<sup>131</sup> Interview with Cleo from Denmark, 16 February 2019; Interview Sasja from Germany, 3 April 2019.

# Discussion & Conclusion

Maurice Gispen & Elise Fellingner

In this discussion, we present our most remarkable findings to demonstrate how femininity, love and sex are negotiated by both *carioca* women and female tourists. We elaborate on these three aspects that either contradict, correspond or paradoxically relate to the way *carioca* women and female tourists experience their sexual identity in Zona Sul. We begin with the meaning *carioca* women and female tourists ascribe to femininity.

Female tourists stay in Rio for Janeiro for a limited period of time, while *carioca* women are already home. Therefore, the notion of temporality is an opposing element that might influence the way in which both *carioca* women and female tourists experience, perceive or imagine femininity. Secondly, we analyse the meaning that *carioca* women and female tourists ascribe to sex as a both physical and non-physical feeling of desire, in relation to *carioca* men and non-Brazilian men. *Carioca* women and female tourists may imagine and experience being with *carioca* or non-Brazilian men paradoxically in short-or long-term sexual or romantic interactions. Namely, on the one hand, *carioca* women express aversion towards *carioca* men because structures of *machismo*, that are assumed to be present in every *carioca* man. On the other hand female tourists often feel more attracted to attitudes of *carioca* men in comparison to men from their home countries, because of perceived differences in behaviour. However, what both *carioca* women and female tourists perceive as positive and negative aspects of *carioca* and non-Brazilian men often correspond. Finally, we analyse love and sex as facets of an intimate relationship that *carioca* women and female tourists seek to balance.

Femininity in Rio de Janeiro is often associated with fragility and elegance, because of existing underlying structures of *machismo* in which women are positioned as inferior to men (Baldwin & deSouza 2011; Merkin 2009). However, *carioca* women seek to resist static gender norms in Brazil by performing gender beyond existing social norms in society. In doing so, the agency that women have to perform gender is emphasized (Butler 2004, 2011; Mahmood 2001). They do this by linking femininity to strength, confidence, independence and self-acceptance rather than weakness, male dependency and subordination to *carioca* men. Inspired by Brazilian feminist movements, social media and European women, *carioca* women seek to redefine femininity. This can be seen as a collective and personal journey towards a stronger position for women in society. Even though female tourists are located within the same political, social and

cultural system of *machismo* during their stay in Rio de Janeiro, they may not perceive it in the same way as *carioca* women do. In comparison to *carioca* women and Rio de Janeiro's society, female tourists see themselves as more liberated, progressive and emancipated which is acknowledged and aspired by *carioca* women. Although female tourists also associate femininity with fragility, sensitivity and submission, some female tourists try to move beyond these connotations as solely ascribed to 'women' (or 'men') (Butler 1988; Mahmood 2001).

In doing so, they understand femininity and masculinity more in terms of 'energies', in which both femininity and masculinity are more fluid concepts that can exist in both women and men. However, it might be a complex task to deconstruct fixed ideas on gender, in a city where femininity is mostly ascribed to 'woman', and masculinity to 'man'. Essentialistic and static definitions of men and women, that exist in Rio de Janeiro may form limitations to the extent in which *carioca* women and female tourists can perform gender (Boucher 2006; Schep 2012).

However, the complexities of being in a city with static expectations on how to behave as a woman, are not primarily considered negative by female tourists for two reasons. Firstly, female tourists are able to leave Rio de Janeiro and to go home any time they wish, while *carioca* women are tied to their home country, Brazil. Therefore, female tourists seem to enjoy normative *carioca* male behaviour to a certain extent as it is considered more passionate, flirtatious and romantic in comparison to male behaviour of non-Brazilian men (Piscitelli 2016). Although 'masculine' behaviour performed by *carioca* men might relate to women's subordinate position in society, the temporality of such behaviour enables female tourists to enjoy rather than oppose male domination. Secondly, idealization of white European women in Rio de Janeiro enables female tourists to feel like they do not have to live up to any gender expectations (Piscitelli 2016). Moreover, idealization of white European women allows female tourists to challenge local gender norms, because they are often seen as already different, sexually liberated and emancipated in comparison to *carioca* women.

*Carioca* women as well as female tourists ascribe specific stereotypes to both *carioca* men and non-Brazilian men, these perceived stereotypes often seem to correspond. However, when it comes to a potential partner, their wishes seem to contradict. Brazilian men - *carioca* men in particular - are stereotypically envisioned as jealous, possessive and unfaithful (Piscitelli 2007). These stereotypes are often confirmed by both *carioca* women and female tourists.



