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**VIOLÊNCIA POLICIAL, MASCULINIDADE NEGRA E EMPODERAMENTO ATRAVÉS DA
ARTE: DOIS ESTUDOS DE CASO COM JOVENS NEGROS EM SALVADOR**

**Salvador – Bahia
2016**

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DA ARTE: DOIS ESTUDOS DE CASO COM JOVENS NEGROS EM SALVADOR**

Dissertação apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação do Instituto de Saúde Coletiva da Universidade Federal da Bahia, como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Mestre em Saúde Coletiva.

Área de Concentração: Ciências Sociais em Saúde.

Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Leny Alves Bomfim Trad.

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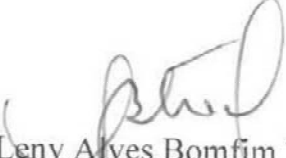
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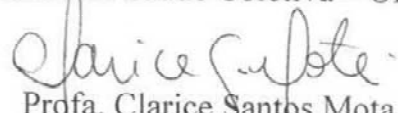
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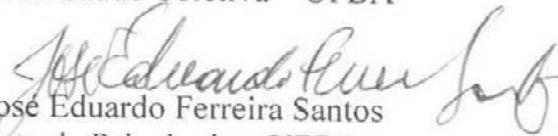
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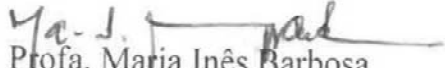
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RESUMO

A Violência Policial é um fenômeno mundial que se acentua em determinados segmentos urbanos de países democráticos como o Brasil. Ainda que entendendo a polícia como entidade legítima de exercício da violência por parte do Estado, o fenômeno da violência policial tem demonstrado estar enraizado em suas práticas históricas ao dirigir-se sistematicamente contra indivíduos de etnias africanas e seus descendentes. Esta pesquisa, vinculada ao mestrado em saúde coletiva, objetivou analisar os significados e experiências envolvidos na relação entre violência policial e masculinidade negra em Salvador. De forma complementar, procurou-se analisar o potencial da arte como instrumento de resiliência para a juventude negra e discutir os limites e as contradições dos programas e políticas governamentais voltados ao combate à violência policial. Trata-se de analisar a relação entre a violência do Estado e os jovens negros, levando em conta a incidência do racismo e a construção social da masculinidade negra, procurando identificar seu papel nessa relação, tendo em vista as restrições impostas à identidade infligida aos homens negros. Além disso, as formas pelas quais a arte prevê a reescrita de processos de identidade, de resiliência e empoderamento. O perfil racial e a violência racial são funções do racismo, que se manifestam de forma diferente em diferentes contextos. A dificuldade em abordar o racismo e a violência racial no Brasil deve ser entendida no contexto da ideologia do mito da democracia racial em que o racismo foi declarado não existir. Em um momento em que o Brasil está tendo debates em torno da ação afirmativa e do racismo, revela-se especialmente relevante desenvolver estudos sobre a violência policial e a relação complexa entre ela e jovens negros. Destacam-se como conceitos-chave da pesquisa: interseccionalidade, masculinidade, racismo e violência do Estado. Adotou-se um método qualitativo de pesquisa, mais especificamente o estudo de casos. Foram conduzidos dois estudos de caso, focalizando a experiência de dois jovens negros vinculados a coletivos juvenis de Salvador que desenvolvem práticas culturais. Os dados foram produzidos por meio de entrevistas narrativas, entrevistas semiestruturadas, análise de produtos artísticos desenvolvidos pelos dois jovens (poesias, letras de música) e observação participante. Além dos estudos de caso, foram realizadas entrevistas complementares com informantes-chave, sendo uma coordenadora do Grupo de Controle

Externo para a atividade policial e outra coordenadora de comunicação do Fórum Comunitário contra a Violência em Salvador. Dentre os resultados, destacam-se os seguintes aspectos: que a própria construção da masculinidade negra, trabalha para confinar homens negros as ideias limitadas de identidade que se auto prejudicam e sustentam ideias coletivas que justificam o assassinato de homens negros pelo Estado. Uma compreensão crítica de todas as maneiras que esta construção social é perpetuada deve ser tido. Mais importante ainda, devemos ouvir as vozes e histórias de homens negros para entender essa complexa relação.

MOORE, Hannah Keturah. *Violência Policial, Masculinidade Negra e Empoderamento através da arte: Dois estudos de caso com jovens negros em Salvador*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Saúde Coletiva) – Instituto de Saúde Coletiva, Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2016.

ABSTRACT

Police Violence is a worldwide phenomenon that is more prominent in certain urban segments of democratic countries such as Brazil. Although the police are understood as a legitimate entity for the exercise of violence by the State, the phenomenon of police violence has been shown to be rooted in historic practices by systematically targeting individuals of African ethnicities and their descendants. This research grew from a masters in collective health, aimed to analyze the meanings and experiences involved in the relationship between police violence and Black masculinity in Salvador. In a complementary way, I sought to analyze the potential of art as an instrument of resilience for Black youth and discuss the limits and contradictions of government programs and policies aimed at combating police violence. This research deals with analyzing the relationship between state violence and young Black men, taking into account the incidence of racism and the social construction of Black masculinity, considering the restrictions imposed on the identity inflicted on men Black. In addition, the ways in which art provides for the rewriting of processes of identity, resilience and empowerment. Racial profiling and racial violence are functions of racism, which manifest differently in different contexts. The difficulty in addressing racism and racial violence in Brazil must be understood in the context of the ideology of the myth of racial democracy in which racism was declared to not exist. At a time when Brazil is having debates about affirmative action and racism, it is especially relevant to develop studies on police violence and the complex relationship between State violence and young Black men. The key concepts of this research are: intersectionality, Black masculinity, racism and state violence. I adopted a qualitative method of research, more specifically the case study. Two case studies were conducted, focusing on the experience of two young Black men linked to youth groups that develop cultural practices in Salvador. The data was produced through narrative interviews, semi-structured interviews, analysis of artistic products developed by the two young people (poetry, lyrics) and participant observation. In addition to the case studies, complementary interviews were conducted with key informants, the coordinator of the External Control Group for police activity and the communication coordinator of the Community Forum against Violence in Salvador. Among the results, the following aspects: stand out that the very

construction of black masculinity works to confine black men to limited ideas of identity that self-harm and support collective ideas that justify the murder of black men by the state. A critical understanding of all the ways this social construction is perpetuated must be had. Most importantly, we should listen to the voices and stories of black men to understand this complex relationship.

APRESENTAÇÃO

Este trabalho é fruto de uma pesquisa de mestrado que teve como ponto de partida a intenção de conhecer experiências de jovens negros de Salvador relacionadas com violência policial. No desenrolar do trabalho de campo, especialmente, a partir das narrativas de participantes do estudo, emergiu fortemente a questão da masculinidade negra, revelando, portanto, o peso significativo da identidade racial e de gênero na produção do fenômeno da violência. Decidi, então, reconfigurar o objeto de estudo de modo a contemplar a realidade empírica. Partindo do reconhecimento da necessidade de compreender como se dá a construção social da masculinidade negra, o estudo interrogou o que significa ser jovem negro em Salvador, considerando as interseções entre gênero, raça e violência, particularmente, a violência policial.

Em consonância com esta pergunta, o principal objetivo da pesquisa consistiu em analisar os significados e experiências envolvidas na relação entre violência policial e masculinidade negra para jovens negros de Salvador. Foram considerados também dois objetivos complementares: discutir os limites e as contradições de programas e políticas do governo disseram para combater a violência policial, analisar o potencial da arte como uma ferramenta para o empoderamento de jovens negros.

O último objetivo descrito revelou-se especialmente relevante no universo pesquisado e espera-se aprofundá-lo em estudos futuros. Destaca-se ainda que a linguagem artística (poesia, letra de música, peça teatral) foi uma das fontes principais de apreensão de significados sobre os temas abordados no estudo.

A problemática de pesquisa envolve, de uma parte, o reconhecimento da magnitude do fenômeno da violência policial, sublinhando, particularmente, seus efeitos perversos para a população negra, e, por outra, a incidência do gênero neste processo, focalizando em particular a questão da masculinidade do homem negro.

A violência policial identifica-se com questões de performances de masculinidade, tanto em termos de uma força policial majoritariamente do sexo masculino quanto em termos de abordar a vitimização de jovens negros como o alvo de tal violência. Indo mais a fundo, as regras que governam a “performance” variam conforme os contextos. Desse modo, os comportamentos de um jovem negro de uma comunidade da favela que apresentem certas linguagens corporais e modos de fala específicos desse contexto podem ser inibidos por determinados espaços sociais e, por isso, mudar sua performance, quando, por exemplo, ao entrar num banco ou *shopping*.

Considera-se fundamental avançar na produção de pesquisas que dê visibilidade à violência policial contra jovens negros, evidenciando, particularmente, em que medida a conjunção de marcadores raciais, de gênero e etários tem contribuído para a vulnerabilidade frente à violência policial. É neste contexto que o enfoque da interseccionalidade revela-se especialmente pertinente ao permitir entender as várias interconexões do mundo em que vivemos. Mais especificamente, essa abordagem possibilita entender como essas intersecções criam sistemas de opressão, e, assim, as relações de poder dentro e ao redor dessas intersecções.

O termo interseccionalidade faz referência à crítica noção de que raça, gênero, sexualidade, etnicidade, nação, habilidade e idade operam como entidades mutuamente exclusivas, e não como unitárias. Em vez disso, tendo em vista compreender a desigualdade e opressão, ou resistência e resiliência, precisamos entender esses conceitos através da intersecção de instâncias sociais, tais como raça, gênero, classe, idade, habilidade etc.

Originalmente cunhada por Kimberlee Crenshaw, a teoria da interseccionalidade procura definir a natureza interseccional da opressão ou como as diferentes formas de discriminação e estruturas de poder se relacionam (Crenshaw, 1991). A interseccionalidade nos leva a compreender o fato de que não é possível dissociar a raça de questões tais como de gênero, classe social ou de qualquer outra forma de discriminação que envolva desigualdades (Crenshaw, 1991).

O conceito de interseccionalidade surgiu nos Estados Unidos, nas décadas de 1960 e 1970, a partir de movimento feminista negro, devido ao fato de que o feminismo de mulheres negras nos Estados Unidos abriga uma gama muito ampla de projetos historicamente específicos de justiça social, além de projetos transculturais e transnacionais que visam desmantelar várias desigualdades sociais (Collins, 2015).

A ideia principal da interseccionalidade é a de que a intersecção das opressões – sejam elas, raça e gênero, classe etc. – criam uma matriz de dominação. Essa matriz de dominação determina a organização geral do poder na sociedade. Assim como qualquer matriz, ela é composta de duas características principais. Em primeiro lugar, uma disposição específica de sistemas de opressão em intersecção, para entender que o modo como esses sistemas se articulam e os efeitos disso compreendem razões históricas e sociais específicas. O segundo aspecto diz respeito ao fato desses sistemas de opressão se organizarem segundo quatro domínios inter-relacionados de poder: estrutural, disciplinar, hegemônico e interpessoal (Collins, 2015).

O componente estrutural estabelece parâmetros e é responsável por organizar as

relações de poder, consistindo de estruturas sociais, tais como a lei, política, religião e economia. Segundo Collins, é o domínio estrutural que determina, de um modo geral, a organização do poder dentro da matriz de dominação, acentuando que o domínio estrutural apresenta um lento ritmo de mudanças. O domínio disciplinar é o domínio que gerencia a opressão. Isso é feito através de organizações burocráticas, cuja função é controlar e organizar os corpos e comportamentos dos indivíduos.

Já o domínio hegemônico legitima a opressão; essa é a esfera cultural de influência onde se articulam a ideologia e a consciência. Ele opera de modo a estabelecer conexões entre os domínios estrutural, disciplinar e interpessoal. O domínio interpessoal, por sua parte, consiste das relações pessoais que mantemos e, por conta disso, esse domínio influencia o dia a dia mais diretamente. Esse domínio sofre mudanças a partir do momento em que os indivíduos compreendem as dinâmicas envolvidas em suas experiências de vida. Essa mudança ocorre quando percebemos a vitimização e – também e mais importante ainda – como nossos pensamentos e ações sustentam a aparelhagem da subordinação.

A teoria da interseccionalidade permite identificar como os fatores idade, raça e gênero (jovem, negro e homem) funcionam em conjunto, oferece uma compreensão maior na relação entre a violência policial e a juventude negra. Ao lançar mão de uma abordagem interseccional, é importante lembrar que a raça representa uma estrutura que coíbe, percebida como primeira instância em vista a entender a matriz da opressão compõe nossas experiências.

A racialização do gênero ou da masculinidade negra tem sido sempre um ponto retórico de discordâncias. Historicamente, a retórica da violência e a super sexualização colocou a masculinidade negra na posição de poder e dominação (Pinho, 2005). Esta retórica histórica colocou a construção da masculinidade negra em uma grande contradição, pois, na realidade, o seu lugar na sociedade é uma masculinidade subordinada. Ao contrário dos brancos, os negros encaram realidades diferentes em relação à dominação, subordinação e opressão, gerando, com isso, diferenças na construção da identidade e na forma de relacionar-se com a masculinidade.

