

UNIVERSITY OF NOVA GORICA
GRADUATE SCHOOL

**CAPOEIRA: INFLUENCES ON DEPRESSION, AGGRESSION AND
VIOLENCE IN SALVADOR**

DISSERTATION

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Author's declaration

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Goran Gumze

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Abstract

This thesis is about Brazilian martial art *capoeira* and its influences on depression, aggression and violence. *Capoeira* is considered as important social institution among Afro-Brazilian population in Salvador and its rituals are effective means of social relationships harmonization. One of *capoeiras* particularity that was of great importance for my analysis is the concept of *malandragem* which represents the art of fraud, survival, mind reading, hiding of intentions etc. In some aspects *malandro* (the one performing *malandragem*) can be compared with trickster, however he is human and doesn't have the same metaphysical role as trickster does. *Malandragem* is perceived as an individual characteristic of each practitioner, however, it exists also on the institutional level of *capoeira* and enabled the art to survive several persecutions.

There are two major paradigms regarding development of *capoeira*; one proposing that the art was developed in Africa and the other that it was developed in Brazil. In my thesis I am defending the theory that *capoeira* was developed among enslaved African population brought to Brazil as leisure activity, whose principal role was reestablishment of social hierarchy. Yet *Capoeira's* role has changed through history and I claim that there are six important developmental phases of *capoeira* institution. First phase represents the development of the art on *senzalas* (slaves habitations), where it was one of the leisure activities and means for reestablishment of hierarchy among enslaved population – primarily among men. In second phase martial art features of *capoeira* were developed. The art was used by slaves to enable the flights from *senzalas*, and served as military martial art in *quilombos* (escaped slaves' enclaves). Through third phase in 18th and 19th century *capoeira* was practiced on the streets of main Brazilian harbour cities as amusement activity of sailors and half free slaves (*caboclos*), who were selling the products on the markets and in harbours. It was also used as martial art of city gangs and so called *vagabundos* (the ones living on the street from day to day). After the Brazilian war with Paraguay in the 1860's, in the fourth phase of development, *capoeira* turned into political and cultural institution of Afro-Brazilian population. The most important fifth phase, through which today's social role of *capoeira* and its institutional characteristics were constituted, began after the proclamation of first Brazilian republic in 1889, when the art was forbidden and persecuted. The sixth phase started in 1937 with foundation of first *capoeira* school and institutionalization of the art. According to what I

have noticed in my conversations and observations, I could also add seventh phase, starting in 1960es and 1970es. In this period Brazilian *capoeiristas* started to promote and educate *capoeira* outside Brazil (USA, Europe), Thus *capoeira* was developed and still continues to be an institution of diaspora underwent to unique processes of institutional changes explained by Johnson (2007). Each of named phases is important for my analysis of *capoeira's* role regarding aggression, violence and depression. For example due to *capoeira's* criminal history the art is still perceived as violent institution *per se* - also among some Salvadorians. Yet the art teaches how to control aggression, how to deceive the opponent, how to apply violence only when necessary and most of all the institution represents the symbol of Afro-Brazilian's emancipation.

Furthermore *capoeira* has elaborated hierarchical system, re-established through two major rituals: *batizado* and *roda*. Former, having two important roles, is usually performed once per year. It represents initiation ritual for new *capoeiristas* when for older ones it is the exam allowing progressing the official hierarchic scale. On each level *capoeirista* earns a new girdle that determines his knowledge and status. The ritual of *roda* is performed periodically in all *capoeira* schools. Each school organises the *roda* at least once per week as the part of learning process for young *capoeiristas*. *Rodas de capoeira* are also being organised on some celebrative occasions, like for example anniversary of the particular school, group or the master. Some major important *rodas* are performed on the streets of Salvador during public festivities. In *roda capoeiristas* are confronted with each other, trying to win the opponent with *rastera*, *queda* or *golpe* (stumble, drop, kick). Observed by other *capoeiristas*, each player is being valued. Such valuation is crucial in establishment of unofficial hierarchy which supports the official girdle system. In order to be respected as good player, *capoeirista* has to develop effective and smart *capoeira* technique and ability to trick. He has to behave in accordance to accepted codex within *capoeira* institution, yet his identity should represent the style and manners of particular *capoeira* group. Shortly, as all of my interlocutors quoted: "*Capoeirista tem que virar malandro bom.*" (*Capoeirista* has to turn into good *malandro*). Practitioners have to follow the rules of each group or school and respect and obey their masters.

There is another aspect to be mentioned regarding respect toward the masters. In poor quarters, where most Salvadorian *capoeira* schools operate, masters are respected members of the community according to their efforts to improve the life and relationships in local

community. In the ambient where children are exposed to criminal acts, drugs, noise, and pollution and in many cases are living only with mothers or grandparents, *capoeira* master is the role model and the father of *capoeira* family. He teaches the youngsters how to cope sometimes difficult life situations and emphasizes the importance of the art and its rituals. In such manner masters are promoters and guardians of Afro-Brazilian culture. They like to compare *roda de capoeira* with real life and emphasize the importance of the smartness in the play.

Pointing out the importance of *capoeira* regarding violence we have to mention that through involvement in *capoeira* training and participation on *capoeira* events, the students are learning how to meet the demands of hierarchical frame, how to respect and how to control their aggression. I have heard many times masters speaking how violence has no place within *capoeira* and how youngsters should avoid street violence. They have also emphasized the importance of ritual rules and respect toward other especially more experienced *capoeiristas*. However many interlocutors have quoted that some schools are promoting violence in order to gain more students and be more successful on martial arts market. Thus even if *capoeira* can prevent violence and students are trained to control the aggression and apply violence only if necessary, in some cases *capoeiristas* act violent to achieve their economic goals or gain social status of being *cara perigoso* (dangerous guy).

Finally, I have analysed *capoeira* also as a therapeutic technique. At least in Salvador it is performed as therapeutic activity in some psychiatric hospitals. In 2007 I have managed to enter psychiatric hospital Juliano Moréira as a therapist, performing therapy with *capoeira*. During that period I researched the arts influences on coping with depression. Based on my observations and formal or informal discussions with therapist, *capoeiristas* and patients I have concluded, that *capoeira* has positive influences in coping depressive moods. *Capoeira* includes elements of martial art, dance and music and is part Afro-Brazilian folklore. As physical activity it is effective means to cope with mood and even personality disorders. Being important cultural institution in Salvador, *capoeira* also has some other, cultural specific influences on individual's identification processes and his self-image construction. Most of Salvadorians I have spoke to, consider *capoeira* respectful Afro-Brazilian cultural institution. *Capoeiristas* also find friends within the *capoeira* group and are mostly being admired outside institution as sports man or respectful members of community. Such perceptions increase self-esteem and constitute positive self-image of those practicing

capoeira. And finally as I argue, *capoeira* was developed as leisure activity (Talmon-Chvaicer, 2007), so as such it represents the means to cope with stress, opportunity to release frustrations, a chance to meet new friends or even arrange a job as *capoeira* teacher, which are all beneficial factors in coping of mental disorders including depression.

Key words: Capoeira, Aggression, Violence, Depression, Psychology, Medical Anthropology, Martial art, History, Afro-Brazilian institutions, Malandragem, Psychiatric treatments, Cognitive sciences, Sports.