Interestingly, we did not meet any women who described their current partner as such. Being jealous, possessive or unfaithful are characteristics often ascribed to other *carioca* men or past partners; which is most often a reason why the relationship did not last. Flirtatious and conquering behaviour of *carioca* men is experienced as attractive and appealing by female tourists, while the exact same behaviour can be perceived as aggressive and intrusive by *carioca* women (Piscitelli 2016). Because, female tourists experience male attention from all *carioca* men - also from men they do not wish to be approached by - they agree on this with *carioca* women to a certain extent.

Furthermore, both *carioca* women and female tourists perceive non-Brazilian men as kind, gentle, honest and respectful in comparison to *carioca* men. On the one hand female tourists may experience such characteristics ascribed to non-Brazilian men in a negative way. To most of them, being kind, gentle and honest equals to being soft, weak and passive. On the other hand, *carioca* women envision non-Brazilian men as perfect partners because they associate the same characteristics with stability and respect. Moreover, *carioca* men are seen as more passionate, sexually active and physical in communication, which both *carioca* women and female tourists consider as positive aspects.

On the contrary, *carioca* women and female tourists describe non-Brazilian men as passive, non-physical in communication and flirting, and less interested in sex. These two generalized ideas about both groups of men, might be a reason for female tourists not to date a European man, because passionate, romantic and conquering male behaviour may be considered a crucial aspect for dating.

For *carioca* women a potential partner should be suitable to accompany them in their journeys towards independence. In general, left-wing educated *carioca* women consciously choose not to love a *machista*. The partners of choice were often high-educated, left-wing, middle or upper class men. *Carioca* women could clearly argue why these men were in their opinion most likely not a *machista*. Although female tourists seem to be aware of existing underlying structures of *machismo* in Rio de Janeiro, they do not consciously decide whether to date a *machista* or not.

Remarkably, none of their current partners are described as *machistas*. Female tourists argue that this might be related to a leftist, feminist or progressive social environment in which their partner are located. *Carioca* women would also not describe their partner as a *machista*. Rather, they would describe their partners as ‘good guys’ who rarely express forms of *machismo*, which

is almost inescapable since every Brazilian is born within these structures (Merkin 2009). A relationship with a man who is not (or not so much) a *machista* enables *carioca* women to perform their redefined notions of femininity; being strong and independent women while expecting their partner to respect and admire that. Respect, honesty and faithfulness seem to be key factors to an intimate relationship for both groups.

An intimate relationship is where both love and sex intertwine, which might distinguish an intimate relationship from love felt for friends or family (Walsh 2009). However, what is understood as a loving intimate relationship can move beyond sexual attraction (Diamond 2004). *Carioca* women and female tourists seem to balance between both sex and love in an intimate relationships, where sex and love do not have to be equally divided. In other words, sex does not have to be as important as love and vice versa (Diamond 2004).

Both *carioca* women and female tourists perceive love as something that can build over time. For *carioca* women an intimate relationship comes from a sense of passion where love can be seen as the 'final station'. A sense of passion is considered a physical feeling which resembles a chemical or electric reaction when two people touch (Tornqvist 2012).

In this way, passion can be seen as an equivalent of sexual desire. Even though love can derive from sexual desire (Vertovec 2009), a lack of sexual passion in an intimate relationship is what female tourists relate to a lack of 'being in love'. This relates to the way *carioca* women define 'being in love'. Namely, as a feeling of being filled with passion that results in feeling sexually attracted to someone else. *Carioca* women define passion or being in love as just a temporary feeling that is worth much less than love. Both *carioca* women and female tourists consider sex a crucial element. However, for *carioca* women, the importance of sex does not transcend the importance of a stable, respectful relationship. Female tourists distinguish a sense of 'being in love' from 'loving someone'. Being in love can be understood as a more unconscious tacit feeling or emotion that makes someone 'fall in love'. Loving someone can be understood as an unconditional form of love whereby respect, trust and honesty are of utmost importance. The motivations for *carioca* women and female tourists to engage in relationships may differ depending on the issue of temporality.