Para discutir a violência policial, precisamos entender o eixo em que ela ocupa em relação a todas as intersecções que permitem seu surgimento e existência. A violência se manifesta de muitas formas, a violência policial vive na esfera do poder do Estado e do controle. Além de entendimento que violência manifesta em várias formas, precisamos começar afastando-se de noções sintomáticas de violência, e para a compreensão de que a violência é um processo, que transforma e se torna a condição de sua própria produção

(Smith, 2006). Ou seja violência gera violência num processo ciclo.

Os atos de violência policial contra jovens negros, contra corpos negros, são atos de violência física que também produzem imaginações coletivas do que é ser jovem negro, ou seja, a reprodução da imagem do jovem negro enquanto violento – que é uma violência em si.

A masculinidade, que entendemos hoje em dia feita pelos papéis de gênero e machismo, é patriarcal. Uma masculinidade intrinsecamente ligada à supremacia branca. As políticas de gênero, de escravidão e de dominação da supremacia branca foi a escola onde homens negros de diferentes tribos africanas, com diferentes línguas e sistemas de valores, aprenderam uma masculinidade patriarcal, onde foi aceitável e necessário usar violência (Hooks, 2004).

Em *Black Sexual Politics*, Patrica Hill Collins também descreve a construção da masculinidade negra como um processo de longo tempo de delineamento de todos os homens negros enquanto corpos de força bruta. Essa combinação, defende Collins, da ideia da fisicalidade em vez de intelectualidade reforça a construção de homens negros como predispostos a serem violentos. Collins continua a dizer-nos que o homem negro construído e consignado para o trabalho de seu corpo tem sido usado para mantê-lo pobre e impotente. No entanto, essa obsessão com o corpo masculino negro como sendo forte e agressivo, quando controlada, gera admiração, tal como vemos isso no mundo esportivo. Nota-se, contudo, que, em todo o espectro de medo e admiração, o foco é sempre o corpo.

Em seu livro, *We Real Cool*, Bell Hooks enfatiza que a verdade sobre a construção da masculinidade de homens negros, é que vivemos numa cultura que não os ama. Eles são temidos, invejosos ou odiados, mas não amados. Hooks vai mais longe e traz a seguinte questão: se os negros não são amados por homens brancos, mulheres brancas, mulheres negras, meninos e meninas, como eles podem se amar?

Collins (2015) fala da interseccionalidade da masculinidade negra a partir da compreensão do patriarcado como uma cultura que restringe e limita grandemente todos os homens. Mas, quando você adiciona raça e classe, os homens negros têm as piores imposições. Bell argumenta que a maior ameaça genocida para os homens negros é a masculinidade patriarcal (Hooks, 2004).

Joy Degruy Leary chama a atenção para a contribuição dos meios de comunicação na construção da autoimagem dos Povos Negros. Uma vez que a mídia age como uma lente em que as pessoas se vêem, assim como nós vemos aos outros, quando os homens negros são retratados como criminosos violentos e fora de controle pelos meios de comunicação, isso tem sérios efeitos sobre o que eles acreditam a respeito de si mesmos (Leary, 2005). Leary fala de

como os jovens negros “cumprem o estereótipo” do que os brancos e outros foram ensinados a acreditar sobre eles. Leary argumenta que uma das maneiras pelas quais a *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* é refletida hoje é vista neste cumprimento de comportamentos estereotipados. Isso decorre da falta de autoestima, da crença de que se tem pouco valor; algo que é continuamente reforçado através dos meios de comunicação de massa, assim como pelos sistemas de educação, o sistema de justiça etc.

Ele fala da maneira pela qual jovens negros tentam lidar com sua baixa autoestima procurando “neutralizar” a dor com estratégias que transformam a fraqueza em controle. Em face da falta de respeito, o medo (que podem suscitar nos demais), considerando o estereótipo do “homem negro perigoso”, que pode intimidar no confronto direto, é usado para expressar poder ou como uma forma de transformar a impotência em poder; ele converte-se em medo inspirador (Leary, 2005).

Leary conclui afirmando que o comportamento subjacente aqui é que, se os jovens negros sentem que não podem inspirar qualidades positivas como amor e respeito, eles sentem pelo menos que podem inspirar algo, neste caso, o medo e a intimidação no confronto. Um sentimento ou comportamento que inevitavelmente os prejudica, à medida que continua a reforçar este estereótipo da construção do violento macho negro.

A violência policial é um fenômeno mundial que se acentua em determinados segmentos urbanos, de países democráticos como os EUA e o Brasil. Ainda que entendendo a polícia como entidade legítima de exercício da violência por parte do Estado, a violência policial, em ambos os países, parece estar enraizada em suas práticas históricas ao dirigir-se principalmente a indivíduos e/ou grupos de etnias africanas e seus descendentes. Em decorrência dessa singularidade das polícias dos dois países, ocorre um questionamento: os espaços urbanos tornaram-se, ou sempre foram, zonas de vigilância e repressão do medo racializado?

No início do século passado, o sociólogo negro norte-americano William Edward Dubois, pioneiro nesse tipo de estudo, previa que o “problema do século XXI” seria a relação entre a polícia e as comunidades minoritárias. Cem anos depois, as relações entre a polícia e as comunidades de afrodescendentes, em cidades do Brasil e dos EUA, nos relembram as previsões de Dubois. Esta relação histórica que a polícia tem com as missões civilizadoras coloniais (de controlar povos escravizados), e o interesse do Estado em disseminar valores morais na sociedade, se transformaram com a nova modernidade e o mundo globalizado, com o surgimento de novas formas de controle social e da ordem espacial urbana (Amar, op. cit.).

Focalizando a realidade específica da cidade do Salvador, estudos prévios apontam

elementos importantes para entender como o filtro racial opera na prática policial. Como Vilma Reis aponta em sua dissertação de mestrado, entre 1991 e 2001, novas políticas de segurança pública foram implementadas em bairros populares em Salvador, que foram guiados pelo modelo de zero tolerância como resultado do estigma e filtro racial em relação aos jovens negros. Homens negros jovens e “comunidades estrategicamente veneráveis” foram e continuam a ser alvos de políticas de segurança pública excessivamente severas e discriminatórias.

Não se trata de um fenômeno isolado. No caso do Brasil, a raça tem desempenhado um papel enorme na criação de políticas de segurança pública, e as vítimas das ações violentas do estado são inevitavelmente jovens negros (Reis, 2013). A polícia brasileira são uns dos mais violentos do mundo, matando cerca de seis pessoas por dia (Anistia Internacional, 2014).

Permitindo, assim, um olhar sobre o ciclo contínuo: o número de assassinatos de jovens negros por parte da polícia continua a crescer, enquanto os assassinatos de brancos diminuem. Isso acaba se tornando um dos fatores que resulta no modo como as políticas continuam a refletir a ideia de que jovens negros são protagonistas da violência.

Com respeito aos indicadores de homicídios relacionados com a população jovem, considerando o recorte étnico-racial, o Mapa da Violência (Waiselfisz, 2014) indica que as maiores taxas de homicídio no Brasil são relacionadas a jovens negros para os três tipos de violência publicados no relatório: homicídio, acidentes de trânsito e suicídio. Os dados extraídos do Sistema de Informação de Mortalidade (SIM) do Ministério da Saúde continuam a mostrar um aumento brutal no número de homicídios de jovens no país. Entre 2001 a 2012, a taxa de homicídios aumentou 13,4%, observando-se uma variação regional: no Nordeste, por exemplo, a taxa de homicídios é quase o dobro. Especificamente no Maranhão, Bahia e Rio Grande do Norte, as taxas de homicídios triplicaram na época neste mesmo período (Waiselfisz, 2014).

Os homicídios pela polícia, quando são registrados, via de regra, são descritas como “morte durante a intervenção da polícia” ou “auto de resistência”, associando o homicídio com a legítima defesa policial. Esse código jurídico era criado na época da ditadura militar (1964-1985), quando as torturas, execuções extrajudiciais, desaparecimentos eram instrumentos de Estado voltado para a supressão da dissidência política (Anistia Internacional, 2015).

Os casos são raramente investigados na determinação do uso da força pela polícia (Anistia Internacional, 2014). A impunidade é o maior devido das falhas no processo de

investigação. Essa impunidade só mantém o ciclo de violência, enquanto os números dos casos das “mortes durante intervenção policial” crescer sem obrigação de investigação (Anistia Internacional, 2015). Uma vez que a resistência alegada era percebida, a vítima era classificada como resistente, necessitando, dessa forma, uma investigação sobre ela.

No que se refere ao perfil de gênero, desde 1998, todos os Mapas da Violência apontam que a taxa de homicídio é maior entre indivíduos do sexo masculino. Nos dados mais recentes (2012), encontramos que 96% dos homicídios no país são de indivíduos do sexo masculino; quanto à distribuição etária, a população entre 13 a 24 anos de idade ocupam as maiores taxas de homicídio pela violência (Waiselfisz, 2014).

As principais características dos dados nos conduzem a determinar que a interseção do fato de ser homem, negro e jovem, culmina numa vulnerabilidade maior desses indivíduos à violência no Brasil. Essa interseção de desigualdades é “intrinsecamente inter-relacionada, elas reforçam cada um dos fatores, e estes não podem ser dissociados do conjunto” (Veentsra, 2011). Tendo em vista entender a complexidade do eixo de opressão que os dados revelam, acreditamos que seja necessário atentar às consequências estruturais e dinâmicas das interseções que esses elementos criam. Gênero é construído através de raça e raça é construída através de gênero; eles são interseccional e mutuamente constitutivos (Ferber, 2007).

Com respeito à metodologia adotada, optou-se pela estratégia do estudo de casos (Yin, 2003). Um estudo de caso é um estudo aprofundado de uma situação específica contra um estudo de levantamento estatístico de varredura. É um método digno a diminuir um amplo campo de investigação sobre um tema facilmente pesquisável. Alguns argumentam que um estudo de caso pode ser muito estreito e, portanto, mostram apenas um exemplo estreito de um grande problema (Yin, 2003). No entanto, psicólogos, antropólogos e cientistas sociais têm considerado estudos de caso como método de pesquisa válida por muitos anos.

Foram desenvolvidos dois estudos de caso tendo como foco as experiências de dois jovens ativistas negros vinculados a dois coletivos da cidade de Salvador: Marcos Paulo (30 anos), de Cajazeiras, e Sandro Sussuarana (29 anos), de Sussuarana. Cada um deles faz parte de organizações juvenis voltadas para o ativismo e o levante de consciência a partir da organização e da arte (JACA e Sarau da Onça).

Os dados foram produzidos por meio de entrevistas narrativas, entrevistas semiestruturadas, produtos de produção cultural dos jovens através de sua poesia e observação participante. Além dos estudos de caso, entrevistas complementares foram conduzidas com informantes-chave sendo um deles o coordenador do grupo de controle externo da atividade policial e o outro é o ex-coordenador de comunicação para o Fórum da Comunidade contra a

Violência em Salvador.

No processo de produção/interpretação dos dados foram consideradas as seguintes categorias de análise (integrando categorias êmicas que emergiram das entrevistas dos sujeitos e observação em campo): masculinidade negra, identidade racial, violência, violência policial e racial, a discriminação especial e classe e impunidade da polícia, a arte como uma ferramenta de capacitação e políticas públicas.

Os resultados obtidos no estudo foram organizados e discutidos sob forma de artigo, anexo a esta apresentação intitulado: *Police Violence and Black Masculinity: A Threat to Identity and Art as a Strategy to Empowerment*.

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Abstract

Police violence against Black Bodies, is nothing new, in fact it is tied to historical processes of the production of Blackness through violence. Yet we find ourselves in a critical historical moment in which murder by police is now more visible than ever before. Racial profiling and racial violence are functions of racism, which manifest differently in different contexts. The difficulty in addressing racism and racial violence in Brazil must be understood in the context of the ideology of the myth of racial democracy in which racism was stated to not exist. Now that Brazil is at a moment in which debates around affirmative action and racism are taking place, it is time to have an open conversation about police violence and the complex relationship between it and young Black men. This research is a proposal to unpack the complexities of this relationship. The objectives of this research consist of the following:

- Analyze the meanings and experiences involved in the relationship between police violence and Black masculinity
- Discuss the limits and contradictions of government programs and policies said to fight police violence
- Analyze the potential of art as a tool for empowerment for Black youth

The sources of the data come from case studies and narrative interviews, with an addition of semi-structured interviews by key experts. The discussion brings up the social construction of Black masculinity and its great role in the relationship between police violence and Black youth. In order to understand the relationship between State violence and young Black men, we must understand the constraints on identity making inflicted upon Black men. In addition, ways in which art provides for rewriting identity processes that lead to hope, healing and liberation. The results suggest that the very construction of Black masculinity, works to confine Black men to limited ideas of identity that are self-harming and sustain collective ideas that justify the murder of Black men by the State. A critical understanding of all the ways this social construction is perpetuated must be had. Most importantly, we must listen to the voices and stories of Black men in order to understand this complex relationship. Reinforcing the importance of art and culture in the identity making process for young Black men to self-identify in ways outside of dominant white supremacist culture.