Introduction

Armed attacks on public buses, street robbers, gang fights, organized crime, mob activities, police violence, family violence, school violence, street fights, suicides, frustrated and dejected citizens, high rates of diagnosed depression and other mental illnesses are all contemporary problems of urban life in Salvador de Bahia. Although I can argue that all modern urban societies are facing the same problems, Salvador, the capital of the Brazilian state Bahia where I conducted my field research, has an especially high rate of crime and violence. Not only Bahia but all federal states of the Northeast Region of Brazil are considered as the poorest states in Brazil, a South American giant with 170.732.694 inhabitants (2010 census). Brazil ranked on 7th place in 2008 list of World Bank GDP, and according to Human Development Report, on 86th place among 196 listed countries in the world, evaluated on basis of HDI 2012 (human development index). The results of *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios* (National Household Sample Survey) demonstrate that there was a 6 % unemployment rate in August 2013 and that also proportion of those working for minimum wage or less, has decreased from 22,7 % in 1999 to 14,3 % in 2006. Even if statistics are showing that economic situation of Brazilian households is ameliorating, such improvement was not noticeable in the quarter of Boca do Rio where I conducted my research. My neighbours were mostly unemployed or involved in short time construction works in the near city quarters. They lived in poor equipped apartments and earned less than the minimum wage at the time. Even if the living conditions in Boca do Rio and accessibility of water, energy, food markets, hospitals and schools were much better than the one in interior cities of North-eastern Brazil, described by Scheper-Hughes (1987), some of my neighbours were frequently complaining about unbearable living condition. The most frequent disturbing factors were lack of intimacy, noise and street crime. In my neighbourhood the poverty did not represent direct menace for physical survival - as Scheper-Hughes (1987) writes for Pernambucan city Bom Jesus - although it was a contributing factor in development of depressive problems and appearance of violent acts. Scheper-Hughes (1987) studied the causes for and social consequences of child mortality in the families of sugar cane plantation workers in the Northeast Region of Brazil. The central theme of her book circles around mother love and child death on *Alto do Cruzeiro*. She studies how mothers cope with unbearable living conditions causing infant deaths and how society gets along with everyday suffering. As she writes, the horror was the routinization of human suffering in so much of impoverished Northeast Brazil and the "normal" violence of everyday life (Scheper-Hughes,

1987, pp. 15-16). Being confronted with "violence of everyday life" in Boca do Rio, I was surprised how easily - at least from the outside perspective - people accepted the given situation. Some were complaining about the living conditions, about political corruption and their economic situation, yet they would remain calm and trying to make their complaints funny. Their interesting sense of humour, their ability to have fun by the end of the week, their positive thinking that someday situation will change, and their somehow passive acceptance of misery attracted my attention. People of *Alto do Cruzeiro* did their best to survive the misery of daily life through the "charade of learned helplessness, breached only by their biting humour and by the occasional, sometimes quite daring, act of trickery or cunning" (Scheper-Hughes, 1987, pp. 507-508). Beside trickery and good sense of humour, Salvadorians are using also other disposable techniques to cope with problems caused by poverty, living conditions, relationships and constant presence of violence. Daily communal activities like *bater papa na rua* (small talks on the streets), *tomar cerveja no barzinho ou na casa do vizinho* (drink beer in local bar or by the neighbours) or *sair para igreja* (go to the church) are some activities Salvadorians would choose to cope with daily stress and problems. Some of them would join the *capoeira* group, Brazilian martial art and Afro-Brazilian cultural institution¹.

My field research was conducted in the urban area of Salvador and was focused on *capoeira* and its influences on aggression, violence and depression. *Capoeira*, being an important social institution in Salvador, is according to the view of its practitioners, an effective tool for coping with problems of aggression, violence and depression. Through *capoeira* rituals social harmony within particular *capoeira* group is being restored. As Johnson (2007, p. 149) writes, where several extended families come together, rituals are supposed to restore family harmony. Many masters have claimed that *capoeira* group is *segunda familia* (second family), and on important events different *groupos amigos* (friendly groups) come together and participate in organisation of event. *Capoeira* is also used in psychiatric hospitals as therapy, and forms a part of the education process in secondary schools and at the universities.

¹ Afro-Brazilian culture is the product of collaboration of several African cultures, indigenous cultures and European cultures. It was developed through resistance and adaptations to the environment and social changes in the 500 years of Brazilian history. Afro-Brazilian culture can also be described in accordance to Čapo-Žmegač (2007, p. 7) as result of negotiations and agreement between social actors, influenced by Africanisation of blacks' cultural institutions that occurred by the end of 19th century in both Central and Latin America. Most important institutions promoting Afro-Brazilian culture are *samba*, *candomblé* (religion), and *capoeira*.

Capoeira has established hierarchical organization and elaborated rules and rituals². The instructors and masters of *capoeira* are those who propagate social norms, values and beliefs about the role and development of *capoeira*. Masters emphasize the positive effects of *capoeira* and its role in learning for life. They mentioned that students of *capoeira* learn skills to face the challenges of living in Salvador such as violence, unemployment and social discrimination. *Capoeiristas* also allege that through practicing *capoeira* one learns how to control aggression. They quote that aggression is sometimes needed during the play, but it may not result in violence. Aggressive play and violence are perceived as two different phenomena in *capoeira*. The former is used when *capoeiristas* refer to dynamic play with more physical contact, the latter is perceived as intended harmful action or uncontrolled expression of emotions during the play. Aggression and violence within the institution of *capoeira* are described as distinct phenomena, not being consequently connected. Authors like Geen and Donerstein (1983), Berkowitz (1993), and Campbell (2005) - researching aggression and violence from the evolutionary psychology's point of view - do not point out such differences between aggression and violence. When describing violence they use words like affective aggression - to depict violent behaviour as consequence of anger or other emotions - and institutional aggression, which refers to violence of state institutions. In *capoeira* the expressions like *jogo agressivo* (aggressive play) and *jogo violento* (violent play) are used to depict different types of play, one accepted by the practitioners and the other rejected. There are also two other expressions used in the context of violence: *violência na capoeira* (violence in *capoeira*) and *capoeira violenta* (violent *capoeira*). The former can be explained with following statement of one of the masters:

Even if today violence is stigmatized in *capoeira* and students performing violence are punished by their teachers, there are still some groups promoting violence for different reasons. That is why there is still so much violence in *capoeira* (*violência na capoeira*).

The expression *capoeira violenta* mostly refers to institution of *capoeira*, meaning that the art was violent in the history as means of emancipation and fight against slavery and oppression.

The term is sometimes used in the same context as *jogo violento*:

² Rituals and rules are inconsistent in *capoeira*. There are differences between different groups in regards to performance of rituals, which are big enough, that we can not speak about formalization and rigid determination of the rules. For example we can note deviations in music, rhythm, number and type of instruments used in the ritual and some rules of play in different styles of *capoeira*. Despite these we can differentiate between two basic types of *capoeira*: *regional* and *angola*. In the ritual of *roda* we can note three types of speeches or lyrics: formal or religious lyrics, incantations, and informal lyrics - sometimes without created text.

Hoje na roda³ a capoeira violenta foi jogada. Por isso é sempre bom observar o jogo primero e depois entrar para jogar. (Violent *capoeira* was performed today in *roda*. Therefore it is always better to observe the play first, and then enter the *roda*.)(author's translation)

In my thesis I also present some of the main reasons for violence and depression in Salvador and its social consequences. As my interlocutors explained violent acts in Boca do Rio are performed mainly by the youngsters stilling money, cellular phones or anything of value. Money is then used to buy drugs, or to *curtir na fin da semana* (to have fun at the weekend). Many cases of depression in the hospital, in which I worked, were provoked by living conditions and family relationships. In some cases depression occurred as result of traumatic event, mostly connected with violence. Some interlocutors argued that there are many people depressed because they are not able to fulfil their goals or to take care of the family. They say that they work a lot, earning less than they would expect and are living in city quarters with no intimacy, constant noise and violence.

Ehrenberg (2010, pp. 15-17), for example, ascribes the potential reasons of depression to the modern way of life, which demands success, self-realization, progress and self-dependence from every individual. Depressive person's problem is his mental anguish that slows him down, almost to the point of immobility. His inhibition represents an obstacle which has to be overcome in order to fulfil the goals of a consumer way of life. Yet modern societies have developed also modern ways to cope with the problems such as depression. Ehrenberg (2010, p. 15) argues about the selling success of psychiatric pharmaceuticals in the 1960s. The discovery of antidepressants in 1957 was crucial in regards to healing methods of all types of depression. So called magic pills or neuroleptics, compounded from the chlorpromazine that was discovered in 1950s, have already been perceived among patients and among psychiatrists as substance that relieve tensions, increase energy, restore the power and don't alter the psyche at the time when Kuhn and Kline discovered antidepressant effects of imipramine (tricyclic) and iproniazide (monoamine oxidase inhibitor) (Ehrenberg, 2010, pp. 76-79). They had different approaches toward healing depression. For the former, antidepressants were correctors of troubled mood, and for the latter they were "psychic energizers" (Ehrenberg, 2010, p. 79). Despite all the claims that antidepressants can increase energy and motivation and bring joy to suffering individuals, patients involved in therapy

³ *Roda* is a circle formed by *capoeira* players, inside which the game is played by the two of them.

with *capoeira* - my fifteen months of fieldwork was partly carried out also in a psychiatric hospital - were lazy, tired, and not in the mood to participate in therapy, after they received their dosage of medications. Psychiatrist - responsible for prescription of medications - said, that patients are receiving various medicaments and that laziness and tiredness might be possible side effects of tranquilizers and anxiolytics.