Decisions to engage in a relationship can be made on a conscious (rational) or unconscious (emotional) level. In this way, love can be experienced as either an emotional feeling or a rational decision. *Carioca* women seem to make conscious decisions based on rational love, to build a solid

relationship with someone who respects them. For *carioca* women, the decision to love someone will most likely be based on whether the potential partner (who is not a *machista*) can provide opportunities for women to express themselves as a strong independent woman.

To make sure a potential partner is not a *machista*, some *carioca* women consciously look for non-Brazilian men. Since *cariocas* are most often seen as more passionate and sexual active, being in a relationship with a non-Brazilian man might result in a lack of sexual passion. But an 'equal' relationship - with either a Brazilian or non-Brazilian man, who allows them to be feminine on their own terms - transcends any lack of sexual passion. Some *carioca* women understand an equal relationship as solely achievable with non-Brazilian men, while others stress that deconstructing patterns of *machismo* with left-wing, educated *carioca* men, may offer the same equality.

Likewise, female tourists try to be conscious in choosing a partner. *Machismo* is not taken into consideration, since they do not experience being part of political, cultural and social structures in Brazilian society like *carioca* women do. The fact that female tourists experience being a woman in Zona Sul for a limited period of time, they are capable of putting aside negative aspects in relationships with *carioca* men related to *machismo* (e.g. jealousy). Therefore, female tourists seem to allow themselves to love on a more emotional level, since their transnational relationships are often based on fun, joy and temporality. However past experiences with *carioca* men made female tourists more aware about their wishes about a future partner. Perhaps, experiencing intimacy with *carioca* men may have allowed them to understand why *carioca* women ascribe meaning to rational love.

With this research, we answered the question "*How do carioca women experience a sense of sexual identity in local and transnational intimate relationships in Zona Sul, Rio de Janeiro?*" From an anthropological and intersectional perspective, we understood 'woman' as a fluid, ever-changing concept (Beauvoir 2010; Butler 1988). This enabled us to study how *carioca* women and female tourists experience a sense of sexual identity in (transnational) intimate relationships. Sexual identity is understood as an overarching concept that includes who one is, how one behaves or wishes to be as a sexual being.

In doing so, sexuality is understood from three different angles. Namely, (1) sexuality as a way to express femininity; (2) sexuality as a physical sexual activity; and (3) sexuality as a socio-cultural way to bring cultural meaning about sex and love into existence. We therefore understand

the meaning and experience of sexual identity as something that comes into existence in intersubjective contact with other sexual beings (Csordas 1993; Vertovec 2009).

We came to an understanding of female sexual identity in Rio de Janeiro as a constantly constructed idea on what it means to be a 'woman', which can be linked to three different notions of 'time': (1) Rio de Janeiro's contemporary political situation; (2) the notion of temporality of female tourists versus the notion of permanence for *carioca* women; and (3) unknown outcomes of the future.

Firstly, our findings show that both *carioca* women and female tourists are located within underlying structures of *machismo* which influence the way in which gender is understood (Beauvoir 2010; Merker 2009). On the one hand, *carioca* women are aware of and conform to these structures while aiming to redefine the meaning of gender in a society where gender is often assumed to be a static biological given (i.e. women as the weaker sex). On the other hand, female tourists define gender from a more assumed liberal, progressive perspective of the social, cultural and political context of their home countries. Since female tourists are seen as the embodiment of female (sexual) liberation, they experience the ability to perform gender beyond local expectations of how to behave as a woman.

Secondly, the way in which female tourists position themselves as loving partners in a relationship differs from *carioca* women, since female tourists know that at some point they will leave Rio de Janeiro. This stands in contrast with *carioca* women who are currently in a permanent state of being in Rio de Janeiro.

Thirdly, at this particular moment, *carioca* women seek to find a partner who may provide stability, respect and female independence; which exceeds the longing for passion with a man who is not a *machista*. In contrast, female tourists, who are in Rio de Janeiro for a limited period of time seem to allow themselves the passionate, sensual behaviour of *carioca* men and can only tell what love and sex means after returning to their home country. Being fully aware of the importance of these three dimensions of time, we are very curious to find out who these women will be in a time yet to come.