Key words: Racism, Black Masculinity, Violence

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1 Introduction

“Until the killing of black men, black mothers' sons, becomes as important to the rest of the country as the killing of a white mother's son, we who believe in freedom cannot rest until this happens.” (Ella Baker)

As the visibility of murder of young Black men by the State continues to rise like levels of Co2 in the air, we are faced with a decision—understand the complexity of this deeply painful reality or continue to ignore it. Yet, 2016 may not allow us to continue to ignore these atrocities, with the international mobilization around the Movement for Black Lives. Collectives such as Black Lives Matter in the US and REAJA ou Será Morto in Brazil, fruits of the long fight of resistance, have been mobilizing, denouncing and demanding justice be served. Although different in nature and in their respective actions, the two groups represent the culminating moment in recognizing the racial violence that continues to exist today. The trajectory of this fight is recognition of personhood, Black people around the world since slavery, have been demanding to be seen as human beings deserving of justice and equity. Police violence in the 21st century has been the clarion call, which has galvanized this moment in time, addressing the hundred years' demand for accountability of police authority who continue to murder unarmed Black Bodies. Further, what this State violence against Black Bodies' means in the production of Blackness.

We, in the *Black diaspora*, wherever we are in the world, share in this collective memory of pain; the pain, the anger, of losing a beloved friend, community or family member to State violence. This is the chilling truth. This pain and grief, lives and seethes in our bodies long after the breaths of sacrifice are no more. How often are we allowed to look deeper, into understanding the elements of this relationship – the State, murder and Black men?

This article is the product of my master's research, in which I sought to understand in greater depth the relationship between police violence and Black youth in Salvador. I was drawn to do this work in Salvador when I first came to Brazil in 2011 as an undergraduate exchange student with UC Berkeley. The similarities between Oakland, California, my home, and Salvador Bahia, in relation to the issues facing the Black community were/are striking. Racism manifests differently in different contexts, yet the symptoms evidence in eerily parallel ways how poverty is constructed, how it concentrates drug use, prostitution, unemployment, precarious housing and police violence. As a Black American woman, of mixed heritage navigating these deeply personal issues and building relationships with the

subjects in my research in Salvador, has been revealing. These issues have pushed me to face my privilege as an American and to understand the complex ways that racism and poverty manifest in the Brazilian context. I would like to take this opportunity to address the limits of this research. First, all *intersectional research* is complex and limited, the range of analysis understands how various forms of oppression intersect, as well as how uniquely different is, every context. Further, I would like to highlight that the basis for understanding the concept of *Black masculinity* used in this research is from North American scholars, and although it gives us a base to work from, I would argue that the way masculinity manifests in Latin America is very different from that of North America. Patriarchy, the role of the Catholic Church and machismo hold a different weight in the Latin American context. Much more research and scholarship is needed to understand the way gender (masculinity) and race intersect in Brazil. In addition, I must say that the focus of this research on police violence and *Black masculinity* does not diminish the fact that Black women are killed daily by the State, and must be recognized and addressed with equal importance of young Black men killed by the State, we must always #sayhername¹.

As (north) Americans, I think it is hard to conceptualize abstractly, without seeing it, the poverty of a *favela* or *periferic* (peripheral both geographically and socially speaking) community. Unpaved roads, open sewage drains, rigged electricity, limited access to clean water, homes built one on top of the other. Yet, or perhaps because of these circumstances of strategic impoverishment, these communities have flourished as innovative and creative spaces.

The *Mapa de Violencia 2015* shows us that on the international stage Brazil has a rate of 21.9 homicides by firearms for 100 people, placing the Country at number 11 out of the 90 countries analyzed. In looking at the rates of homicide within Brasil, broken down by region and race, in 2012 in the North of Brazil 385 white youth were killed by firearm compared to a 3,444 Black youth killed the same year (Waiselfisz, 2014). In the northeast region of Brazil, where Salvador Bahia is located, in 2012 1,215 white youth were killed by firearm compared to a 13,647 Black youth. In the Southeast, the number of white youth killed by firearm was 4,346 while the number of Black youth killed was 7,824. These numbers allow us to conceptualize the weight of the racialized violence happening in Brazil. This gravity of violence has not always been so profound, yet the racialization of it is nothing new.

The *Mapa de Violência* permits visibility to these racialized murders, which to many

¹ The #sayhername campaign was launched by Kimberlee Crenshaw and the African American policy Forum in order to call increasing attention to the police violence against Black Women. <http://www.aapf.org/sayhername/>

people would not exist without the statistical science to prove that they are real, and the process in which the fight to bring visibility to these murders is one of length and fortitude. During Slavery, there were countless uprisings and revolts, *Quilombo* communities were created far from the white supremacist slave masters control. Thus with the abolition of Slavery (1888) and the implantation of public policies based in scientific racism and programs of *branceamento* inviting and paying for white European Immigrants to come to the country, the anti-racist movement organized in new ways. With early leaders like Vicente Ferreira, José Correia Leite, Arlindo Veiga dos Santos, in what Petronio Dominguez calls the first phase of the *Black Movement* in the Republic era (1888-1937), emerged various distinct organizations; clubs, associations, civic centers, drama groups, newspapers, political entities, social and cultural activities and more. All making up the anti-racist black power movement in Brazil. (Dominguez, 2007). In Sao Paulo, the oldest Black Association was the Clube 28 de Setembro (Club 28th of September), at this time the club was similar to a union made up of Black workers and offered different kinds of assistance and cultural activities. Dominguez speaks to the *Black Movement* in Brazil in three phases; First phase of the *Black Movement* organized in the Republic 1889-1937 during the First Republic to the New State, the Second phase from 1945-1964 from the Second Republic to the military Dictatorship, and the third phase from 1978-2000, the beginning of the process of re-democratization. During the first phase of the *Black Movement* along with various cultural associations across the country, the Black press was born giving rise to Black newspapers, creating an alternative media source to discuss issues facing the Black community, such as racial violence. By 1930, there were at least 30 Black newspapers in the State of Sao Paulo alone (Dominguez, 2007). It was in 1932 that the *Black Movement* in Brazil made a substantial leap and created the Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB) The Black Brazilian Front. The FNB was the first Black Organization with specific political demands, with delegates in over seven States. During the military dictatorship, the conversation around racism and Black rights in the fight was violently repressed; this time in Brasil can be characterized by strong political repression thus this phase of the movement did not have the same power as earlier years. However the *União de Homens de Cor (Union of men of color)* founded by Joao Cabral Alves in Porte Alegre in January 1943, was one of the two main organizing *Black Movement* activists groups at that time, and they were extremely organized throughout the country even with the Dictatorship going on (Dominguez, 2007). From the 40's to the 70's organizing and actions continued to grow and in 1978 the MNU (*Movimento Negro Unificado*) did a public act in Sao Paulo denouncing the violence suffered by the Black population, specifically addressing the torture

and murder of a Black man by the military police (Rodnei Jerico da Silva, 2009).

The murder of a Black worker by Military Police in São Paulo and the racial discrimination of Black Athletes in a club also in Sao Paulo brought again to the forefront a process that had been going on for years, a political intervention of Black Brazilians since the Frente Negra Brasileira (Black Brazilian Front) had been extinct. Through this public action in 1978 the *Movimento Negro Unificado* poised the racial problem to the Brazilian society. Situating racism as the structural aspect of domination connected to Capitalism, and used to maintain unequal social and racial groups. The actions of the MNU had a ripple effect in the organization of Black entities on a National level. Amplifying Black consciousness and demystifying the myth of racial democracy as well as incorporating Black issues in political parties of the government and winning institutional spaces and elaborating public policies (Rodnei Jerico da Silva, 2009).

Blacks are particularly vulnerable to lethal violence today; in fact, the Black movement in Brazil has been denouncing this crime for decades. It is in this context that the young men in this article grew into the artist activists that they are today working with local and national organizations in organizing their communities through the arts against racial violence.

Salvador, one of the oldest settlements in Latin America is rich in colonial history. The original capital of Brazil, where the Portuguese crown came to settle, was greatly revered at the time; however, Salvador is now very much a backwater of Brazil. Forgotten by the rest of the country in terms of economic investment, stigmatized by other Brazilian States whose residents, although love to vacation in Salvador, have only negative things to say about the people. The local politics of poverty and displacement reflect that of the country. Spatial reproduction of capitalist logic has geographically separated the rich from the poor, as we see in capital driven cities across the globe (Soares, 2006).

In the 1950's Salvador went through a dynamic process of urban growth. Improvement to transportation and the arrival of certain industries like that of *Petrobras* and *CHEFS* situated Salvador as the Northeast reference in the movement of modern industrialization. In the 1970's the city went through another huge social and economic change. Salvador experienced great population growth and the city literally moved the business and economic center from the area next to the port known as "comércio" and the historic district to Iguatemi, further from the water, geographically speaking. This shift in the location of commerce coupled with the new booming industry and the need for qualified professionals gave birth to a new class, a middle class who located themselves along the *orla*

(water). This gentrification process of new business and call for new professionals (from Salvador, also from Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo) invested in a specific part of the city along the water along the bay, pushing poor and low-income peoples from the cities center. Great amounts of money were being invested in areas where people already had money, meanwhile the popular areas of Salvador grew rapidly without any technical support, housing, or economic investment (Soares, 2006). It is in this context that we are able to see the inextricable nature of racism as an economic system.

Charles Mills (The Racial Contract) gives us the opportunity to understand the complexities of racism. *Racism* is the most important political-economic system in the history of domination systems (Mills, 1997) and, for hundreds of years, has been used to control the bodies of Black people. Exerting an oppressive subordination, without doubt, the State uses racism to control and subjugate for the sake of economy and politics. Mills uses the notion of the "contract", as we are familiar with the "social contract" to designate the agreements of the said and the unsaid, by which we operate in society. Thus, the racial contract allows us to understand the origins of society and the State, the ways in which governments operate, the way society is structured and how the moral psychology of people is informed by racism (Mills, 1997).

The *racial contract* eventually leads us to understand the world from a perspective of economic, political and cultural domination, engendered by Europeans. We can thus conclude that racism is not embedded in our systems, but sustains them at all times. We can see obvious traces of white European in our education systems (reflected in how and what we learn), in health care systems (in who has access to services), political (about who holds power) and judicial (in terms of who is criminalized and imprisoned). It is in this context that the objectives of this research consist of the following:

- Analyze the meanings and experiences involved in the relationship between police violence and black masculinity
- Analyze the potential of art as a tool for empowerment for Black youth
- Discuss the limits and contradictions of government programs and policies said to fight police violence

The key concepts utilized in this research were *intersectionality*, racism, Black masculinity/identity and State violence. The theory of *intersectionality* seeks to define the intersectional nature of oppression, and how the different forms of discrimination and power structures inter-relate (Crenshaw, 2002). *Intersectionality* allows us to understand the fact that it is not possible to separate social constructs of race, gender, social class or any other form of

discrimination involving inequalities (Crenshaw, 2002).

The concept of *intersectionality* emerged in the United States in the 60s and 70s, from the Black feminist movement, because the Black feminist movement in the United States is part of a transcultural and transnational project that aims to dismantle various social inequalities (Collins, 2015).

The main idea of *intersectionality* is that the intersection of oppressions - race and gender, class etc. – create a *matrix of domination*. This domination matrix determines the overall organization of power in society. As any matrix, it is composed of two main features. First, a specific provision of systems of oppression intersect, to understand the way these systems are organized and the effects we must consider specific historical and social contexts. The second aspect concerns the fact that these systems of oppression are organized in four interrelated areas of power: structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal (Collins, 2015).

The structural aspect of the domain establishes structural parameters and is responsible for organizing the power relations, consisting of social structures, such as law, politics, religion and economy. According to Collins, the structural domain determines, generally, the organization of power within the rule array, thus the structural domain has a slow rate of change. The disciplinary domain is the domain that manages oppression. This is done through bureaucratic organizations whose function is to control and organize the bodies and behaviors of individuals. The hegemonic domain legitimizes oppression; this is the cultural sphere of influence, which articulates the ideology and consciousness. The hegemonic domain operates to establish connections between the structure, discipline, and interpersonal domains. The interpersonal domain consists of the personal relationships we have and because of that, this domain influences the daily lives more directly.

Patricia Hill Collins (2015) discusses the difficulty in defining *intersectionality* and describes it as a knowledge project whose reason for existing lies in its concentration in power relations and social inequalities. Collins offers racial formation theory in addressing intersectionalities definitional dilemma. *Racial formation theory* conceptualizes race as situated within the relationship between social structures and cultural representations, not conflating discourse about race or the racial meanings and the power relations they come from (Collins, 2015). *Racial formation theory* understands the historical processes and constant changing of race formation as being context specific. How these racial formations create specific patterns of racial inequality linked to specific racialized populations and the social problems that occur (Collins, 2015). *Racial formation theory* offers an analysis of racial

projects to the concept of *intersectionality*: an analysis which retains the agency of an individual or collective providing intellectual or political space for subordinate groups. The underlying base of *racial formation theory* is that it connects specific knowledge projects (racial projects) to historical constructed power relations (race formation). Thus can be used to analyze various kinds of knowledge projects; patriarchy, capitalism and their specific knowledge projects. Collins argues that many scholar activist whom entered the academy in the 1980's and 1990's have faced the challenge of having their work interpreted and translated within academia very differently then their original boundaries. Collins continues in showing how many stories of the emergence of *intersectionality* have given naming rights to Kimberlee Crenshaw, when in fact Women's studies assumed an important leadership role and scholars like Lyn Webber were early leaders in discussing race/class and gender. "Crenshaw herself has taken issue with this rendition of her own work, claiming that it is returned to her in forms that are often unrecognizable" (Collins, 2015).