Anthropological surveys in the field of mental health and studies of psychiatric treatments in psychiatry are more than necessary as they provide the non-medical discourse regarding mental health. In my discussions with psychiatrists and other therapists I have learned that in Salvador psychiatrists are inclined to promote drug based therapeutic approaches so exclusively that medical research approach toward mental health might be biased because of this and other effects of medicalization. As Ehrenberg (2010, pp. 22-23) writes, in many cases human psychological states - such as sadness, for example - are not correctly distinguished from disorder. Therapists in Juliano Moréira Hospital in Salvador have mentioned that sometimes they diagnose depression in those who are intensively sad for longer period, to provide more treatment possibilities for the patient. Some patients told me that they are constantly sad because of relationships they have in the family. They also mentioned the problems to cope with living conditions in their neighbourhood. The fact that they can not change the given situation irritates them and hollows their sadness. Ehrenberg (2010, p. 20) argues that even if the lay public is not aware of this, some psychological states are only the results of social circumstances and the modern way of life. Martin (in Ehrenberg, 2010, p. 20) on the one hand writes that depression is a "disease of un-connectedness" with environment and society, while for the Karp (1996) on the other hand, it is a problem of collective sensitivity to emotional stress. Ehrenberg (2010, p. 20) writes about a personal dislocation caused by the triple movement of medicalization, disconnection and postmodernization. He also writes that increasingly loose human connections contribute to an increase in depression. Ehrenberg's (2010) notion of medicalization - being transformation of social problems and human suffering into medical diagnoses - is just one of the explanations how medicalization processes may affect lay and professional public beliefs and choices regarding illness and treatments. Lock and Nguyen (2010, pp. 2-10) write that also the invention of new technologies in medicine can be explained as medicalization. Improvements in medical technologies are not only helping to ameliorate health but are also raising the questions how these technologies will be used. In some cases biomedical technologies give birth to new diagnoses as they enable manipulations that intervene in human bodies to make previously

unknown or inaccessible "objects" factually real. They bring about transformations, resulting in newly discovered knowledge about the human body that, in turn, influences subsequent interventions into it. Science of biomedicine is actively constructed by technology (Lock and Nguyen, 2010, pp. 16-18). According to Healy (1997), medicalization has led to the discovery of new diagnoses and treatments through the invention of new drugs. In the case of diagnosed depression, as he writes, antidepressant drugs are prescribed by psychiatrists - regardless to social background of the patient - shoving aside all other treatment methods as a second choice (Healy, 1997, pp. 2-4). Thus medicalization has an impact on number of medical diagnoses, yet in Salvador also some other factors than medicalization must be considered in regards to diagnoses of depression. Psychiatrists in Juliano Moréira Hospital would diagnose depression together with anxiety and schizophrenia especially in the cases, when they can not clearly define the symptoms of disorder and - as I already mentioned - when they want to provide additional, through insurance paid, treatment methods for the patient.

Anthropological analysis of the connection between *capoeira*, violence and depression is also important in the context of Brazilian social reality and understanding of its cultural institutions. Some Brazilian sociologists (Almeida et al., 2004; Ianni, 2004; Cubitt, 1995; Gaiarsa, 1993; Oliveira et al., 2000; Sodr e, 2006; Abramovay et al., 1999) search for the reasons of aggressive and violent behaviour in social structure and globalization. Ianni (2004) and Gaiarsa (1993) emphasize the influences of class conflicts, class differences and of the complex global capitalistic economic system. However, only some Salvadorians are violent and depressed, even if they all are confronted with same social reality of class differences and conflicts. My interlocutors mentioned that *capoeira* has a unifying role, bringing together different races and social classes in the *na o de capoeira* (*capoeira* nation).

There are not many anthropological studies that examine *capoeira* generally. The ones that do have mostly been done by Afro-Brazilian scholars and tend - as I have noticed reading their works - to glorify *capoeira* as indispensable institution in fight against the past and present repression of Afro-Brazilians (Oliveira Cruz, 2006, pp. 30-31). Non-Brazilian scholars who studied *capoeira* are few: Downey (2005), Mason (2010), Talmon-Chvaicer (2007), Stephens and Delamont (2006), Lowell Lewis (1992). Even if they all present historical development of *capoeira*, their research focus is different. Downey's study is phenomenological analysis of *capoeira* rituals and styles, while Talmon-Chvaicer analyses *capoeira* in the context of Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations. She claims that *capoeira* was developed as leisure activity,

which is important for my analysis of connections between *capoeira* and depression. Also Mason's work is important for my thesis, as he writes about the impact of culturally empowered activities on individual's psychic and physical conditions, saying that he is investigating how culturally empowered repertoires of skill lead to deep changes in the perceptual sensitivities and physical capabilities of the practitioners (Mason, 2008, p. 1).

This thesis will provide an insight into the connection between the *diasporic*⁴ martial art *capoeira*, which is at the same time also a significant social institution, and some of the relevant problems of modern societies. The life-style of an average Brazilian from Salvador is in some aspect not much different from any other person living in a big city elsewhere in the world. An average Salvadorian would go for a work around seven o'clock in the morning, using his own car or more common public transportation. He would work till late afternoon, and would stop in the shopping mall on the way back home. Some would go directly to academia (gym) for daily recreation or to the church. When daily activities are finished an average Salvadorian would go for a dinner or prepare it back home. After he would watch some television or have a conversation with room mates or family while drinking beer. Finally till midnight, at least in the quarter where I was conducting my fieldwork, everyone would go to the bed. Yet there were many differences notable between the life-style in Salvador and the one back home. For example constant presence of street violence in Salvador, specific urbanisation and cultural particularities of *baianos* (those coming from Bahia) are some of those factors that constitute Salvadorian specific life-style. One of such cultural particularities is the institution of *capoeira* that in the first place is perceived as physical activity but due to its historical development and similarity of its rituals with those from *candomblé*⁵ and *samba de pé*, we can consider it as a relevant social institution of African diaspora or even - in Johnson's words - as *diasporic* practice. Johnson (2007, p. 14) argues that *diasporic* practices are memorial imaginations of authenticity placed in a new environment. In these institutions we cannot speak about imitations of "traditional" ritual methods, but rather about creating new identifications and social adoptions through the process of migration and the reestablishment of known original relationships, that influences the recreation of new ritual methods.

⁴ Despite the broad usage of the term *diaspora*, Johnson (2007, p. 10) argues that it can only be related to three issues: dislocation of the group, flawed assimilation of the group in a new society, and sensations of separation and the continuation of relationships with places and people at the original location.

⁵ The Afro-Brazilian religion of people called Nagó, which derives from the African cosmology of Yoruba population. In the Caribbean it is also known as santería, sometimes also referred to Cuban voodoo.

Even if *capoeira* was developed in Brazil, it contains several ritual elements rooting in West-African traditions and plays important role in the daily life of Afro-Brazilians. As a relevant social institution regarding its educational and identification role in Salvadorian local societies, *capoeira* has an impact on coping with aggression, violence and depression.

Topics and Background of Research

In my thesis I write about social beliefs regarding *capoeira* in relation to aggressive behaviour, violence and depressive disorders in Salvador, Bahia. I try to offer a holistic perspective on the connection between aggression, violence, depression and *capoeira*.

I present the opinions and views of *capoeira* practitioners regarding the before-mentioned phenomena and its role in coping with problems caused by aggression, violence and depression. My observations and information gathered from conversations, discussions and interviews are compared with different theories regarding violence, aggression and depression.

The causes of violence and depression could be ascribed to poverty and social differences in Brazil. Gaiarsa (1993), Oliveira et al. (2000), Sodr  (2006) and Abramovay et al. (1999) write about different problems caused by poverty in Brazil. Oliveira et al. (2000) present the violence and its consequences in Bahia, while for example Abramovay et al. (1999) write about the youngsters' gangs, and reasons for violent behaviour of their members. The authors are not ascribing gang violence exclusively to the poor. In Salvador also rich people are violent and depressed, so the reasons for development of those phenomena must be multiple and complex. However most of my interlocutors ascribe the causes of violence and depression to poverty and unemployment, so I am presenting some of the Brazilian statistical data regarding poverty and unemployment below.