### *Recommendations*

We began this research by criticizing the recently elected right-wing conservative president Jair Bolsonaro. We argued how Bolsonaro may put a strain on female rights and sex education in Brazil and how Brazilian feminist movements have demonstrated against Bolsonaro with, for example, hashtag #EleNão. With this research we aimed to leave room for women to (re)interpret gender, to talk freely about sex and to think and talk about the meaning and the role of love in an intimate relationship. Therefore, we like to view our research as a form of resistance to female subordination and fixed ideas on gender. Unsurprisingly, while taking such a left-winged approach, most of our participants were also left-oriented, high-educated women with progressive liberated perspectives on women's position in society. Therefore, to gain a multi-sided understanding on the meaning of femininity, love and sex in Rio de Janeiro in the construction of a female sexual identity, we suggest a focus in further research on women who are more right-wing-oriented. Seventeen percent of the Brazilian female population has voted for Bolsonaro. Moreover, to demonstrate female support, a Facebook group has been created called '*Mulheres com Bolsonaro*' (women in favour of Bolsonaro). The Facebook page was created in 2018 and has attracted over 1.5 million members. This female support for Bolsonaro may be an interesting start to question how femininity, love and sex is constructed and perceived within conservative ideas from a female perspective. Furthermore, we want to address several limits to our research. Firstly, we are fully aware of the heteronormative notion of this research, since all of our participants were heterosexual. Therefore, for further research we suggest the inclusion of diversity in sexual preference (Spronk 2011) to understand sexual identity beyond static ideas on what to be, how to behave or whom to be with as a 'woman' or a 'man'. Secondly, we should stress the lack of tourists from other areas of Brazil and female tourists from other countries in Latin America. This could offer other critical perspectives on gender, that may address diversity within structures of *machismo* in Latin America.

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# Appendices

## 1. Summary in English

In this research, we analysed how *carioca* women and female tourists construct, represent and perform female sexual identity in Zona Sul, Rio de Janeiro. What it means to be a woman in Zona Sul - where tourism exists alongside the daily lives of *carioca* women - is influenced by right wing, conservative political spheres, which increased due to the election of Jair Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro promotes a conservative right-wing policy that places women in a subordinate position while viewing the female body as male property, which reflects notions of *machismo*<sup>132</sup> in Brazilian society.

We seek to move beyond static ideas ascribed to the gendered body. In doing so we understand women not as passive objects within Brazilian society, but as active agents that (re)construct and (re)define notions of gender. From an anthropological and intersectional perspective, we thus understood ‘woman’ as a fluid, ever-changing concept that moves beyond ‘woman’ as a static, biological given (Butler 1988, 2011). What it means to be a ‘woman’ or a ‘man’ is constructed, and may be resisted, within specific social, cultural contexts that form ideas on how to behave as a ‘woman’ or a ‘man’ (Abu-Lughod 2010; Beauvoir 2010).

We conducted a complementary qualitative research for a period of three months in Rio de Janeiro. Maurice focused on how female tourists - as non-Brazilian women - give meaning to their sexual identity while being abroad. Elise focused on how *carioca* women perform and experience their sexual identity as local inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro. By studying *carioca* women and female tourists, we took the possibility of difference *between* and *within* these two groups of women into account since other axes of identity - such as nationality, ethnicity and class - may influence the way women position themselves in society (Crenshaw 1989; Wekker 2016).

Furthermore, we aimed to understand the way in which both groups experience, perform and construct notions of femininity, sex and love, which may transform in relation to another sexual being (Vertovec 2009; Walsh 2009). Therefore, we studied how *carioca* women and female tourists experience their sexual identity in an intimate (transnational) relationship.

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<sup>132</sup> Machismo can be explained as a set of ideas that view women as weak and subordinate to men (Merker 2009).

Female tourists understand femininity in relation to their home country while being in Rio de Janeiro. Some female tourists extend the meaning of gender by understanding gender in terms of energies, where both masculinity and femininity can be expressed by women and men at the same time. Masculine is often seen as dominant, extravert and controlling, while feminine is considered to be more sensitive, kind and introvert.

Extending gender boundaries may function as an example for many *carioca* women because they view European women as (sexually) liberated. *Carioca* women aim to relate being feminine to being strong, confident and independent. However, they are limited to Rio de Janeiro that is marked by structures of *machismo* and female unsafety. Since structures of *machismo* are assumed to be present in every man born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, *carioca* women may express aversion towards *carioca* men.

Contrarily, female tourists often feel more attracted to attitudes of *carioca* men over men from their home countries, since European men are seen as less passionate and romantic in comparison to *carioca* men. This attraction comes both ways since female tourists experience to be an object of sexual desire of *carioca* men, as blond, white, European women. The received male-attention is sometimes experienced as enjoyable, while at the same time it often remains a superficial, short-term reward.