Bell Hooks speaks to the "real truth" about the construction of *Black masculinity* and Black males, that is that we live in a culture that does not love our Black men. They are either feared, envied or hated, but not loved. Hooks goes further in adding that if Black men are not loved by white men, white women, Black women, boys and girls – how can they love themselves? Hills speaks to the *intersectionality* of *Black masculinity* in describing how Patriarchy is a culture that greatly restricts and confines all males, but when you add race and class Black males bear the worst impositions. Bell argues that the greatest genocidal threat to Black males is patriarchal masculinity (Hooks, 2004).

Dr. Joy Degruy breaks down the intergenerational effects slavery has had on Black people as a whole. Degruy deconstructs the medias contribution to our (Black Peoples) self-image. How the media acts as a lens in which people see themselves as well as how we view others. Thus when Black men are portrayed as violent, out of control criminals by mass media this has serious effects on what they believe themselves to be (Leary, 2005). Leary speaks to how young black men 'fulfill the stereotype' of what white people and others have been taught to believe about them. Leary argues that one of the ways in which *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* is reflected today is seen in this fulfilment of stereotypical behaviors. Acting out self-denigrating behaviors, exploiting one another. This stems from lack of self-esteem and believing that one has little worth, which is continually reinforced through mass media, education systems, the justice system etc. The ways in which young Black men try to deal with low self-esteem through "neutralizing" their pain with strategies, turn weakness into control. In the face of lack of respect, fear is used to express power. Inspiring fear, fulfilling

this stereotypical role, is a way of turning powerlessness into powerful (Leary, 2005). Playing into this idea of the dangerous Black man, and arousing intimidation and confrontation is a source of power where they may be none. The underlying behavior here is that if young Black men feel they cannot inspire positive qualities like love and respect, they feel at least they can inspire something (Leary, 2005). Inevitably hurting themselves, as it continues to reinforce this stereotype of the construction of the violent Black male.

According to Munanga (2000), the biggest problem caused by humanity is not the concept of race, but lies in the classification used by the scientific authorities to maintain a hierarchy of a certain race, or, to be more exact, it is a rating based on a scale of values: the upper to the lower. This scale has created an intrinsic relationship between the body, the features of the face, skin color, hair type, intellectuality, culture, moral and ethical, this scale permits these values to be inherited by individuals within a given society.

This same scale classifies white people or the white race as superior, therefore more intelligent, creative and attractive, while this kind of positioning is supported in society from the concept of white supremacy (Munanga, 2000). Racism and white supremacy work together to create and maintain an oppressive system of social relations, justified by ideologies and efforts which simultaneously maintain the privilege (in many cases unnoticed by whites who benefit from it), and the oppression of non-white and black peoples (because the darker the skin color, the more oppressive the system will) occupy the opposite end of the scale (Gee, 2002).

The issue of violence in Brazil has been greatly debated over the last ten years, mobilizing actors from all sectors: philosophers, economists, educators, judges etc. (Leal, 2001). The articulation of the concept of violence is recondite and diverse. The various forms of violence, their justifications and relations to other concepts, such as power and domination (Minayo, 1994).

Hannah Arendt (Leal, 2001) defines violence as a tool, not as an end, or rather, says that violence is used as a tool for more purposes than its potential. According to Arendt, violence is the language that characterizes power relations (Leal, 2001). Direct violent action by the hands of the State is the defining characteristic in understanding the culture of public security in Brazil. The Brazilian police kill on an average six people a day. In 1978, the *Movimento Negro Unificado* declared *State violence* as the number one threat to Black people in Brazil (Smith, 2016). This *State violence* against Black bodies represents a historic and present reality. In 2014 police, killings went up 40 percent to more than 3000 (Smith, 2016). *State violence* in Brazil is demonstrative of a racialized and gendered violence, Black bodies

and specifically Black male bodies are put on display as sacrificial beings in order to demonstrate power and control.

In order to operate the analysis for this research, I categorize police violence with two manifestations of social violence. The first concerns *structural violence*, giving us the opportunity to understand more fully the extent of the effects of such violence in the social sphere. The second type of violence that I will seek to understand is political, despite being very strongly linked to structural violence. Political violence “acts like a brute physical force, causing disruptions in everyday life [...] observed in terms of strategies and goals, violence appears as a tool to search for power” (Skurski, 2004).

Structural violence “requires that classes, groups and nations are economically and politically dominant in relation to other groups, to maintain a privileged position for some, through laws and institutions, as if this condition were natural” (Minayo, 1994). One of the most common acts of structural violence are erasures in History (Farmer, 2004).

Suppressions and distortions in historical discourse are part of the socialization process necessary to the interests of hegemonic forces imposing historical facts and the reasons for their events. The justification of murder by police is maintained through this legal basis. When friends and family of the victims seeking to sue or try to prove that a police officer committed murder, there is little or no access to information from police. Moreover, the lack of media monitoring on police killings is another example of how structural violence works to obscure or neglect that which occurs in black communities, most notably those affected by police violence.

It is through this process that structural violence is used to regulate the power of the people through a biased education for reinforcing inequalities and the legitimacy of the social structure that has been in place throughout history. Imbalances of power can be legitimized only through the distortion of facts and meanings of history. If the manipulation of a chain of events is interesting to inequalities, so the power of speech to sell the eyes of certain groups, thus limiting their powers. *Structural violence* did not occur only in historical processes, but also participates actively in daily life.

2 Methods

Two case studies were conducted for this research project, through narrative interviews, semi-structured interviews, products of cultural production (poetry) and participant observation. A case study is an in depth study of a specific situation versus a sweeping statistical survey study (Yin, 1989). It is a method deigned to narrow down a broad field of research into an easily researchable topic. Some argue that a case study can be too narrow and thus only show a narrow example of a big issue. However, psychologists, anthropologists and social scientist have regarded case studies as a valid research method for many years. In addition to the case studies, complementary interviews were conducted with key informants, one being the coordinator of the External Control group for police activity² and the other being the former coordinator of communication for the Community Forum against Violence in Salvador.

For the analyses “*emic*” categories were considered which emerged from the interviews of the subjects, they are the following; Black masculinity, racial identity, violence, police and racial violence, special and class discrimination and police impunity, art as a tool of empowerment and public policies.

The cases studied in my research were that of Marcos Paulo (30 years old) from Cajazeiras and Sandro Sussuarana (28 years old) from old Sussuarana³. Each of them are a part of youth organizations which work with activism and consciousness raising through art. Marcos Paulo, born and raised in Cajazeiras lives with his mother, recently finished his undergraduate studies at the Federal University in psychology and is an educator giving classes on the ENEM (similar to the SAT) and classes around identity and empowerment. Sandro Sussuarana lives by himself in old Sussuarana where he lived with his mother until she passed 3 years ago. He has been working as a poet and recently returned to school for social work at a private University in Salvador.

Sandro Sussuarana is one of the co-creators of the “Sarau da Onça”, an open mic poetry event and critical consciousness space to mobilize youth that takes place in the neighborhood of Sussuarana. The ‘Sarau da Onça’ grew out of organizing that was happening in Sussuarana by Pastor Afro, a local pastor in the community. Pastor Afro organized a four-year training program to form community leaders. He identified youth who were active in the

² The name of this informant has been changed in order to maintain her privacy, the other informant has authorized the use of her real name

³ Both Marcos Paulo and Sandro Sussuarana authorized the use of their real names for this article

community some were involved in hip hop, others capoeira, poetry and theater, and created “Juventude Negra pela Paz” (Black youth for Peace). “Juventude Negra Pela paz” was a four year program with lectures, study groups and debates all focused on the neighborhood and youth leadership. In 2008 the group finished and Sandro and his colleagues began leading social actions in the neighborhood (Sandro Sussuarana, personal communication, June 16, 2016).

The constitution of Pastoral Afro grew out of the transformative trajectory of both society and the Catholic Church. This began when the Catholic Church in Brazil presented *A Missa dos Quilombos (The Mass of the Quilombos)*, created by Dom Helder Camara, written, and produced by Dom Pedro Casadalgia. Dom Pedro Casadalgia, a Catholic Bishop from Spain who settled in Brasil in 1968. Dom Pedro practiced liberation theory and was the target of expulsion by the military dictatorship five times. The objective of the Mass of the *Quilombos*, stated by Dom Pedro Casadalgia, was a Mass held to take responsibility before God and the Church, apologize, and repent to Black peoples for the atrocities of Slavery and the guilt of Christ in this process. In 1982, the year after the first Mass of the *Quilombos*, Eduardo Hoenart wrote an article about it in the magazine *Tempo e Presença*, that the Mass of the *Quilombos* is not only about commemorating the past, but above all is about recognizing the present. That *Quilombo* in Brazil is not the past but the current. All popular Black neighborhoods are *quilombos*, where Black Brazilians call home, feel safe, can build and rebuild themselves walk in the middle of the street (Santos, 2006).

The Mass had Afro Brazilian dance and culture in it, as it was a dedication to Black peoples. However, this was greatly criticized within and outside of the Church as it was far from the basic Catholic Mass. In fact these critiques were sent back to Rome and not long after the Vatican sent an official letter to Brazil prohibiting the Mass for almost a decade.

The first Mass of the *Quilombos* was celebrated for an audience of seven thousand people on November 22 in 1981 in the square in front of the Igreja do Carmo in Recife Pernambuco. This location was emblematic because it was in that very location in 1695 that the head of Zumbi, the leader of the Quilombo dos Palmares, was exposed on top of a stake after being captured and murdered (Santos, 2006).

Pedro Tierra, a poet and professor wrote in 2006, that no Church, and no facet of the Catholic Church ever lived the experience that the Catholic Church in Brasil lived during the military dictatorship. The role of resistance against the repression and the reconstruction of popular movements has not been seen in the Catholic Church in any other Latin American Country.

The Mass of *Quilombos* began a movement awakening the Catholic Church to Black culture and since then the Church has seen great growth and participation of Black seminaries and Pastoral Agents (Senra, 2010).

The following year in 2009, Sandro began to frequent ‘Sarau bem Black’, the first *Sarau* in Salvador, which took place in the Pelourinho historic district and center of the city. Sandro soon became a presenter at Sarau bem Black, and wanted to bring the idea of the *sarau* to his neighborhood, Sussuarana. After several years of being invited to recite his poetry in different spaces throughout the city, Sandro, his friends Edinilson and Preta Mãe, also poet activist decided to start *Sarau da Onça* in 2011.

The idea behind “Sarau da Onça” was to bring visibility to the neighborhood, of something positive happening, because the adjectives formerly associated with Sussuarana were not that of positivity. Beyond bringing a better image to the neighborhood Sandro and his colleagues wanted to bring a critical consciousness to people who lived in Sussuarana, so that residents could begin to break down the complex issues that make Sussuarana what it is, and to bring a valorization by the residents to the neighborhood.

Sussuarana is a periphery neighborhood, far from the center of the city and commerce. Neglected by local government through corrosive structural processes, counterproductive social policies, through the strategic ways of concentrating poverty. Historically **Sussuarana** is a neighborhood situated in an area where once existed the “Mata Atlântica”, or dense forest that once was all of Salvador, and an abandoned plantation. Based on stories from the elders in Sussuarana, a plantation owner by the name of Jose Inocência went out to hunt and suddenly out of nowhere was face to face with a sussuarana panther that inhabited the region. Courageously, Jose killed the panther, brought it back to the community, and had a banquet for all the people to eat. From that day on he was known as Zé of the panther Sussuarana. The neighborhood ended up receiving this name “Sussuarana” in homage to the panther native to the forest that once existed.

Today the neighborhood is one of the biggest in the capital, with an intense market where you can find everything from grilled meat on a stick to household appliances. There is really no reason why one would leave the neighborhood to go find things in surrounding neighborhoods or even make the long trip to the center of the city. Today the neighborhood of Sussuarana is known for their cultural scene full of artistic activities.

The cultural mobilization of the neighborhood has been greatly accepted by the people who live there and in surrounding neighborhoods, and in fact has had an inverse effect in the nature of the neighborhood. Until recently, in order to watch a theater play, a dance

performance, a musical or hear poetry recited you had to dislocate from the neighborhood and go to the center of the city. Today the cultural scene produced by the youth of Sussuarana has removed this discomfort in having to travel away from the neighborhood to experience art and culture (Sussuarana, Sussuarana, 2016).

JACA (Juventude Ativista de Cajazeiras) came about in a response to the lack of resources and public services in Cajazeiras where Marcos Paulo grew up, and continues to live today. In 2005 Marcos and some friends were selected to participate in a course to build local youth leaders to lead social mobilization in their neighborhoods. Marcos was selected because Cajazeiras had been identified as one of the most violent neighborhoods in Latin America (Marco Paulo, personal communication, August 5, 2016). The course was focused on recognizing identity and valorization of the space in which you live, with the intention for these youth leaders to create cultural actions in their neighborhoods to help minimize the violence.

Soon after completing this course, together with the youth movement that was happening in Cajazeiras, JACA was formed with the intention to mobilize the neighborhood. The organization is horizontal instead of hierarchical in an attempt to deconstruct power relations that are normally common in top to bottom organizations. The hope was the horizontal structure would help facilitate communication between participants and thus implement the materialization of activities in the community (Marcos Paulo, personal communication August 5, 2016).

JACA conducts different kinds of activities related to social justice and youth empowerment in the community. They organized a recycling system in the community that has created a sustainable income for people who live there, they organize a march against the murder of Black youth within the community, they train youth in using different technologies, and they have a monthly open mic poetry event that is always based on a specific theme. It is through the “Sarau” (open mic) that they engage youth through art, the art of poetry, spoken word.