According to IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estat stica, the Brazilian index of poverty varies between 14.08% and 69.94%. Salvador with a mostly Afro-Brazilian and mixed population has an index of 35.76%. In addition, Salvador has 36.000 homeless people. Brazilian unemployment in November 2010 was 6.1%; in Salvador there were 26.14% unemployed Afro-Brazilians and 18.1% unemployed Euro-Brazilians. Due to the high rates of

poverty and unemployment as well as to the general belief that they are the main causes of violence and depression, I had to consider influence of these factors on self-esteem and mental or physical health.

My interlocutors mentioned that for them it is of great importance to support the family. The ones living in my neighbourhood claim that there is a constant lack of basic resources and finances to live a normal life: provide good education for kids, pay health insurance, furnish the house, buy sufficient clothes and food, etc. Youngsters are mostly frustrated⁶ because of their economic status and their helplessness to change their situation. They claim that violence is often a tool for providing financial resources. My interlocutors also emphasized the occurrence of mental problems between the poor; therefore, we can consider poverty factors as important and possible causes for lower self-esteem and a negative self-image. Some Afro-Brazilians also connected their poor economic position with skin colour. They were in general ashamed of their origins and skin colour. As they said light skin is considered more beautiful and can *a priori* be perceived as a sign of wealth⁷. Some of them are using rather interesting method to make it lighter. They expose themselves to the sun covered with hydro peroxide cream, convinced that it would reduce the skin's pigmentation or at least make their body hair white, which would give the skin a lighter shade.

Such stigmatization of dark skin colour might be connected to slavery and colonial economy of Brazil, which can still be perceived in today's labour and capital relationships. According to Fontes et al. (2012) average real monthly earnings of non-white Brazilians in 2007 were 817,60 reals, when for white Brazilians were 1.657,50 reals. There were 30.25 % low paid workers among non-white Brazilians and 14.45 % among white Brazilians in 2007. Also Scheper-Hughes (1987) writes that low paid workers on sugar cane plantation are non-white Brazilians. Cubbit (1995, pp. 63-78) talks about governmental investments, planned mass stock-breeding, sugar cane harvesting for ethanol production and mineral exploration where cheap labour power is needed. According to her, they are supported by the World Bank, USA and a few Brazilian corporations such as Petrobras, which in the name of progress exploit Brazilian natural and human labour resources. The important production in Brazil represents

⁶ I will present the definitions of frustration later on in this thesis. For now it will suffice to say that frustration is a psychological state caused by unaccomplished goals due to external or internal obstacles.

⁷ Material wealth, meaning plenty of money, a well paid job, a big house, the ability to go travelling, to buy luxurious things, eat in restaurants. Especially valued are Nike sport shoes.

the harvesting of sugar cane. In the 1980s Brazilian government introduced the PROALCO⁸ project and managed to become self-sufficient regarding road transportation fuel. In 2008 the sugar cane production contributed 2% of total Brazilian GDP (Fava et al., 2010), but the social differences were not reduced through that project. On the contrary, as Scheper-Huges (1987, p. 51) argues, the sugar cane plantation workers are amongst the poorest citizens of Brazil, with around 40 US\$ monthly income in the 1987. The situation has changed since then, but sugar cane workers from Northeast are still among worst paid workers in Brazil earning 666,20 reais (around 240 euro) per month in 2008 (Fava et al., 2010). Such underpaid workers would use any opportunity to escape from the given misery and migrate to cities, full of expectations. However, they are also confronted with the misery of unemployment and hard living conditions in urban areas.

The reasons for aggression, violence and depression might therefore be easily ascribed only to social and financial distress. Aggressive behaviour and violence in such context could be understood as coping with and revolting against the current political, economic and social situation. Depression however has to be considered from the perspective of individual's reactions on living and economic conditions, and daily problems and distress. The causes of depression, aggression and violence cannot be ascribed only to the current socio-political and economic situation. We also have to consider other social and individual factors, such as socialisation, interpersonal relationships, and relations with social institutions, the personal attributes of an individual, lifestyle, nutrition, substance abuse, life space, and intimacy. Kleinman (1986, pp. 110-142) claims that socio-political and cultural changes in China have had a significant impact on the appearance of depression. However, more crucial are the relations of patients with their families and friends as well as working conditions and work relationships. Healy (1997, pp. 14-24) argues, however, that pharmaceutical industry caused drastic changes regarding views on mental illness and healing, not only in western countries but also in those societies where bio-medicine is at the forefront of every treatment of an illness. Healy (1997, p. 43) writes that the number of diagnoses in mental health has rapidly increased in the second half of 20th century, which does not necessarily mean that the number

⁸ Project PROALCO should enable cheaper production of fuel. Most plantations could be found in the north-eastern part of Brazil.

of illnesses has also increased proportionally. He is convinced that the increase in diagnoses has to do with the discovery of antidepressants⁹.

As I argue about connections between *capoeira*, aggression, violence and depression in this thesis, I will not only analyse the sicknesses, social problems and how people cope with them, but also the social role of *capoeira* and its historical changes. *Capoeira* can, with its properties (dance, religious ritual, music), be understood as a folkloristic activity, sport and cultural institution¹⁰. Different scholars define *capoeira* differently. I do not give a rigid and consistent definition of *capoeira* in thesis but rather describe it in the context of society and location; where it was and continues to be developed. I define its connection and relationship toward aggression, violence and depression, and for better understanding of its position today and the role and interpretations of *capoeira* in Brazilian society I also analyse the historical development of the institution and art. The period between the beginning of 19th and middle of the 20th century was important for *capoeira* as it is known and practiced today. In that time, according to some scholars, *capoeira* underwent the greatest structural, hierarchical and social changes (Silva, 1997; Liberac, 2004; Rego, 1968; Nestor Capoeira, 2002). Nestor Capoeira (2002) argues that *capoeira* of the 1930s was the strongest means of expressing Afro-Brazilian culture besides *candomblè*. Afro-Brazilians were excluded from the Brazilian society with the establishment of a sovereign kingdom in 1821 and especially with the abolition of slavery and the rise of the Republic in 1889. Brazil has rather promoted itself as the land of collision between European and indigenous cultures of *Tupi* and *Guarani*.

Capoeira existed as a political institution between the years 1864 and 1889, but it was more of an *incognito* apparatus of repression ruled by the leading conservative party. With the rise of the Republic, the new Brazilian dominant class prohibited *capoeira*, since it was considered to be the strongest political opponent and number one enemy of the state. Despite its trivialisation and criminalisation, *capoeira* remained an important part of Afro-Brazilian culture together with *candomblé* and samba, through the years of prohibition and persecution as well.

⁹ In 1952 doctors discovered the soothing effects of chlorpromazine on patients with depressive disorders, which represented a critical development in the psychopharmacological industry in general. Chlorpromazine was initially used for asthma.

¹⁰ The expression Afro-Brazilian culture encompasses the traditions, beliefs, music, dance and other institutions of the Afro-Brazilian society.

In 1937 the dictator Vargas de-criminalised *capoeira* and *Mestre* Bimba (Manuel dos Reis Machado) was the first to found the *Academia* (school) of *capoeira*. Institutionalised *capoeira* became easier to command and at the same time was placed under the control of the state. In the 1960s *capoeira* was developed as a sport activity and became the means of leisure and relaxation, but was only recognised as an official sport activity by the Brazilian government in 1972. Today various *Mestres*¹¹ instruct *capoeira* in primary and secondary schools. Students can choose *capoeira* as an optional course. Despite the changes in its image it still has negative connotations in society. It is still perceived as connected with street violence and crime, therefore its role is unclear. On the one hand the master is a respected member of local society; on the other hand there are parents who would do anything to prevent their children to become involved with *capoeira*. They consider it a violent activity or *coisa violenta*. Although it is true that until the end of the 1970s sharp weapons such as *canevete* (jack-knife) and *navalha* (razor) were used by *capoeiristas*, that remain today only a part of history.

Methodological Frame

My thesis is based on the analysis and comparison of field-research data collected in Salvador, the capital of the state of Bahia, between the years 2004 and 2007, with the literature about *capoeira*, aggression, violence, and depression. With my former partner we spent 15 months between inhabitants of the so-called *favelas*¹². We lived for five months with a *Contramestre*¹³ of *capoeira* in the Boca do Rio quarter with whom we got acquainted already in the pre-fieldwork visits to Salvador, when we spend four months in the house of a dance instructor in the Garcia quarter. *Contramestre* was the dance instructor's sister boyfriend at that time. After we have already got to know most of the people in the neighbourhood of Boca do Rio, during the last period of our research which terminated in December 2007, we rented a house there. It is important to mention that we met the dance instructor already in Europe on one of *capoeira* events where he was giving samba dance lessons. We have already practiced *capoeira* at that time and our professor invited the dance instructor to the event he organised. What I am trying to depict is how an anthropologist can approach the alien society he wishes to study, using the informal channels of social acquaintanceships. In our case the institution of *capoeira* was not only the object of our

¹¹ *Mestre*: master of *capoeira* represents the educator, moral leader and role model.