Moreover, sexual attraction might be a trigger to fall in love or to be in an intimate relationship with someone else; as a result sex and love co-exist together (Walsh, 2009). Both *carioca* women and female tourists seek to balance love and sex as important aspects of an intimate relationship. For *carioca* women, love is embedded in issues of politics and *machismo*. Therefore - in the eyes of many left-wing, upper class *carioca* women - a partner cannot be a *machista*. *Machistas* are often experienced to be jealous, possessive, aggressive and unfaithful - being most often lower class, low educated men - who keep women from expressing themselves as confident and independent. Therefore, *carioca* women consciously decide to either start a relationship with a non-Brazilian man or with a highly educated, left-wing, middle- or upper class Brazilian man. Although they might experience a lack of passion in such stable relationships, love and respect are considered more important.

Likewise, female tourists argue that it is important to harmonize with their partner in core-values (e.g. respect and honesty) to have a 'well-functioning relationship' with someone who is not from their home country. However, since many female tourists stay in Rio de Janeiro for a

limited period of time they are more able - in comparison to *carioca* women - to be moved by their feelings instead of their ratio.

Thus, the way *carioca* women and female tourists experience and construct their sexual identity in relation to *carioca* men and non-Brazilian men differs. The main reason for this difference is that *carioca* women aim to reposition themselves as independent and strong women in Brazilian society while female tourists make less conscious decisions when it comes to starting an intimate relationship in Rio de Janeiro. After all, being a female tourist in Rio de Janeiro is a temporary experience, while *carioca* are inescapably tied to Rio de Janeiro as the city they were born in.

## 2. Summary in Portuguese

### *Resumo*

O objetivo dessa pesquisa foi analisar como é construída e apresentada a identidade sexual de mulheres brasileiras (Rio de Janeiro) e turistas femininas (mulheres estrangeiras) moradoras da Zona Sul da cidade do Rio de Janeiro. O que significa ser uma mulher moradora da zona sul do Rio de Janeiro – aonde o turismo convive lado a lado com o cotidiano das cariocas. Cotidiano, esse, que é constantemente influenciado pela política. Vale salientar aqui, o momento político vivido no Brasil nesse momento, onde a direita vem ganhando força, principalmente após a eleição do novo presidente Jair Bolsonaro. O atual governo, presidido por Jair Bolsonaro, promove um conservadorismo retrógrado, colocando, desta maneira, as mulheres em uma posição de subordinação, em relação aos homens, que pode ser visto como um reflexo da estrutura machista da sociedade Brasileira.

Nosso objetivo foi ir além das ideias estáticas atribuídas ao corpo feminino. Desta maneira, nós entendemos mulheres, não como objetos passivos da sociedade brasileira mas como agentes ativos, capazes de (re)construir e (re)definir as noções de gênero existentes na atualidade. De uma perspectiva antropológica e de interseccionalidade, nós entendemos ‘mulher’ como um conceito fluido, ou seja, passivo de mudança. Assim sendo, ser ‘mulher’ é mais e maior do que um simples dado biológico (Butler 1988, 2011). Logo, o conceito de, ser uma mulher ou ser um homem, é construído culturalmente, e por assim ser, o mesmo é passível de resistência dentro de diferentes contextos sociais e culturais. Onde as ideias sobre ‘ser mulher’ e se comportar como mulher são formadas (Abu-Lughod 2010; Beauvoir 2010).

Paralelamente conduzimos uma pesquisa complementar e qualitativa, de 23 de janeiro 2019 à 22 de abril 2019 no Rio de Janeiro. Maurice analisou o que turistas mulheres (estrangeiras de férias no Brasil) veem a identidade sexual no Rio de Janeiro, ou seja, fora do seu país de origem. Elise, analisou como as mulheres cariocas entendem a identidade sexual no Rio de Janeiro, ou seja, no seu país de origem. Ao compararmos os dois grupos, levantamos a possibilidade da existência de diferenças não somente entre os grupos em si, mas também dentro dos mesmos. Desta forma, é possível que possa existir uma interdependência entre relações sociais, de raça, sexo e classe. De maneira que possa vir a influenciar a maneira pela qual as mulheres venham a se posicionar na sociedade (Crenshaw 1989; Wekker 2016).