Cajazeiras, built as a government intervention to house 100,000 inhabitants is now at over 400 thousand inhabitants. Cajazeiras is one of the largest peripheral neighborhoods in Salvador, geographically situated hours away from the center of the city with poor transportation, lack of social and structural services. As of this year, 2016, Salvador inaugurated the Metro that had been a point of controversy for years, wondering if it was ever going to be finished. With a metro stop in Piraja, a nearby neighborhood of Cajazeiras, residents now have a little more access to the center of the city.

Yet popular areas like Cajazeiras have very little to no State presence (other than police), and demonstrate the strategic planning policies which concentrate poverty and people of color. “Due to the great lack of access we have in Cajazeiras in relation to public services and in respect to the dimension of human rights, JACA was born” (Marcos Paulo, personal communication, August 5, 2016).

3 Results and Discussion

3.1. Identity, Black Masculinity and the Black body

According to Hall, identity crisis is the greatest process in dislocating structures and processes central to society. This crisis occurs when something fixed and stable, something that we understand to be true is dislocated by an experience of question and uncertainty. Identity, according to Hall is formed through the interactions of the subject and society, the crisis or dislocation occurs through acts of violence by police against black bodies.

However, for scholars like Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy who have played a great role in the scholarship on identity, culture and ethnicity from a critical perspective. They continue to argue that Blackness is a cultural concept connected to place, in this case regional (Bahia) or national (Brazil). Yet this perspective makes Blackness and Black people mutually exclusive. This cultural concept of identity, fails to address race or ethnicity anchored to black bodies, or the lived black experience (Smith, 2006). Hall does however refer to the body when speaking to decentralizing the subject in modern society. He describes this displacement of the subject through a series of ruptures. Hall addresses this in referring to Foucault and the “power of discipline”, based on the idea that new institutions in late modernity have the goal of controlling individuals in the attempt to create human beings that can be treated as docile bodies (Hall, *A identidade cultural no pos modernidade*, 2006). This however is not specifically in reference to Black Bodies or the lived black experience.

W.E.B. Dubois in his classic work, *The Soul of Black folks*, presents his theory of the *Veil Metaphor* and *Double Consciousness*, both of which are based wholly on the lived Black experience. The concept of *Double Consciousness* or racial dualism is the idea that the lived Black experience consists of having a consciousness of self and a consciousness of that in which society views you (Dubois, 1903). This sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of the other, and measuring oneself by the amused contempt and pity of society afflicts and transfigures the Black soul. This infliction can be described as interjecting racism into the racially oppressed self (Dubois, 1903). Ralph Ellison writes in his classic novel, *Invisible Man*, of the invisibility of the lived Black experience. Ellison describes an identity of invisibility in a society in which he is not recognized as a human being, as even existing.

“I am an invisible man...I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, of fiber and liquids- and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am

invisible; understand, simply because people refuse to see me... when they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves or figments of their imagination – indeed anything and everything but me”. (Ellison, 1952)

Ellison’s concept of (in) visibility was very apparent in speaking with both Marcos and Sandro. The fact that white Brazilians purely see young black men as “favelados”⁴, associating where one lives with their character, letting their imaginations run wild with horror stories sold by the violence pumped through mass media. The very idea behind creating Sarau da Onça, Sandro states, was to give visibility to the positive aspects of Sussuarana. To show people both inside and outside of the community that beyond all the sensationalized cop and robber shows that show on TV in Salvador from noon to six in the evening, there are a lot of positive and uplifting programs, activities and events working to change the face of the neighborhood and those who live there.

In order to understand the production of Blackness through *State violence* against Black Bodies, it is necessary to deconstruct the very construction of *Black masculinity*, its production, its script, its performance. “When people don’t like the way you’re quote, unquote, performing, they will manipulate it to their benefit” (School, 2015). Historically, Black people have been seen as animals, as bodies used for labor and specifically Black men for their brute force (Collins, 2006). This emphasis on the Black Body, this brute force attributed to the black male was always constructed as uncontrollable, with a lack of constraint and little to no intellectual abilities. The construction of this combination of attributes has always placed the Black man as a threat. A threat to society, fostering deviant behaviors, promiscuity and violence (Collins, 2006).

This construction of the violent threat to society that must be tamed, if not acting according to the provided script is the very premise behind racial profiling by police. When asked, in their interviews, about the genocide of Black youth in Brazil, both Tania Cordeiro of the Forum against Violence, and Isabel Adelaide of GACEP, responded in the long historical process of the construction of Black masculinity and its role in this genocide. “The situation of Black youth is one of a charge. He is charged the entire time with proving that he is a saint. For example, yes I’m Black, but I don’t do drugs, I don’t steal, I don’t do this I don’t do that, he is so heavily stigmatized” (Tania Cordeiro, personal communication June 6, 2016). These layers of stigma are so tightly ascribed to Blackness through repeated experiences of violence,

⁴ Favelado is a discriminatory term used to describe someone who lives in a favela or slum community lacking in basic services and resources

through mainstream media outlets who heavily invest in the production of Black violence, through the historical context we see the non-arbitrary ways in which race is attributed to the body (Smith, 2006). Race, like any social construction must be situated within a context.

The construction of *Black masculinity*, as described by Abby Ferber is the historical process concerned with taming and controlling black bodies. The constant and continued emphasis that Black bodies are inherently violent, hypersexual and aggressive. The construction of *Black masculinity* is intrinsically tied to white supremacy and white male superiority. Black males have been constructed into roles of serving or entertaining white people, or as a threat, criminal or rapist. *Black Masculinity* must be understood as the intersection of race and gender as gender is constructed through race, and race is constructed through gender (Ferber, 2007). The construction of *Black Masculinity* has objectified the Black male body and allowed for white imagination to limit Black men to their physical bodies.

Patricia Hill Collins (2015) also describes the construction of *Black Masculinity* as the long time process of depicting Black men as their bodies of brute strength. The combination, of the idea of the physicality and lack of the intellectuality has construction Black males as predisposed to being violent. Black males have been consigned to the work of their bodies in order to keep them poor and powerless. Yet this obsession with the Black male body as being strong and aggressive generates admiration, when controlled, we see this in the sports world. However, across the spectrum of fear and admiration, the focus is always the body (Collins, 2006).

The discussion of State violence against Black Bodies or *Black masculinity* have been challenging in Brazil, due to Brazil's contentious relationship to racial categorization and identity. The *myth of racial democracy* produced and sold the idea that Brazil was a land of a rainbow of colors, a mixed race nation who all lived in harmony with one another. Scholars from within and outside of Brazil have argued that racism does not exist here, while the classification of who is Black and who is white continues to cause tension (Smith, 2006).

Although the conversation has opened up and policies like affirmative action have been in debate, many Brazilians continue to hold tight to the idea of a racial democracy. Adelaide adds that this construction of Black masculinity sold through sensational television shows and government policies is coupled by the lack of understanding and information about the history of Blacks in Brazil.

“We don't know our history, we don't know our history in relation to how

Blacks were kidnapped from their homes and brought here as an exploited workforce. This history, our African-ness was never taught in schools, was never talked about. We have no understanding of this. What we have always been told is that the Black man is an uncouth element, who we did a favor to in bringing to civilization” (Maria Jose, personal communication, July 20, 2016).

Rooted in a historic process, negative stereotypes of Black masculinity continue to over determine the identity Black males are allowed to ascribe to (Hooks, 2004).

Man, I look at *Racionais* MC (Brazilian rap group) they said some things to me – that I think are true- black drama – you know. I think to be a black man in Brazilian society is to live and feel black drama. It’s knowing that you are a descendent of the enslaved. That public policies are against you, that the system is against you, and that you are a potential criminal. And that you are demonic, and everything related to that, sexual profanity and basically all of these racist bigoted views built against you, that you have to at all times deconstruct for people to really see you. (Marcos Paulo Cajazeiras)

This Black drama Marcos speaks to having to live with expresses the intersectional nature of being a Black man at the intersection of race, class and gender. In patriarchal culture, all men are taught to be in roles that restrict and confine (Hooks, 2004). When race and class combine, black men are in the worst impositions of an engendered masculine patriarchal identity. In understanding the construction of *Black masculinity*, we must understand it in its context of patriarchy, a masculine patriarchy that is tied to white supremacy.

Marcos shared with me a poem he was inspired to write after teaching a course on sexuality, drugs and HIV to young Black men in various favela communities in Salvador. The course he taught pushed young Black men to reflect on the relationship between drugs and how they relate to our identities specifically to masculinity. He shared with me how surprised he was at all the stories he heard from the young men about violence, humiliation, respect, waste, of young Black men who risk everything to maintain a certain image of masculinity.

Teaching this course and hearing all the stories of young Black men working to maintain an image that is in fact hurting them, pushed him to reflect on his own masculinity and as a poet, he felt compelled to write. In turn, he has since shared this poem with many other young Black men and each time is moved by how much they identify with the poem at

how it has encouraged other men to reflect on their own masculinity. The poem is about how men move through the world thinking they are a penis who can penetrate whom and where they want, when they want:

Ode ao Machismo

*Eu sou um pau
 Um homem mole e fraco
 Escondido por trás da calça jeans
 Eu não sou sentimental, comer bocetas é a minha sina
 Um tipo que se pretende conquistador
 Eu sou um pau, cu que é meu vizinho
 Mantenho-o protegido
 Com medo de outro pau
 Eu sou um pau coco orgulhoso meus colhões moles e fracos
 Eu meu sinto aço
 Eu sou um pau, Eu sou um pau
 O exército sabe bem disso
 Aos 18 anos me alisto porque eu sou um pau
 Eu sou um pau e meu tamanho sempre importa
 Não posso falhar naquela hora
 Porque eu, eu sou um pau
 Paus não pedem socorro
 Paus não falham ou brocham
 Paus não são sensíveis
 Paus são incríveis
 Eu sou um Pau
 Eu sou um Pau
 E vivo incentivando outros paus a serem iguaizinhos a mim
 Nesta sociedade falocêntrica
 Ser pau é o que alimenta meu papel de dominador machista
 Eu tô na pista, no meio
 O mundo inteiro tem que se abrir pra mim
 Pois um pau deseja entrar
 Eu sou um pau
 Um legítimo comedor
 Ainda que me falte o sabor da boceta que eu comi
 Eu vivo aqui me arrogando de ter comido todas
 Ignorando que o prazer é compartilhado
 Eu sou mesmo é um otário
 Quando penso que fui eu quem comi
 Eu sou um pau vivo oprimindo as mulheres
 O respeito que elas me pedem não posso dar porque eu
 Eu sou um pau
 Eu sou um pau
 E você é homem?
 Fechado na ideia de masculino
 Adestrado desde menino a ser um pau*

Eu sou um pau
Eu sou menos que um animal
Eu sou um pau
Eu não sou palhaço
Eu não tenho graça
Eu sou mesmo é uma desgraça
E isto tem tudo a ver com o fato de eu ser um pau
Ser um pau é ser um homem?
Fato que me consome
Neurose permanente
Esta ideia que a gente sustenta de homem
Me valeria muito mais ser humano livre
Longe dessa idiotice de tentar ser um pau
Que persegue um ideal de homem
Isso faz mal
São homens paus que vão para debaixo da terra
Não podem nem mesmo se lamentar de terem vivido feito um pau
Me jogue na fogueira
Eu sou um pau enalteço meu lado animal
Meu instinto natural
Homo sapiens de Neandertal
Eu sou um pau
Eu sou a flecha na brecha
O sangue que espirra dessa merda de sociedade machista
Eu sou o top, o bom, o filho do homem nascido num berço patriarcal
E fascista
Lidero o topo das estatísticas
Ode ao homem machista
Que morre mais por armas de fogo
Que provoca mais acidentes de trânsito
Que mais abusa no uso de drogas
Que comete mais suicídio
Que morre de doenças por ir menos ao médico
Que arrisca sua vida por nada
Que luta para manter esta imagem sagrada de homens
Que não são homens, são paus
Você não é homem, não, véi?
Você não é homem, não, cara?
Você não é homem, não, man?
Você não é homem, não, brother?
Não!
Voce é um Pau

This poem by Marcos is a social critique of *patriarchal masculinity*, of machismo, and the way men fight to uphold this notion of power driven by violence. Speaking to the ways in which we live in a phallic-centric society, where everything revolves around a man's penis. Marcos literally describes men as moving through the world as though they are a penis. How this fight to uphold a *patriarchal masculinity* in fact hurts men. That due to *patriarchal*

masculinity men are the highest to be killed by gun violence that it is men whom cause the most car accidents, that it is men who commit suicide at the higher rates that men abuse drugs at higher rates and that men die younger because they go to the doctor less.

Bell Hooks (2004) reminds us of the masculinity of African men before slavery. Telling us of the Africans who traveled to North America before Columbus, and the fact that they did not strive to dominate the indigenous peoples living there, shows us how their understanding of masculinity was not based in the idea to colonize and dominate those who did not look like them. It was not until the gender politics of slavery that Black (African) men were taught that their power must lie in the dominance of women and children. With the end of slavery, autobiographies from freed formally enslaved Black men show us the struggle it was to engender this new patriarchy in which violence was used to establish patriarchal power and dominate women (Hooks, 2004). There were those who fought against this `new world` patriarchal masculinity; however, a large majority took on the dominator model of the white master.

In my interview with Marcos Paulo, president of JACA, he speaks to this constant “jogo” (game), between the script of Black masculinity ascribed to him and his true self as a Black man in Salvador Bahia. When asked who his masculine references were growing up he said he had none. He said this in fact was a point of great contention for him, as he understands masculinity to be an ideology of the industry of culture (Marcos Paulo, personal communication, August 15, 2016), a fight to persevere a rigid violent masculinity that he does not identify with.