¹² Poor city quarters or slums. Some have electricity, water and public services, but are mostly inhabited by the poor or unemployed, mainly by the Afro-Brazilian population.

¹³ *Contramestre* is an instructor of *capoeira*, one level below *Mestre*.

research but also the means how to get access to the people within institution and also to the other members of communities where specific *capoeira* school operates. Thus integration into *capoeira* society was not a significant obstacle once my fieldwork started, yet it was more difficult to get integrated into local community of Boca do Rio. Since the locals are far less suspicious of couples the first step to integration was to present ourselves as a Slovenian couple that came to research institution of *capoeira*. Especially the men do not trust single male Europeans, as many of them visit Salvador for sex-tourism. The curiosity, which I must point out as typical Salvadorian characteristic, was the key protagonist of closing up with neighbours. They started to ask questions and some have invited us to their houses already after the first week living in the neighbourhood. It is also important to mention that Salvadorians are used to hang round on the streets in the afternoons, so even if we are not used to do so in Slovenia, I started to greet everyone on the way out and back home. They are also more than ready to start conversation once the first contact is made. However curiosity was not enough to get really accepted as a neighbour or even *negão*, as dark skin Salvadorians would call their pals or friends. First I was called *gringo*, than *estrangeiro* (foreigner), than *vizinho* (neighbour) and after few months I was upgraded into *negão* (pal). But it was not simply the time that enabled the integration. I had to get involved into a local life and activities. First I got involved in longer conversations with the neighbours, when after couple of weeks I was already drinking a beer with them in the local bar or on the barbecues they organised. But the most important of all was that I started to help the neighbours around with some small construction repairs. I have for example changed the cracked plumbing in our house where four families lived, then I have helped the other neighbours with some construction material transportation, I have further helped to install the cable for local internet - we had to connect the cable from the garage where one of the neighbours operated local internet café with the only existing internet junction in local school - and least but not the last I have helped carrying the sick kid into the nearest hospital that was half an hour walking distance from where we lived. Once you become *negão* to someone, the normal polite greeting phrase *Bom dia* (Good morning) or *Boa tarde* (Good afternoon) would sound *Ia ie negão, tudo bem?* (Everything O.K. pal?). Yet for an anthropologist there are also some other advantages of being *negão*, such as allowance to speak with people about personal problems. They would confide him the details hidden from the eyes of participating observer. I learned more about the views, beliefs, values and habits of my neighbours in such intimate informal conversations than in in-depth interviews or even observations. Every day after coming home

in the evening, I have noted this information into my diary. Peace by peace the puzzle of life in Salvadorian *favela* came together.

In order to be integrated into the *capoeira* "society" and become part of the family¹⁴, I had to practice *capoeira* in several schools and spend much of my time with other *capoeira* students and teachers. Through daily conversations I learned details about their everyday life and their attitude towards *capoeira*. I attempted to find out how *capoeira* had influenced their lives and personal development. I mostly targeted practitioners who chose to practice *capoeira* in order to cope with aggression and unbalanced emotions or because they were depressed, some even violent. I also became familiar with several masters who instruct *capoeira* in *favelas*. They pick up children and youngsters from the streets and try to provide them with a basic education and save them from a life of crime and street violence. Boca do Rio is considered one of the most violent quarters of Salvador. The higher crime rate might be due to the proximity of luxurious areas and shopping malls that attract thieves.

My field-research was conducted in several stages and sites in Salvador, which proved convenient for gathering broader research examples, and was also useful for coping with bureaucratic, financial and life-style difficulties. Firstly Brazilian migration laws only permit a six months tourist visa and it is difficult to acquire a research or working visa. Secondly, during my absences from the field I was able to go through and reflect upon the gathered material and prepare for the second stage. Thirdly, over the period of six months back home I could work and obtain enough money for each research period. In Salvador I had to rent a house, pay bills, buy food, use public transportation, and pay memberships or contributions in the institutions that were the subjects of my research, spending around 500 euro per month. It is also important to mention that it is extremely difficult to sustain the living conditions in the *favela* over a longer period of time, so back home I could rest and study the relevant literature. The intense and structured work in *favelas* is disturbed by the constant noise and the inhabitants' lifestyle. Hann and Hart (2011, p. 165) argue, that the traditional approach to spend at least a year in the field, learn language and execute profound research is slowly changing as anthropologists acquire complementary knowledge from outside their discipline and often work within a multi-disciplinary framework. Also the pressure to publish fast, as

¹⁴ A *capoeira* group represents a larger family where the master is perceived as the father, since many children live with single mothers or even with their grandparents. In many cases fathers leave the family, because they are without a job and are not capable to take care of them. They leave out of shame.

consequence of "market discipline tyranny", influences the duration - and sadly also the quality - of the fieldwork. In any case, regardless of obstacles, the total duration of fieldwork might be even prolonged through fieldwork conducted in stages. Scheper-Hughes (1987, p. 15) writes that her fieldwork in total duration of fourteen months, was parted in four sections between the years 1982 and 1987. She further writes that even if "anthropologist has professional and moral obligation to get the facts as accurately as possible, the facts are necessarily selected and interpreted from the moment we decide to count one thing and ignore another, or attend this ritual but not another, so that anthropological understanding is necessarily partial and is always hermeneutic" (Scheper-Hughes, 1987, p. 23).

Even if I collected data over three shorter periods and in different sites, I had to make sure that the quality and quantity of information were adequate for analysis in my thesis. Marcus (1995, p.100) presenting his Multi-Sited Ethnography model writes, that it is perhaps anthropologists' difficulty of doing intensive ethnography at any site and the satisfaction that comes from such work when it is done well that would give them pause when the anthropologist becomes mobile and still claims to have done good fieldwork.

The beneficial factor in my case was that differences between life in Brazil and elsewhere in the world are not too big due to the globalisation processes. Most urban societies are consumer-oriented and share a common set of values, attitudes, beliefs and goals. Cultural differences are therefore easier to surmount. As a matter of fact I was at risk to lose the objectivity of anthropologist, and to become *capoeirista* being involved in *capoeira* as practitioner. Delamont (1995, p. 14) states: "Every anthropology department has a story about promising student who set out to do study of Italian circus performers or French gypsies or Belgian waffle makers and never came back."

My main task as anthropologist was to establish friendships and relationships with members of the society. People in Salvador are used to constant migrations and are therefore more open to passing relationships with many people. Therefore I didn't have many problems to get assimilated into the society and to collect enough relevant data through profound observation, conversation and interviews. I also participated in most activities of local inhabitants. In the context of my research I can mention that *capoeira* events are organised a few times per year and not simultaneously within different *capoeira* groups. Therefore with good research planning, I didn't miss important cultural events.

An important part of research was also conducted in a psychiatric institution, more precisely in CENA¹⁵, a department of the Juliano Moréira mental hospital. I conducted some interviews and case studies there, and I also led the movement therapies with *capoeira*. In such a way I was able to become aware of the attitudes that the general and the professional public in hospital have toward aggression, violence and depression. I have also collected useful data regarding *capoeira*, violence and depression through my tutoring of English in primary school based in a very poor *favela*. The school was frequented by children from the poorest and most dangerous suburbs of Salvador, some also practicing *capoeira*.

Presenting myself not only as *capoeirista*, but also as anthropologist researching the relationships within *capoeira* and attitudes of its practitioners towards aggression, violence and mental illnesses, I was confronted with some ethical questions. Firstly I had to ask the permission to use the real names of *capoeira* schools and the hospital where I conducted my research. I got the permission of all in research included *capoeiristas* to use their real names, however I have decided to change some names in cases where conversation topic was rather delicate or my observations and explanations might disclose some unpleasant facts about relationships within the certain *capoeira* group. I also changed the names in those cases where discrepancy between that what *capoeiristas* speak and what they do was noticed. Luckily I was not confronted with the dilemma whether to include such noticed discrepancies into the theses or not as some anthropologists are (Šantek, 2006, p. 63). If they deal with delicate issues in societies where identities are easily recognised even if being changed, they must reconsider including such material into their representation. In my case I faced such ethical reconsidering regarding the information about the patients of the psychiatric hospital and about those included in the research from the primary school. However I decided to include this material with changed names into the thesis. Regarding material about the patients I did not mention in which period they were participating at the therapies and what were their exact diagnosed mental pathologies.