Procuramos também, entender como os dois grupos entendem e constroem os conceitos de feminilidade, sexo e amor. E quanto maleáveis os mesmos podem ser, a ponto de transformarem-se no momento em que a pessoa se encontrar em uma relação amorosa (Vertovec 2009; Walsh 2009). Para isso, analisamos o que mulheres, cariocas e turistas, entendem por identidade sexual dentro das relações amorosas internacionais.

Turistas femininas definem feminilidade baseado em ideias que existem em seus países de origem, mesmo durante o tempo despendido por elas no Rio de Janeiro. Um dado interessante que gostaríamos de ressaltar, foi o fato de algumas turistas femininas ampliarem o significado do conceito de gênero, por entenderem o mesmo em termos de ‘energias’. Visto por essa ótica, masculinidade e feminilidade, estão presentes e podem ser expressados por homens e mulheres ao mesmo tempo. Masculinidade é entendida como; ser dominante e extrovertido, enquanto feminilidade, por outro lado, é vista como; ser sensível, simpático e introvertido. Ampliar os limites do conceito de gênero, tornando-o mais maleáveis, pode ser um exemplo a ser seguido pelas mulheres cariocas. Mulheres cariocas tentam sempre relacionar o “ser feminina” ao; ser forte, ter confiança e ser independente. Contudo, seguem sendo limitadas pelo Rio de Janeiro, uma cidade marcada por uma estrutura machista e coberta por uma enorme insegurança em relação a população feminina. Mulheres cariocas percebem o machismo como estruturas sociais e culturais intrínsecas ao homem nascido e criado no Rio de Janeiro. Por essa razão, mulheres cariocas podem expressar aversão aos homens cariocas.

Ao contrário, turistas femininas frequentemente se sentem mais atraídas por homens cariocas. Elas acham que os homens cariocas são mais emocionais e românticos, comparado com homens europeus. Paralelamente, turistas femininas recebem mais atenção dos homens cariocas, por suas aparências (cabelo loiro e pele branca). Por vezes, turistas femininas gostam da atenção recebida pelos cariocas, por outro lado, as mesmas também relatam que esta atenção soa como uma recompensa superficial e de curto prazo.

Além disso, atração sexual pode ser um início para se apaixonar ou para começar um relacionamento íntimo. Portanto, amor e sexo coexiste e se relacionam (Walsh 2009). Mulheres cariocas e turistas femininas, procuram um equilíbrio entre amor e sexo, aspectos que são considerados importantes num relacionamento íntimo. Para mulheres cariocas, o amor é incorporado em questões de política e machismo. Assim sendo, um companheiro não pode ser machista. Machistas são considerados pessoas possessivas, agressivas e infiéis. E em sua maioria



vêm de uma classe social baixa e possuem baixa escolaridade. As mesmas concluem assim, que homens machistas tratam mulheres como suas reféns, de maneira que possam, desta maneira, sentir-se confiantes e independentes. Por essas razões, mulheres cariocas decidiram tentar um relacionamento amoroso com homens estrangeiros ou com homens brasileiros que possuam alta escolaridade, sejam de esquerda e que sejam de classe média ou alta. Embora mulheres cariocas possam a vir sentir falta da paixão neste novo tipo de relacionamento, atributos como; estabilidade, amor e respeito são considerados de grande importância em um relacionamento.

Da mesma maneira turistas femininas enfatizam a importância de harmonizar valores fundamentais em um relacionamento, tal como, respeito e honestidade. Especialmente em um relacionamento onde a outra pessoa é de outro país. Um ponto de observação importante, é o fato das turistas femininas, por causa da curta estadia, se sentirem mais livres para se deixar levar somente por seus sentimentos, em comparação a mulheres cariocas, que tem que continuar no rio de janeiro, ou seja, em contato com os homens cariocas.

Assim sendo, é notável a existência de uma diferença entre a construção de identidade sexual por mulheres cariocas e turistas femininas em relação à homens cariocas e à homens estrangeiros. A principal razão dessa diferença pode estar associada ao fato das mulheres cariocas se posicionarem como mulheres fortes e independentes na sociedade brasileira (rio), enquanto turistas femininas tendem a tomar decisões menos conscientes em relação a possíveis relacionamentos íntimo no Rio de Janeiro. Concluimos assim, que por ser temporária a estadia da turista feminina no Rio de Janeiro, está lhe garante um possível afastamento dos seus valores, enquanto para as mulheres cariocas, estar no rio é estar em contato diário com a luta de sua constante (re)afirmação como mulher.