“As a heterosexual male I have limits and restrictions on the way I have been constructed to think, but I consider myself more feminine, more open to different understandings of masculinity than heterosexuals, you know” (Marcos Paulo, personal communication, August 15, 2016).

The only references of masculinity Marcos could remember were that of stereotypes of masculine experiences shown through the media. The film, *Fight Club 1999*, came to mind for him in reflecting on how the media sold him an image of a machista masculinity, in which you had to be tough and lack feelings of sympathy. He remembers that many of his friends wanted to start their own fight club after seeing this film.

“But I was never that guy you know, I was not Brad Pitt, I was never Edward Norton, I'm Marcos Paulo, I never even had the weight to take a punch, I prefer not to scratch my skin (he laughed) I'd rather not get involved in that dimension” (Marcos Paulo, personal communication,

August 15, 2016).

However, although Marcos in many ways has freed himself from the violent construction of masculinity, it is a constant struggle to fight the constructs placed upon him. This racialized, engendered *patriarchal masculinity* imprisons Black males who frequently exist in a prison of the mind unable to find their way (Hooks, 2004).

In my interview with Sandro Sussuarana, when asked what it means to be a Black man in society in Salvador, he speaks to this very prison. Sandro explains the “complicated and scary” existence of being a black man in Salvador. As years pass you are able to see how you have managed to overcome some of the difficulties placed in front of you, you recognize that you are still alive. While at the same time you feel relieved to still be alive, you know you can be killed at any moment. This gives him the feeling of being a prisoner in his own body.

“You live in an imprisoned freedom, because we are not free, you know. We are not free to do things we like to do, we are not free to go wherever we want to go. We can only do the things that we are conditioned and permitted to do, we are not free” (Sandro Sussuarana, personal communication, July 12, 2016).

He continues in adding that freedom does not exist in its essence, that freedom is conditional. Sandro speaks to the lack of freedom to move through different spaces in the city in his Black Body. Only permitted to enter certain spaces, and even less spaces because he is from the periphery of the city. At all times in all spaces he must consider if he is allowed to be in and move in that space, whether it’s the area of education, health, or leisure. The overwhelming feeling of living with this and seeing others around you living with this weight, and understanding how it directly influences the daily decisions you make and how this affects the course your life will take (Sandro Sussuarana, personal communication, July 12, 2016).

The body is the material representation of who we are, according to Foucault, the body is the place where we have been condemned to live. The body is the place in which we differentiate from or identify with others. What matters in regards to the differences, are the systems we use to make sense of them, the way we are organized through these differences (Hall, *Policing the Crisis*, 2013). The restrictions of freedom Sandro speaks to, in moving through the city in his Black Body are maintained through police violence against Black Bodies, delineating the spaces in which we are able to move. Sometimes conscious sometimes

unconscious these restrictions are stored in the body and understood as “Blackness” by the rest of society.

Another aspect you cannot ignore in understanding *patriarchal masculinity* is the gender roles and scripts it works to maintain. This was very clear in my interview with Sandro, when asked who his masculine references were growing up he responded, “My aunt. A woman, a Black woman was my reference of masculinity”, Sandro exclaimed proudly. He explains that this idea of masculinity in which there are certain scripts you must adhere to as a man, certain things you had to do because you were “macho”, did not reflect his reality. Sandro`s reality was being raised by women, his father died when he was young, and anything and everything that had to get done was done by women, simply because there were only women in his household.

Although this was Sandro`s lived experience, the patriarchal norm which teaches men that parental caregiving and household responsibilities are woman`s work, continues to prevail (Hooks, 2004).

In discussing gender roles in Salvador Bahia, as Sandro pointed out, his reference for masculinity came in the form of a Black Woman, his mother and aunts who raised him. It is not only necessary but extremely important to address the role of the Black woman matriarch in Bahia very intimately connected to African Yoruba Religion strongly practiced in the region. In the series *Cadernos Geledes*; a publication created as the result of a political action from Geledes; the Institute of the Black Woman, Carneiro writes that the role of the Black Woman in Bahia has been that of carrying responsibility to hold the family together, while working to support economically and maintain the family traditions (Carneiro, *Mulher Negra Carderno IV*, 1993). This is twofold, on one hand, the extreme marginalization and lack of preparation for the Black men after abolition left only the most marginalized and humiliating jobs, while the Black population was left in sub-human conditions, Black women were able to find better options of survival than Black men. Whether that was going into white homes to cook and clean and care for children, or vending in the market place. Traditional foods like Acarajé, a traditionally African food, the food of the Orixá Iansã, was and continues to be sold by Black women in the streets, testifying to the strategies for survival created while raising children, and the children of their Orixás. Carneiro addresses the contradiction that although like all cultures produced by humanity, African culture and mythology models the necessity to control woman. That the domination of the woman is justified due to her “natural” qualities of voracity, intolerance and excesses. This is seen in the stories of the Orixás (gods); Carneiro gives the example of the Creation story in which three Orixás come down to earth. Ogun, the

warrior is in the front to open the roads, Obarixá who holds the power to do all things is second and Odu, the only woman is last. The two in the lead receive the power of War and Creation while Odu, the woman receives nothing. However, the role of the woman within Candomblé is not that of subordination. In fact, within the religion women are the majority and hold a great amount of and very high roles, both traditionally and currently (Carneiro, *Mulher Negra Carderno IV*, 1993).

For Sandro being raised by Black women showed him from a young age that these gender roles were purely social constructs and that everything said to be “a man’s job”, a woman can do just as easily. He saw that this idea of physical labor being a man’s job because he is “stronger and thus more capable” was simply not true. Sandro speaks to the patriarchal teaching that you receive as a young boy and how early in life he perceived how this is done. Sandro understood from a young age that boys are raised to study, go to school, graduate, and get a good job so that he can financially maintain his household. While girls from a young age are taught that, they do not need to go to school, but simply to learn all of the domestic obligations of maintaining a household so that they can meet that man who works and financially takes care of the family, while she raises the children (Sandro Sussuarana, personal communication, July 12, 2016).

Sandro explains how growing up they could only afford one doll, and that was for his sister. “I liked to kick things so the doll I shared with my sister turned into my ball”, Sandro laughed, and he had no problem playing with it. You can see in toys for kids, how these gender roles start very young. The dolls for girls are all made with limited movement, normally the legs and arms. While the hands are always made in the form of holding a plate or some kind of household appliance. While the toys for boys have so much more body movement. They can bend their legs, bend their knees, he is always shown running, can bend his arms and usually comes with some kind of weapon (Sandro Sussuarana, personal communication, July 12, 2016).

Sandro speaks to the idea of social constructionist theory, which conceptualizes gender as a system of social classification that influences access to power, status and material resources. Gender, like racial construction is dependent on context, the gender systems in Salvador fosters power imbalances that facilitate women’s role as housekeeper, cook and child bearer (Strebel, 2006). Placing the man’s role as financial provider and protector. Gender roles are often mutually agreed upon and reciprocal, thus can and are reinforced by both genders.

3.2 The multiple facets of violence and limits of Government

One of the first poems I heard Sandro recite in our first interview left me with goose bumps and tears in my eyes. The poem speaks to the ways in which State violence works to silence Black people, how police are applauded for the brutal killings of young Black men, the pain of mothers having to bury their sons and how the police are encouraged to continue in this racialized violence through the laws created to protect them, through police impunity. He continues to exclaim how there is never a police investigation when police come in shooting up Black communities, and how is it that we continue to ignore our blood running through the streets?

*“Em primeiro lugar eu não vou me calar
 Baixar o tom, muito menos ficar quieto
 Tá achando bom a morte no guetos não ter comoção
 E ver o estado aplaudir dizendo que os pms estavam certos?
 Não há investigação e a mídia não noticia
 Você sabia que o auto de resistência
 É o mesmo que autorizar matar preto na periferia?
 Como se não bastasse séculos de história apagada,
 Heróis que não são lembrados sem medalhas nem troféu
 E nos dias de hoje tantos que se vão assim como se foi o menino Joel
 Tá achando que eu sou radical?
 Experimenta sentir na pele
 O que é perder um filho por conta da imprudência policial!
 Nós fomos, nós somos e nós sempre seremos os alvos
 E isto não vai acabar enquanto a gente estiver só olhando
 E não fizermos nada pra mudar os fatos
 É o nosso sangue que está escorrendo, não estão percebendo?
 Mudaram-se as formas de nos matar e os nossos continuam morrendo
 Pode me chamar de vitimista
 Que vejo preconceito em tudo
 Que somos exagerados e até mesmo extremistas
 Mas nunca vão saber o que é viver no risco
 Superar os desafios e ainda assim ser o alvo de mira de prisco!
 Não temos liberdade, e já sacamos o que é a real
 Que o plano do estado é fazer uma limpeza étnico-racial
 Eu continuo na luta, no afrontamento
 Nós não vamos aceitar ver o nosso povo morrendo
 Se a saída for ter que atirar além dos versos
 Nós não vamos hesitar
 E se o caminho para viver for este
 Pode ter certeza: a gente vai aprender a matar”*

(Sandro Sussuarana)

The lived Black experience of *State violence* in Brazil is intricate; ethnic cleansing, police impunity, erased histories, the blood of Black people running through the streets. The complex nature of violence is built into the very construction of identity, supported by the implicit racial hierarchy tied to bodies but not necessarily secured by them. The construction of *Black masculinity* and the scripts of this identity not only flattens the multiple dimensions and complexities of racial formation but is also a violent act, perpetuating narratives of violence. It is important to make the political distinction between the acts of violence by police against Black Bodies and the production of said “Blackness” through these very acts. We must move away from symptomatic or causal notions of violence, and towards an understanding that violence is a process, which transforms and becomes the condition of its own production (Smith, 2006). Violence is not an abstract entity, its actions are concrete, and affects the daily lives and relationships of the closest ones to the victims. Friends, family, neighbors, associates; finally, the community is affected as a whole. Understanding police violence involves understanding great loss.

José Eduardo Ferreira Santos presents in his book, *Cuidado com o Vão*, the story of a young man talking about the murder of his friend. “It seems that everything stopped, time stopped, the street has changed, and everything became sadder...” (Santos, 2010). The author points out in his work that the profile of many cases is of deep sadness and a degree of uncomfortable and stifling perplexity.

Moments of violence against Black Bodies by police officers is a performance of a “*racial contract*”⁵, demonstrating the patrio-heirachial power of the State through discourse power and action (Smith, 2006). These embodied forms of violence are used to set and maintain social and moral boundaries throughout the Nation, disciplining acts that demarcate the boundaries of social order. The body is the site involving biologic, emotional and social cognitive dimensions, forming feelings, meanings values and behaviors (Netto, 2016).

Sandro Sussuarana states, to be a black man in Salvador is for “you to have all the characteristics of marginality in your body, to have all of the characteristics that influenced the process of slavery that our country suffered, in your body” (Sandro Sussuarana, personal communication, July 12, 2016).

Understanding race and Blackness as performance allows us to understand the political implications, acknowledging the violence against Black Bodies. Whether it is

⁵ The Racial Contract, Charles Mills: the racial contract allows us to understand the origins of society and the state, the ways in which governments operate, the way society is structured and how the moral psychology of people is informed by racism (Mills, 1997). Racism is the most important political-economic system in the history of systems of domination.

physical violence, in the case of police violence against Black Bodies, or structural violence in the case of government programs said to combat State violence, or symbolic violence when children watch TV and only see images of white people or black people in violent or subservient situations, these violence(s) produce racial meaning (Smith, 2006).

The (Black) Body is arguably the most distinguished location where State violence is perpetuated however; geographic location is an imperative element in understanding the nature of such violence. As Tania Cordeiro points out in *“Vidas em Risco”, “Mortes Violentas” e “Tempos de Luta por Justiça”*, the urban spaces in which occurrences of violent death are registered are areas which have forgone various forms of abandonment, the people who live there are stigmatized, and have been written into a narrative of violence, legitimating the need for external control. Impoverished parts of the city, abandoned by the State, are not necessarily criminalized for their condition or situation in itself, but rather for the threat, they become for the rest of society (Espinheira, 2005). “You can observe a very important relationship between crimes committed by police and the urban space in which they are practiced”, (Tania Cordeiro, personal communication, July 6, 2016). “Where the police kill, is not just anywhere”.

The Brazilian police, Cordeiro explains, have some specific characteristics, and are important for determined purposes, one of them being to protect and take care of the Patrimony. This is why banks are often the most vigorously protected; merchants in commercial spaces are seen as deserving of police protection, police act in a logic according to the interest of the commercial. The inverse to this relationship is the perverse idea in which police see poor and black people as threats to the patrimony (Cordeiro, 2016). Abusive police, Cordeiro continues, enter certain spaces with the preconceived notion that it is a `dangerous place`, and thus prepared to treat the people as threats. Police would never act in the abusive ways they do in middle class and noble neighborhoods; they do not feel as comfortable proving their power. Where as in peripheral communities the posture is that of repression.

Sandro Sussuarana adds, “principally for those of us who live in the periphery, the question of marginality is always attributed to us, simply because we live here, based on our social condition...” (Sandro Sussuarana, personal communication, July 12, 2016). Espinheira explains how thought and discourse on criminality in the United States, has supported such a relationship through the protestant ethic. Certain individuals are seen as inferior beings or, theologically, as part of those abandoned by God, thus the State should refrain from interfering with those abandoned by God, for the simple fact that such interfering will be ineffective (Espinheira, 2005).