Secondly I had to decide whether to explain to the patients that they will be included in the research or not, and I decided to do so. Of course to be allowed to take notices and converse with the patients I had to gain the permission of the therapists and at first place from hospital's

¹⁵ Centre for reintegration of mental patients.

director. By coincidence the director of CENA was the friend of *capoeira* master that was also my teacher, so for exchange to carry out the therapies with *capoeira* I was allowed to perform the research and collect data in the hospital. Yet I will present only a few material collected in the primary school where I have not explained that I am conducting an anthropological fieldwork. I also don't want to include opinions and views of under aged without their parents' permission.

My research results are based on semi-structured interviews informal conversations and chats, observations and participation in local activities as well as in daily life which according to Čapo Žmegač (2007, pp. 26-27) enables analysis of two levels of reality - reality of the discourse and the reality of interaction. I compare my results with the already existing Brazilian and global literature in the field of *capoeira*, aggression, violence and depression. I have observed the general public and the professional attitude towards *capoeira*, aggression, violence and depression. I attempted to perceive the main and latent reasons of aggression, violence and depression and to connect them with the institution and the art of *capoeira*, which is why I had to undergo a historical review of *capoeira* in the first section, then analyse the mentioned phenomena in the second and third section and connect the theoretical data with my research outcomes.

In this thesis the Brazilian martial art is analysed within the context of Afro-Brazilian cultural institutions. In the following chapters I describe *capoeira* characteristics and depict the process of the historical transformation of the political and cultural institution of the depressed and marginal population into an educational and therapeutic institution of the present time. The influences of *capoeira* on aggression, violence and depression and *vice versa* are analysed in this thesis, as well as the past and present links between the named phenomena and the social role of *capoeira*.

In order to gather the field data I conducted 28 in-depth interviews with men and women between 20 and 55 years old, not counting the random conversations and discussions with neighbours, *capoeira* practitioners, patients, therapists and others. The in-depth interviews are between 40 minutes and 2 hours long - the duration depending on the person's available time and their willingness to talk. Nine teachers and seven students of *capoeira*, three therapists, six patients and two school teachers and university professors were included in my research. *Capoeira* practitioners are members of five different schools that are joined in two big

Salvadorian *capoeira* groups. Therapists and patients are from the Juliano Moréira Hospital and teachers from the Emanuel Lisboa Primary School and the *Faculdade Social Bahiana*. I noted all my observations and informal chats in two diaries; one of them included my personal views regarding the expressed opinions. In addition, six case studies were also included in the research; two with neighbours, two of *capoeira* practitioners and two with the patients at the Juliano Moréira Hospital.

PART ONE

Chapter 1: Development of *Capoeira*

1.1 *Capoeira* in Salvador

Capoeira could be defined as Brazilian martial art but such definition is simplistic and does neither match the heterogeneous perceptions of the general public nor the professional body regarding *capoeira*. Downey (1998), Liberac (2004) and Oliveira Cruz (2006) argue that perceptions about *capoeira* change in space and time. In the 19th century for example, *capoeira* was a paramilitary and political institution and simultaneously represented a means of emancipation and class struggle. *Capoeira* was violent and involved in any kind of fighting regardless of political orientation, class or race. Today *capoeira* is a sport activity, folklore, martial art, tourist attraction and therapeutic activity. Even if it appears in many contexts, its main venue is the street. In Salvador many schools have presentations of so called *capoeira pra turista ver*¹⁶ on the main *Pelorinho* square *Terrero de Jesus*, or at market place *Mercado modelo*. Also my first contact with *capoeira* happened at public presentation in 2002 when I visited Brazil as a tourist. Some masters of *capoeira* do not agree with such trivialisation of the art and argue that *capoeira* always was an instrument of emancipation and martial art and should stay as such also in present. They argue that the image of *capoeira* is being spoiled through the use of *capoeira* for promotional and profitable purposes. However, after I met *capoeira* on promotional public presentation, I have first decided to start practicing the art. Later on the institution of *capoeira* became not only the main object of my anthropological research but also led me to the topics I have studied during the fieldwork. Ideas about *capoeira* in the general public are controversial, so my discussions opened several questions regarding violence and aggression within the institution of *capoeira* and the social role of the art. Some perceive *capoeira* as an aggressive and violent activity, interrelated with crime. Others praise it as an important part of the Afro-Brazilian folklore or as a sport activity and dance. Others again relate *capoeira* to the Afro-Brazilian religion *candomblé*.

¹⁶ *Capoeira* for tourists

Despite these heterogeneous perceptions of *capoeira*, there exists an internal consensus inside the institution of *capoeira* saying that the art should be de-stigmatised, partly uniformed regarding its basic styles and that everyone should strive to improve its image. Therefore, many masters are critical of today's development of *capoeira* and disagree with the emphasis on violent play and instructing of *capoeira* outside of Brazil, without the supervision of skilled Brazilian masters¹⁷. Decanio (1998, p. 8) notes that *capoeira* is forgetting its roots, its origin and its own culture. It can be compared to gladiator games in the Roman Empire, without rules, codices and civilisation norms. For Decanio (ibid.) *capoeira* has become a merciless and lawless barbarian activity. On the other hand many *capoeira* practitioners claim that outside of Brazil *capoeira* is practiced as a dance and cannot be compared with the Brazilian one. This can also be noted in some *capoeira* songs:

*Capoéira estrangeira eu mato,
capoéira brasileira é pra matar.*

(Foreign *capoeira* I kill, Brazilian *capoeira* is to kill; author's translation).

1.2 Short Historical Overview of *Capoeira* and the Development of *Malandragem*

In this subchapter I present the historical development and changes in *capoeira* with emphasis on today's relationship between *capoeira* and some problems of society. Despite my rather general overview of *capoeira*'s history and development, the analysis will serve to understand the background of institutional formation within *capoeira* that will allow the understanding of its role in Afro-Brazilian society and its connections to aggression, violence and depression. Colonisation, diaspora, the development of slave economy, cosmologies of the enslaved populations, their adaptation to new realities and the environment in Brazil, their desire to survive and their emancipation are only some of the events and factors that have influenced the development of *capoeira* as a social institution. The same factors have also influenced the establishment of rules, costumes, hierarchies and concepts within the institution. Therefore, in the frame of the short historical description of *capoeira*, I present some of the theories of its origin and development, but most of all I analyse the appearance of an important concept

¹⁷ Many young instructors leave Brazil and settle in Europe, North America, Australia or New Zealand. They form their own groups and regardless if they have the required authorisation and formation or not, they proclaim themselves as *Mestre*. Sometimes they instruct *capoeira* without considering the established rules in Brazil.

related to *capoeira*, the *malandragem*¹⁸. Through it the interpersonal and other relationships in *capoeira* as well as in broader Salvadorian society are established and controlled. The understanding of *malandragem* is important also in the context of the relationship between *capoeira*, aggression, violence and depression. *Malandragem* in *capoeira* is the characteristic that transforms martial art into a survival technique, therefore the questions to be asked are where, when, how and why has it appeared or was developed in *capoeira*. Since the qualities personified in *malandragem* are not only typical of *capoeira*, the question to ask might be why *malandro* has become a synonym for a good *capoeira* player and *malandragem* his most valuable skill.

To begin with a historical analysis of *capoeira*, I will presume that the art was developed in Brazil. However, I have to consider that the theories on beliefs about the foundation of *capoeira* are not consistent. Placing the appearance of *capoeira* into a timeframe is already a difficult task because of the small number of existing documents on slavery in Brazil. Some scholars like Rego (1968) and Vieira (1998) argue that *capoeira* was developed immediately after the beginning of the African diaspora in Brazil, others like Liberac (2004) and Oliveira Cruz (2006) consider *capoeira* as a product of urban street life and traditions in the 18th century.