This religious dimension of violence acts as the nonverbal codes that are followed when people interact with one another. It is understood through the racial contract, that “those people, in that place” are a certain way and we should not deal with them. This is the logic, one of which works to support neoliberal theories of criminality. This puritan mentality allows for the judgment of the human condition as something irreversible, equating behavior to nature. The idea that can be summed up in the simple sentence, “The culprit of the crime is the criminal” (Espinheira, 2005).

This was the idea behind the “*Broken Windows*” theory created by George Kelling and James Q. Wilson during the early 80’s conservative law and order agendas in the USA. The Broken Windows theory can be summarized as follows; if a neighborhood or community shows signs of disorder, like broken windows, loitering, or graffiti it is only a matter of time that it turns into a violent and reckless place and thus must be more strongly policed (Ritchie, 2016). This theory was supported by a number of other neoconservative theories of the time such as, *The Bell Curve*, which advanced a theory of racial differences in knowledge, *Thinking about Crime*, by Wilson, arguing that crime is the product of social “predispositions”, *Crime and Human Nature* by Richard Gerstein. New York City was the first to implement the Broken Windows policing policies, and just as policies like the War on Drugs moved from the US to Brazil through globalization, so has this theory surrounding neoliberal ways of policing certain spaces. Broken Windows policing, like so many policies of the right is rooted in fear. Fear of poverty, fear of youth, at its core, a fear of Blackness (Ritchie, 2016).

Thus driven by fear mongering tactics, in which the blame is always that of the victim. However, violence of poverty, the expression of the sum of violations of the pluralities of everyday life are a part of the capitalist system. Thus, the peripheries (poor neighborhoods in Salvador) were created to support the functioning of this system. Capitalism was not created for everyone, and those not included in this plan were placed in geographic distance from the center of the city. A rich capitalist society generously offers poverty to the poor and accuses them of failures to compete, discards them as social and hazardous waste of wealth (Espinheira, 2005).

This distribution of violence by Capitalism also shows up in the lack of valorization and dignity ascribed to certain basic functions necessary for society to maintain. Tania Cordeiro speaks to the dispute for dignity in her interview.

“You rarely or never see a gravedigger feeling proud of the work he does, or

someone who changes the streetlights, or picks up the trash, although these are functions necessary to society, they are not considered noble” (Tania Cordeiro, personal communication, June 6, 2016).

People who do this work are never considered to have value and recognizing dignity in people who do these jobs is becoming less and less common. There are people who are “born noble”, in thinking about this relationship to dignity, born into wealth and privilege, and there are people who fight their whole lives to be seen as worthy (Tania Cordeiro, personal communication, June 6, 2016).

In 2013 President Dilma Rousseff created the political program, *Juventude VIVA*, in which she states “Violence against Black youth has turned into a problem for the State of Brasil... We are interested in combating violence through amplifying citizenship and rights, but also ending violence against Black youth” (Waiselfisz, 2014). This program was the result of years of pressure by the political fight of Black youth and the Secretary of racial equity to politically recognize the murder of Black youth as a national problem.

Juventude Viva is a federal government program lead by the National Secretary of youth whose premise is to articulate a dialogue between ministries, municipalities, states and civil society to face and deal with violence against youth, specifically Black youth. The states with the highest rates of homicide were prioritized and currently the project has 44 programs across the country with over 10 different ministries involved, ie: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Sport, Ministry of health ect. The program has already made pacts with Alagoas, Paraíba, Distrito Federal e região metropolitan, Sao Paulo capital, Bahia e Espirito Santo. The Project states that one of the ways to prevent and combat violence against youth is to monitor, give visibility to and disseminate information about the problem (Waiselfisz, 2014).

However, there is great doubt that this or other programs are interested in ending State violence against Black youth. Sandro explains the perverse and cyclical logic of government programs like this one in how they do not work in addressing the root of the problem.

“The program is beautiful, it’s beautiful - on paper, but it doesn’t work. You know why it doesn’t work? Because it’s a government program and doesn’t treat the cause, it treats the effect, the cause is the government. The cause is the government, damn it, the cause is the government, how is the program going to work when it is a government program? It’s real complicated to say you are dealing with an issue when you

are part of the government, who is killing people every day. If that is the case, why hasn't this fucking auto-resistance ended?... In fact this program benefits from the murder of black people. The more black people that are killed, the program will continue to say, see this is why we are needed, you see that people are dying- but what are they doing? They are purely saying that people are dying, and doing nothing else. When I am called to speak and people are there from the program or from the government, I say it, I tell them: everyone here is benefiting from these deaths. They always talk about the programs, the statistics – 100 were dying now 90 are dying , the program is working, but we have some difficulties and need more money – they always say this- that they need more money...hey always talk about needing more money, but I will always talk about needing an end to the murder of black youth. They need more money to implement more programs? But I do it without any money...” (Sandro Sussuarana)

Distrust in the government among the Black community is not an anomaly; we see it in the United States and Brazil. In Joelson Oliveria Sampaio's doctoral thesis, *Essays on Trust in the Judicial System: Evidence from Brazil*, he creates the Brazilian Confidence Justice Index (BCJI) and identifies how trust in the judicial system and police force is much less among the Black population. Sampaio (2015) identifies that Black Brazilians are at least 10% less trusting in the system than white Brazilians, stating that Black persons believe the judicial system is more expensive and less honest. This distrust is fueled by the racism, discrimination and racial profiling Black Brazilians deal with on a daily basis by the government. The legitimacy of laws and legal processes are highly questioned and greatly doubted by Brazilian Blacks. On the contrary, Sampaio identifies that non Black Brazilians and Brazilians with high income, have high levels of trust in the judicial system and the government in general. This stems from the preferential treatment given to them, by the system (Sampaio, 2015).

In Brazil, violence against Black people has not always been recognized. It was in large part due to the Black Movement in Brazil who raised the issue of racialized violence. The *Black Brazilian Front* was the one of the first organizing efforts of the Black Movement in Brazil in São Paulo, during the early 1900's. Then in the 1970's Black consciousness in Brazil took on a strong political stance and called for international attention, through a process of racial identification by activist in the Black movement. While racial identification by Black Brazilians happened before this, it was at this time that it became more intensely internationalized, connecting with Blacks throughout the Diaspora. Thus, one of the main issues raised by Black Brazilian activists was racial violence (Alberti, 2006).

In the early 1990's a campaign was launched to call for international attention (Carneiro, 2014). The campaign, “Não Matem Nossas Crianças” (Don't kill our children), was created by the organization CEAP (Center for articulation for marginalized populations) in Rio de Janeiro, made up of members of the Black Movement in Brazil, this campaign was created to call attention to the extermination of Black children and youth. The Campaign was launched in response to the massacre of Candelaria, in which 11 children who lived on the street and slept in front of the Church Candelaria in Rio de Janeiro were murdered in the middle of the night by police officers (Carneiro, 2014). The campaign played a huge part in the historic-political process of calling international attention and protection to the human rights violations happening in Brazil, and most importantly to the racial aspect of these violations.

Cordeiro speaks briefly to this process in Salvador, the *Fórum Comunitário contra Violência*, was created with this very agenda, to convince people of the violence in Salvador. At the time (1997), Rio was known as violent and Salvador positioned itself as being the counter point to Rio adverse to violence (Tania Cordeiro, personal communication, June 6, 2016). Salvador sold the idea that it was a city of happiness and parties, where violence did not occur. When in actuality Salvador was extremely violent and homicide was already the second cause of death for men between the ages 15-29. The *Fórum Comunitário Contra Violência* was a part of a project by the Federal University of Bahia at the Institute of Collective health. It focused on the health district of Barra and Rio Vermelho, in the poor neighborhoods of the district the people who lived there immediately let us know (says Cordeiro) that violence was the biggest health concern, more specifically the complaints from the community were about the police violence. They talked about the police making them feel more unsafe than safe.

3.3 Legitimacy and Impunity of Police Violence in Salvador

For the State to exercise domination within the State in the form of “legitimized violence”, there must be a specific unit in charge of that role. It is at this point that the role of the police, as agents of the State, becomes a powerful entity. The police function is twofold by nature: the police exercise the monopoly of legitimized force within the state, as well as establish a consensus within the masses (Santos, 1997). In other words, the police act in favor of the State as an agent of social organization, working to maintain State power and domination. The forms of power over human bodies through an organizational modality and

control began in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Idem, 1997). In a sense, the police were conceived to act as the eyes and hands of the state, so that they may be aware of what happens long ago in this place of power; In this way, the police are given the power and authority to physically keep society “in order”, according to State grounds. The police are in charge of establishing control of people and space, “ensuring the obedience of individuals and a better saving of time and actions” (Idem, 1997).

In 1892, in London, the “New Police” was instituted, a police organization in charge of maintaining the local order against a specific class of the population (Santos, 1997). This is the most obvious case in which social control was directed against a particular class. In the case of Brazilian society, the theme becomes apparent in Heliosa R. Fernandez’s pioneering study of the public power of the State of São Paulo during the first Republic and of the need to use ostensive and repressive force against the labor movement (Idem).

In addition, in relation to the case of Brazilian society, the police are organized as follows: civil police and military police. “The Brazilian Federal Constitution establishes, in its Article 144, that public security, the duty of the State and the rights of all, is exercised for the preservation of public order and the security of persons and property, through certain police corporations” (Amnesty International, 2015).

Pre-existing beliefs about the criminality of Black people is a determining factor in how Black peoples are subject to rigorous policing. Representation by the media, politicians, and criminal justice agents as a “social problem” (Bowling, 2003).

The belief that we live in “the war on drugs”, a public safety strategy used to refer to the sale and use of drugs, makes the idea of killing of Black people involved in trafficking an actual war. The ideology promoted by this strategy is that suspects involved in trafficking-related activities must be killed. This discourse blames the victim stigmatized by the context of racism, crime and poverty (Amnesty International, 2015).

The “war on drugs” is a policy that began in the United States in the 1980s said to fight crack cocaine. In her book, *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander (2012) brings us to a detailed understanding of how the system of mass incarceration configures itself as a practice of slavery in modern times and how the drug war process has been a vehicle for boosting the mass incarceration of Blacks in the United States. Alexander makes it clear that the war on drugs was a *racialized policy* chosen by the United States in the face of increased crime associated with drugs.

Alexander (2012) also points out that some countries that face this social problem opted for the treatment of users, for prevention and education, as well as the incentive to

economic investments in communities with high crime rates. Portugal, for example, has chosen to combat chemical dependency and abuse by decriminalizing drug possession and redirecting resources for prevention and treatment. The rapid hit of crack in the United States could have taken other directions in terms of government action. However, the aftermath of this whirlwind was accompanied by a violent reaction against the civil rights movement, with very specific motivations for racial politics, as a way conservatives found to justify a declared war against an enemy that had been defined for years, based on Racial criteria (Idem, 2012).

As in the United States, Brazil has also chosen to respond to the use, sale, and abuse of drugs through war. The logic of the drug war has driven large-scale police operations that often result in murders of black youths (Amnesty International, 2015). In tracing the origins of the police as an agent of the state, one perceives that it is an organization trained from bases based on the legitimate monopoly of physical violence, as well as constituting an agent in the establishment of a consensus (Santos, 1997). Public safety, socio-organizational management and maintenance of public order must address all acts of disorder, guaranteeing the human rights of victims and those who carry out violence. However, we see policies operating under neoliberal concepts such as “zero tolerance”, which operate through an institutionalized racism lens, the criminalization of black youth. Security and public order must be uniform throughout the city, so that / as social rules are practiced by all races, economic and cultural groups. However, poor black communities continue to be criminalized and, afflicted or are afflicted with police violence.

“It is extremely difficult to convict a police officer, for you to have an idea, there was a police officer convicted some time back, because he killed a two year old child, and he was only convicted because it’s extremely difficult to say a two year old was in a shootout” (Tania Cordeiro, personal communication, June 6, 2016).

In dealing with homicide by and conviction of police, there is something that is invariable, “who is the murdered and who killed him?” If the person murdered is of middle or noble class and white, in this case there is a chance of conviction of the police officer. However if the person who was killed does not have much and is part of a low financial condition, he is automatically a suspect; rather he had to have had something on him (Cordeiro, 2016).

The question of police impunity in Brazil is complexly constructed in order to maintain this exemption. First, there is no general police conduct manual that police must follow, thus there are no guidelines to be held accountable. In terms of accountability the only

structure responsible for regulating police abuse in Bahia is GACEP (Grupo especial de Atuação para o Controle Externo da Atividade Policial), which is part of the public ministry, whose job it is to ensure quality working conditions for police (Maria Jose, personal communication, July 20, 2016). Although it was written into the constitution of 1988 to have an external control of the police, GACEP only began in 2006. In an interview with Maria Jose, the coordinator of GACEP she explains that their job is to receive complaints of alleged police abuse resulting in death and through an investigation with the officer determine if in fact it was a violation. However although they are in the position to judge the officer they also provide educational classes to officers and verify the adverse conditions that may be impeding quality service of officers. So although they are the only external control of police, they are also in charge of the work conditions of the police, thus creates a conflict of interest. When police officers are reported for abuse or murder, they are registered as a rule under the penal code of “auto-Resistencia”, stating the officer acted in self-defense. This legal code was created during the military dictatorship (1964-1985) when the torture, extrajudicial executions and disappearances were State instruments aimed at the suppression of political dissent (Lemos, 2016).