It might be even more difficult to establish the theory regarding the development of *malandragem*. It is not a product of *capoeira* but one of its basic postulates. Liberac (2004, pp. 52-82) argues that *malandragem* became an important feature of *capoeira* in the 19th century when it was used as a fighting technique on the streets of Salvador. Street *malta*s (gangs) had to be malicious and cunning in the fights between them and the police. Some members of the gangs also worked as personal guards of politicians and even the king, therefore they had to be smart, fast and effective in their attacks and defences. As I have mentioned they used weapons as *navalha* and *faca*, which had to be hidden and a surprise in order to be effective. The tactic of surprise is also considered as one of the main characteristics of *malandragem*. Liberac (2004, pp. 70-82) describes *malandragem* as a street cunning and survival technique. He depicts one of the conflicts between the famous

¹⁸*Malandragem* is a capability to read others' intentions and hide your own. It is the art of survival of the repressed, using all accessible means. It is the skill to handle life obstacles and challenges, the art of negotiation, diplomacy and seduction. In a positive sense it means the ability to cheat, not to be destroyed. In a negative sense it denotes the insidiousness and hypocrisy of using all means to win or control others. It is ultimate characteristic of a good *capoeira* player, which can only be achieved through years of practice and fights or plays. *Malandro* is the person who uses *malandragem*.

capoeirista from the beginning of the 20th century with the *apelido* (nickname) *Três Pedações* and the notorious chief of Salvadorian police and the adversary of *capoeira*, *Ludgero Alves Santana*:

Três Pedações was sitting with his legs stretched out on the pavement, when Ludgero Alves Santana accompanied by two girls passed by. Sitting *capoeirista* tripped up one of the girls and Ludgero reacted with violence. However, Três Pedações was expecting a conflict; he jumped on his feet and attacked back with *navalha*. After he injured the policeman, he managed to calmly walk away and disappear into the crowd. (Liberac, 2004, p. 73) (author's translation from Portuguese).

Also, Filho (in Ríbano, 1999, pp. 22-23) claims that *capoeira* and with it connected *malandragem* are urban phenomena, developed on the streets of some Brazilian cities as survival techniques. However, *capoeira* first of all represents a cultural rather than physical combat against the dominant class and its repressive apparatus. *Malandragem* is perceived as a fighting technique. According to Filho *capoeira* was initially developed as a leisure activity in the 18th century and became an emancipated institution later on. As Filho argues, the art of *capoeira* was developed by slaves named *capoeiros*. They carried goods for sale to harbours in baskets named *capú*. Through *capoeira* they preserved African rituals, music and dances of various peoples. *Capoeira* was developed as a fighting technique later on, in the 19th century.

Most of my interlocutors disagree with such a theory of *capoeira*'s origin proclaimed by Liberac and Filho. They connect *capoeira* with the fighting for liberation and emancipation and not with leisure and fun. However, later on I will try to show that *capoeira* was indeed a technique to release frustration. Although the myths about fearless warriors such as *Zumbi* and *Besouro Mangaga*¹⁹ are difficult to ignore, they are easier to believe than the infamous theory of *capoeira* as a leisure technique. Many *capoeira* songs are about heroes and *capoeira* warriors. Some of them emphasize the role of *capoeirista* soldiers in the Brazilian wars as well, for example the most famous one, which is about the war with Paraguay on the river Paraná and the soldiers wishing to return home:

Paraná ieee, Paraná ie Paraná

Vou embora, vou embora (I am leaving, I am leaving) *Paraná*

¹⁹ The first one was the leader of *quilombo Palarmes*, and the second one a fearless street fighter at the end of the 19th century.

como eu ja diz eu vou (as I have already said, I will go) *Paraná*

Eu aqui não sou querido (I am not welcome here) *Paraná*

mas na minha terra eu sou (but in my homeland I am) *Paraná*.

Paraná iee... (author's translation from Portuguese).

Undoubtedly, the war with Paraguay was one of the most important events for the development of *capoeira*. It preconditioned the political enforcement of *capoeira*, although the stories of heroism between *capoeiristas* are exaggerated and idealistic. I could not find any proofs in literature that *capoeira* was used as a fighting technique in the war between Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. Rego (1968, p. 257) claims as well that the war with Paraguay was the crucial moment for the development of *capoeira*, yet he doubts that the art was actually used in the field of combat. *Capoeiristas* made good use of the war to improve the image of the art that had already at the beginning of the 19th century been stigmatized as the domain of idlers and scoundrels. Stories of heroic acts of *capoeiristas* and their merits for Brazil's victory have improved the relationships between *capoeira* and the leading conservative party and the crown. However, Rego (1968, pp. 257-258) emphasizes that the sources of information claiming that *capoeira* was used as an attack/defence technique in this war are unreliable, since historians have not found proof of them. Thus *capoeiristas* were involved in the war but were mostly in the reserve troops (Rego, 1968, pp. 257-258). Such opinions are not accepted by *capoeiristas* even if the argument does not match the general *capoeira* public beliefs about the social role of *capoeira* and its origins. *Mestre* Henrique and other masters believe that *capoeira* and the indispensable *malandragem* were both developed at the beginning of the diaspora in the 16th century. The art was practiced by slaves in *senzalas*²⁰, where they practiced martial arts for liberation purposes. They had to mask their intentions in order to be able to attack technologically and physically stronger guards on plantations where they worked. They had to choose the right moment and strategy for escape. They also had to hide their rituals, religion, martial arts and politics, consequently developing a new form of Afro-Brazilian culture.

If I consider that the physical and psychological survival are fundamental tasks of every living being, I can presume that the enslaved population has developed the appropriate techniques to

²⁰ These are buildings on large estates where slaves resided.

preserve physical and psychological integrity in the new environment and conditions in the first place. In regards to the non-proportional distribution of physical²¹, technological and political power between the Portuguese coloniser and the enslaved African population, I can presume that indirect methods of fighting like guerrilla, diversion and terrorism became legitimate means to achieve emancipation and liberation. Such methods acquire the capability to conceal intentions, to seduce and to be clever. All this can be described with one word: *malandragem*. Despite the general belief about the development and role of *capoeira*, there are only a few songs describing *capoeira* as a means of liberation before the 19th century. Therefore there is a chance, as I will explain later in this thesis, that *capoeira* more likely represented a means of reestablishment of social respect and internal emancipation of the enslaved men. Many times I heard claims that *capoeira* served as a fighting technique for those who managed to escape. With *capoeira* they resisted to be recaptured and preserved their culture. I think that I cannot consider *capoeira* as a strictly physical means for re-establishing freedom and emancipation, but rather I should take into consideration its role in the cultural renaissance of the enslaved population. We must see *capoeira* as a myth that has raised hope for possible liberation amongst Afro-Brazilians. According to Malinowski (in Segal, 1998, p. 176) myth has a cultural power and co-creates a social reality: "*It is constantly regenerated; every historical change creates its mythology, which is, however, indirectly related to historical facts.*" As I will demonstrate later on, the stories of *capoeira* change, they are invented and are being told in accordance with the social changes and the changes inside the institution.

I have argued that the main goal of the enslaved African people was not physical resistance, but rather the reestablishment of political, cultural and religious power. The Portuguese perhaps did not respect the slaves because of their underdeveloped technological skills, but they were aware of their cultural and political power, which had to be repressed in its roots. To avoid a rebellion, they put members of various peoples together, so that former enemies lived together in the same *senzalas*. But the new situation and the extreme conditions brought the mix of people together and a new culture was developed, a mix of different peoples and their habits amongst the enslaved people. They all had a new common enemy and I can presume that the journey of liberation and emancipation started almost simultaneously with the beginning of the diaspora. They joined their knowledge, experiences, traditions, beliefs

²¹ Here I argue about the physical power of a certain group demonstrated in numbers and their knowledge of combat techniques and technological resources.

and fighting techniques. The conditions lead to an amalgamation of life-styles and to the cooperation of different cultures, which according to Lévi-Strauss (1962, p. 42), can bring about improvements and changes in working and fighting techniques, rituals, etc. to such a level of complexity that it allows all groups to have domination over the environment. Lévi-Strauss, who differentiates between static and cumulative history already in his previous works, defends the theory that only isolated cultures could stay static because all cooperation leads to cumulative history.

Therefore, there is no cumulative society that would be cumulative by and after it. Cumulative history is not an attribute of specific cultures or societies. It stems more in their behaviour than in their nature. It expresses a particular existential manner of the culture that is nothing else than their way to co-exist (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 46).

I can presume that during the epoch of slave economy in Brazil and through the process of diaspora an establishment of circumstances has had as consequences a cumulative history and a mixture of various cultures. A mixture of at least three cultures came into process; the indigenous people, the Africans and the Portuguese.