When an officer is indeed under investigation for homicide, the rituals of the justice department can be treated as a theater performance. Cordeiro explains a scene she has seen time and time again. This performance always involves the mother of the officer, friends, the entire family and more police officers than she has ever seen together in one place. The friends and family are all there giving testimony of the good moral character of the officer, explaining what a good history he has had. The main argument, always presented by the family, friends and colleagues of the officer questioning how the judge could take away his uniform because of a “malandro, miserável” (Tania Cordeiro, personal communication, June 6, 2016). This performance, these scenarios of white supremacy of the racial contract, act as violence against black bodies in (re)producing racial meaning in Brazil (Smith, 2006).

3.4 Art as a strategy for empowerment

In the 21st century, we continue to live in a world in which the understanding of Black masculinity is intrinsically linked to one dimensional violent, or hypersexual behavior of the body. This racist stereotype has been promulgated by the imperialist white supremacist system for centuries. Black male rage is the only voice of black masculinity which the white supremacist allows to be heard. Black men are not allowed to be whole human beings (Hooks,

2004).

The construction of Black masculinity has objectified the black male body and allowed for white imagination to limit Black men to their physical bodies. (Ferber 2007). This socially controlled image of the Black man has been expressed to the public by “scientists”, media and politicians as our social problem which must be controlled in our educational and penal systems to allow for the safety of our society. It gives Police tacit permission to shoot first, question later if at all. How are Black men able to psychologically combat this virulent history of attempts to discredit them as men of intellect and sensitivity but also as a race of people? How are they able to re-write their scripts outside of the confines of white supremacy? This is where the importance of art and culture enter and strengthen identity.

The artistic and cultural sphere is one of great importance when discussing ways to go up against racist patriarchal systems of power. The way that culture is spread through the black population is directly connected to identity making, and processes of visibility, recognition and empowerment. It is in this context that we are able to understand art as a tool to liberation. A tool used to criticize and refute oppressive systems of power, to create autonomy, affirmation and resistance. To create and take up space in affirming identity and creating visibility.

Art is the most effective way to get free. Through art, you can see anything in an entirely different way; it is about questioning and shifting the frame. Art at its core is about what you see and whom you see. Defense mechanisms in the most elementary type, the simple instinct of self-preservation can be understood as safety railings marked out by the cultural sphere (Fanon, 1961). The theory of “daily practices”, as discussed by Certeau (2005) establishes the idea that the city is a place of construction as well as rejection. When ones identity is not recognized by the values of the dominant power systems, it is through daily practices and ways of life that one re-creates and re-signifies ways of existing.

That in fact it is through the relationship between the dominant power structures and the development of cultural production that youth create tactics of resistance. Certeau (2005) goes on to discuss that these daily practices are simply ways of life, yet not valorized or recognized by dominant understanding of culture. Subjects reorganize and re-create their trajectories through daily practices that makes sense to the subjects themselves, independent of the recognition given. Practices created by youth, in the spaces in which they live and move on a daily bases. It is through these practices that alternative knowledge is produced and other forms of logic are allowed to exist and be shared. The re-identification of a space, created for and by black youth, allowing for the re-identification of the self through the

process.

Therefore, we begin to understand the importance of cultural practice in the process of identity making and at its core, a self-liberation in which autonomy is taken back. These practices are both unique to the specific context in which they are born (the neighborhood in which these youth live) as well as play a part on the global stage in the conversation throughout the diaspora of re-defining what it means to be Black. These daily practices or mechanisms are not simply acts of leisure and pleasure but are tools to survival and tactics to dealing with realities of State violence, ways of re-writing trajectories (Pimentel, 2016).

“Cultural expressions (music, theater, literature, visual arts) produce a symbolic space, whose aesthetic and formative dimension projects on a political dimension for its porosity. At this point, we rely on the idea of cultural resistance, developed by Duncombe (2002), when the author points out the importance of understanding the ways groups, collectives and individuals dynamically transform the cultural system (behavior, norms, languages, goods) transforming social, political, economic structures, to develop resources and strategies of resistance...” (Pereira & Figueiredo, 2015).

The function of art acts in the opening up of new possibilities, beyond our known reality, beyond our known existence. Art is a presentational language of the senses, it conveys meanings that cannot be transmitted through any other language (Barbosa, 1999). Artistic processes allow for the material transformation of experiences. Through art making one is able to get to know oneself in a deeper more profound way. Lived experiences of racism and State violence are challenged in understanding one's identity. Thus shifting the frame and allowing these experiences to bring the findings of hope and quality of life, replacing the fear, and trauma of State violence (Elmesany, 2010). The artistic and cultural sphere allows for the creative process and for one to connect with their creative self. Connecting with one's creative-self facilitates expression of internal processes that can be difficult to express verbally (Elmesany, 2010).

The world of cultural production by Black youth throughout the diaspora is vast and diverse. In urban cities through the world, streets scream loud, full of colorful graffiti demanding to be seen and heard. Hip hop, Capoeira, graffiti, street art are some of the ways that we see the daily practices of Black youth re-writing their trajectories. It is through these productions that significant experiences are created to strengthen self-esteem, ideas about what is important, who is capable, intelligent and beautiful. It is through these practices that the Black population self refers, constructing our own subjectivity and agency, versus

constructing an identity based on the script of white supremacy (Netto, 2016).

Spoken word and poetry are particularly powerful in that the story teller, or poet narrates a new episode sharing with the public a real invocation and through this act a new kind of man is revealed (Fanon, 1961). Poetry is a political action undertaken as a matter of information, faith, lyrical invention that make it possible to tell the truth. Poetry means taking control of the language of your life. Good poems can prohibit suicide, rescue a love affair, and builds a revolution in which to hear someone becomes the first and last purpose of every social gathering (Jordan, 1995).

In my first interview with Sandro at his home at the end of the line in old Sussuarana, he was wearing a shirt which read, “Poesia Cria Asas” (Poetry creates wings); poetry creates potentials to fly, to sore, to give mobility in a world where movement is constantly censored and controlled. *Poetry creates wings*, is truly a profound concept in which we are forced to understand the limited mobility of Black Bodies moving through different spaces within society. Not everyone is granted access to all spaces and Black men may have the most limited access. Thus through poetry one can re-define for themselves where they want to go, and if they want to fly high above all the restrictions placed on them, they have the tools to do so.

Both Sandro and Marcos Paulo share in expressing the ways in which their poetry has spoken to youth in awakening a new perspective, a critical consciousness. The self-identity and collective agency that can be born from artistic expression opens doors to feelings of hope in a world where hopelessness is produced in large quantities (Ginwright, 2011). A feeling of hopelessness isolates and prevents us from participating in organized collective struggle. When discussing the importance of tools to self-affirming identity processes in the Black population in Brazil, it is especially important to understand the socio political history of the Brazilian context, that not only created and sold the “myth of racial democracy”, but also ignored and denied the contributions of African society and culture as a part of Brazilian society (Conceicao, 2010). In Brazilian society, much like all colonized countries the dominant image and representation was that of a Eurocentric perspective. Making the white, heterosexual, Christian man the default standard. Those who did not fall under this script, were written in as deviant, criminal, and not allowed into mainstream society.

Yet the arts, and in particular poetry and in specific safe spaces like the Sarau, create intimate spaces for critical reflection and collective resistance. Healing, the process of restoring health and well-being individually or collectively can only be cultivated in the

presence of hope. So when we talk about the power of art in the context of a culture that does not allow Black men to be whole, does not allow Black men to be loved we are talking about life and death.

In the Brazilian context in which many people still fight to hold onto the myth of racial democracy and the lies sold about racism not existing, when we talk about youth engaging in critical consciousness raising, we are addressing shifting scripts of performance and power roles. These spaces of black art are necessary to building a culture in which Black men are loved, love themselves and can love one another. Police are killing our black men, and patriarchal masculinity is a huge part of what allows this violence to be a reality, thus we must re -conceptualize our understandings of love, and loving our Black men (Hooks, 2004).

Conclusion

Concluding, in reflection of the original objectives of this research we can see that the relationship between the police violence and the construction of Black masculinity is complex and needs more attention and understanding. Moving towards an understanding that violence is a cyclical process and a means of its own production we must understand that breaking cycles of violence will take intersectional approaches. The very construction of Black masculinity, works to confine Black men to limited ideas of identity that are self-harming and sustain collective ideas that justify the murder of Black men by the State. A critical understanding of all the ways this social construction is perpetuated must be had. Most importantly, we must listen to the voices and stories of Black men in order to understand this complex relationship.

Although nothing new, we are able to conceptualize the power of art and culture to struggles for justice, self-affirming identity making and personal liberation from dominant white supremacist power structures. Art not only provides visibility in a world set on not recognizing, but also allows for alternative ways of seeing and existing in the world.

Finally, we see that the limits and contradictions of government programs in fighting police violence sit in a context in which the State creates, maintains and promotes race projects and racism in post-colonial societies. Thus these programs are not only limited in what they can do, but are in fact not going to be what free Black bodies from the hands of murder, as this murder is by the very State claiming to fight such violence.

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Glossary

Glossary Terms appear in *Italics* in the paper-
Refer to Bibliography for full citation of
Authors Cited in Glossary

- Black Diaspora:** People who live outside of their ancestral continent. Refers to the dispersal of African communities, by enslavement throughout the world. Brazil 55,900,000. P. 20
- Black Masculinity:** Ferber, The intersection between race and gender. Construction of Black masculinity has objectified the Black male body and allowed White imagination to limit Black men to their physical bodies. P. 21, 37
- Black Movement:** Dominguez, first phase 1889-1937 Black press was born, cultural associations across the country; the Second phase from 1945-1964 from the Second Republic to the military Dictatorship, third phase from 1978-2000, the beginning of the process of re-democratization.
- Broken Windows Theory:** Kelling, if a neighborhood shows signs of disorder, graffiti, broken windows, it is only a matter of time that it turns violent and reckless and thus must be policed more strongly. P. 55
- CHEFS & Petrobras:** a publicly-held company whose majority shareholder is the Government of Brazil, and is therefore a state-owned mixed-economy enterprise in the exploration and production, refining, marketing, transportation, petrochemical, distribution of derivatives, natural gas, electricity, gas-chemical and biofuel segments. P. 22
- Emic Categories:** of, relating to, or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied. P. 30
- Favela:** a peripheral community, both geographically and socially speaking. Often people who live in favela communities face prejudice and are discriminated against and labeled as socially less than. P. 21
- GACEP:** Grupo especial de atuação para o controle externo da atividade policial, specialized external group in control of police activity and conduct, part of the public ministry of Bahia. P. 63
- Intersectional Research:** social scientific scaffold of analysis how various forms of oppression intersect in Brazil; racial, political, social, economic, judicial. P. 21
- Identity of Invisibility (Ellison)** in society a Black man is not recognized as a human being, as even existing. P. 35
- JACA-** Juventude ativista de Cajazeiras, Youth Activist group of Cajazeiras with a range of local political actions and a monthly open mic event. P. 46
- Matrix of domination:** (Collins) the intersection of oppressions, race, gender, and class, create

a matrix of domination. P. 24

Myth of Racial democracy: Heavily sold idea that racism does not exist in Brazil but in fact there is a democracy among the races that do exist (Black, white and Indigenous) P. 18

Patriarchal masculinity: damaging societal standards for men based on ideas like men don't feel emotion', 'must be tough'. P. 47

Political Violence: a broad term used to describe violence perpetrated by either persons or governments to achieve political goals. Many groups and individuals believe that their political systems will never respond to their demands. P. 31

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: DeGruy, a theory that explains the etiology of many of the adaptive survival behaviors in African American communities throughout the United States and the Diaspora. A condition that exists because of multigenerational oppression of Africans and their descendants resulting from centuries of chattel slavery. P. 29

Quilombo: Originally, in Colonial Brazil, a hinterland settlement founded by escaped enslaved African peoples, a safe haven. However, the term is used today as well as a political term for a safe all black space. P. 22

Racism: (Mills) Racism is the most important political-economic system in the history of domination systems and, for hundreds of years, has been used to control the bodies of Black people. P. 23

Racial Contract: (Mills) understands the complexities of racism as the most important political-economic system in the history of domination systems by Europeans. P. 23

Racial formation theory: a sociological theory that focuses on the connections between how race shapes and is shaped by social structure, and how racial categories are represented and given meaning in imagery, media, language, ideas, and everyday common sense. Racial formation theory frames the meaning of race as rooted in context and history, and thus as something that changes over time. P. 25

REAJA OU SERÁ MORTO: a joint movement of black peoples and black movements and communities in the state capital Bahia, articulated nationally and with organizations that fight against police brutality, addressing the reparations deserved to the families of victims of the extrajudicial executions and death squads, militias and extermination groups. P. 20

Sarau da Onça: open microphone poetry event for black youth in the neighborhood of Sussuarana. P. 30

State Violence: Smith, State violence is the number one threat to Black people in Brazil. State violence in Brazil is demonstrative of a racialized and gendered violence. Black male bodies are put on display as sacrificial beings in order to demonstrate power and control. P. 31

Structural violence: refers to systematic ways in which social structures harm or otherwise

disadvantage individuals. Structural violence is subtle, often invisible, and often has no one specific person who can (or will) be held responsible (in contrast to behavioral violence). P. 28