The most largely represented African people in Brazil are the Yoruba from Nigeria and the Nagô from Angola. Members of these and also some smaller peoples like the Jeje for example have evolved their own Afro-Brazilian religious practices - I can mention *umbanda* (a mixture of African religious practices and spiritualism), *quimbanda* (the opposite of *umbanda*, as the members fought against the influences of spiritualism) and *candomblé* (in some parts of Brazil also known as *macumba*) - but they also visited Catholic churches and rituals, where they sought features of their gods in Catholic Saints. For example the god *Oxalá*, creator of humankind, is known in Salvador as *Senhôr do Bonfim* (Lord of Bonfim). They were forced to change the god's name to preserve their rituals and pantheon. Such cleverness can surely be described as *malandragem*. Even if the cultures and religions have been mixed in Brazil, it is interesting that one of the most important deities in Afro-Brazilian religions such as *umbanda*, *quimbanda*, *batuque* and *candomblé*, has become *Exú*²² or *Eshu* from the pantheon of Yoruba. In Angolan Bantu mythology there is a mediator between humans and deities known as

²² *Exú* represents cosmos. He is a mediator between deities and humans. His colours are red (activity) and black (absorption of knowledge). He regulates the universe and maintains order in it. He is a teacher and most human of all deities, which makes communication with him possible. His function is not to make judgements between good and evil, but to carry out the task given to him (Bastide, 1987).

Aluvaiá that can be equalled with *Exú*. However, this deity also has a female principle called *Vangira* (female principle of *Exú* appears also in *candomblé*). In Yoruban mythology, *Eshu* represents a deity of chaos, deception and death. He is inexorable but a good teacher, protector of wanderers, roads and crossroads. In Brazil he was declared protector of streets, idlers and the homeless and in *candomblé* he is the one that allows the connection between deities and people. Only through him can we reach the *Orixás* (deities or cosmic principles). Catholic missionaries have equalled *Exú* to Satan²³, probably because of his black and red outfit and some of his characteristics. *Exú* would smile even in the most tragic of situations and in the Brazilian version he always enjoys drinking *cachaça* (sugar cane brandy) and smoking. *Exú* is perceived as the mediator and executor and in order to do his job he must be satisfied, according to *candomblé* beliefs, with the help of *cachaça* and *farofa*²⁴. While in *candomblé* man has no influence on *Exú*'s acts and decisions, in *quimbanda* mediators can influence his actions. *Exú* does not represent a deity, but rather a spirit executing his mission. This version of *Exú* has roots in the mythologies of people from Angola, where *Exú* represents the cosmic principle. *Exú* neither has a codified dance nor participates directly in the circle dances of *candomblé* (Nunes Faria, 2011, pp. 60-61). Many of my interlocutors described *quimbanda* as witchcraft opposed to *candomblé*, which is perceived as religion. *Quimbanda* is believed to be black magic that can harm people with evil spirit acts. Despite many perceptions of *Exú*, the latter is due to the contradictory positive and negative features, one of the most important cosmic principles in the development of *malandragem*.

The enslaved population has beside intercultural exchange and cultural adaptation searched for support in the spiritual world as well. They ascribed new characteristics to the already known deities and their existing features thus became of greater value. For the enslaved to fulfil the demands of the Portuguese coloniser, to survive physically, psychologically and as well culturally, they had to develop effective defence/attack mechanism, which helped them re-establish political, cultural and technological power. The culture had to be modified, religion, beliefs and fighting techniques concealed and masked and other cultures had to be studied and respected. I presume that for the enslaved population *malandragem* was one of the most important skills in their incognito fighting against the dominant Portuguese, or it

²³ I use the name Satan (Semyaza), even if in Jewish-Christian mythology there are several names for the same principle and personification of evil: Lucifer, Belcebub, Leviatan, Belial, Mastema, Azazel, Satanail (Russell, 1988, pp. 7-44).

²⁴ Roasted mandioca flour with different flavours.

might be better to say an important means of physical, psychological and cultural survival in the given circumstances.

Most scholars and masters of *capoeira* bind together *malandragem* and *capoeira* and argue that this principle was developed on the streets of Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, where according to some authors (Oliveira dos Santos, 1956; Santos Silva, 2002) *capoeira* emerged and became popular by the end of the 18th century. Liberac (2004, pp. 92-111) and Oliveira dos Santos (1996, pp.45-52) even argue that *capoeira* was not developed on *senzalas*, but rather on the streets of big cities, although Oliveira dos Santos (1996, pp. 42-43) notes that a kind of fighting masked as dance had already been practiced in *senzalas*. In the 17th century some fighting similar to *capoeira* techniques had already been used in the man on man fights to protect *quilombos*, formed as enclaves of fugitive slaves during the Dutch occupation of the Brazilian north-eastern region, in the period between 1624 and 1630. *Capoeira*, however, as it is known today, was believed to be developed in an urban area.

I can argue that most scholars connect *capoeira* with *malandragem*, described as a clever mode of the game and the art of smooth and seducing body movement. Some authors claim that *malandragem* is the art of good and clever coping with life challenges and a diplomatic way of solving conflicts. Many interlocutors emphasize that in the past *malandragem* had a negative connotation due to its connection with witchcraft, sorcery, deceptions and cheating, and that even today it might be used in such manner.

The development of malandragem

In the existing *capoeira* literature there are very few things written about the development of *malandragem*. My interlocutors as well as some of the scholars - like Nestor Capoeira, (2002) - claim that it is an indispensable and necessary part of *capoeira* and the most important feature of a good *capoeira* fighter. In the following I will describe the development of *malandragem* in the context of *capoeira* and its institutional changes. I will focus on the period from the end of the 19th century up to today, which represents, according to some authors (Filho in Ríbano, 1999; Liberac, 2004), the time of significant and fundamental institutional changes of *capoeira* and its attitude toward *malandragem* and violence. I will connect the concept of *malandragem* with the concept of the trickster, whose characteristics

are in Afro-Brazilian religions ascribed to *Exú*, which I have already linked to the evolution of *capoeira*. As I have mentioned, *Exú* can represent a male or female principle and can act as beneficial or malevolent, which corresponds to the image of *malandro* whose main objective is survival, regardless of the morality of applied methods. Nestor Capoeira (2002) understands *malandragem* mostly as a female principle and links it to intuition, tactic and slyness. According to him *malandragem* is a struggle repressed without a representative power²⁵. *Malandro* does not act violently, but uses the support of deception, slyness, charm and deep intuitive knowledge about life and human psychology. His tools are words and his greatest skill is the ability to quickly analyse people and situations. Such quickness is inaccessible for people who live in accordance with moral laws. *Malandro* is immoral in life as in fighting, but ethical as long as he follows the established principles of *malandragem*²⁶. Although Nestor Capoeira (2002) points out that we have to distinguish between the concept *malandro* that impersonates the method of *malandragem* with all of its positive and negative features and the *malandro* of flesh and bones, the person that applies *malandragem* to survive on the streets, in regards to his knowledge and interpretation of the latter. *Malandro* does not follow the established social rules and conventions, he is immoral, but despite this integrated in society, since he can mask his immorality so well. Regardless of Nestor Capoeira's (2002; 1992) representation of *malandro* as a non-violent cheater, he is indeed a lawbreaker due to his violent acts. Fraud and a certain level of violence are accepted and ethical amongst *capoeiristas* because they ensure the physical and psychological integrity of the individual. *Malandro* has to be an expert in a fraud, deception, violence and diplomacy, to continue to be accepted in greater society. *Malandro* could be anyone who in accordance with Nestor Capoeira's (2002) perception of *malandragem*, applies these skills in a given situation, but is everything except a murderer and employs violence as the ultimate manner to achieve the goal. To survive or to acquire certain benefits he will in the first place use deception, which is completely ethical within the context of the *malandragem*. *Malandro* is therefore a mixture of positive and negative features, he is full of humour and in the same moment dangerous, he is protective and aggressive, you can communicate and negotiate with him, but you cannot trust him.

²⁵ With the term representative power I avoid the claims that some groups are completely without power, while others possess all the power.

²⁶ Nestor Capoeira (2002) distinguishes between morality and ethics, where morality represents activity in accordance with social norms, while ethics is an activity driven by inner feelings of justice and individual values and beliefs.

I have pointed out some of the similarities between *malandro* and *Exú*. The latter as well has positive and negative features and uses deception to teach or to achieve goals. *Exú* is, maybe due to his constant communication with humans and mediations, more human than godlike for the gods. Deities are according to Beaver et al. (1987, pp. 165-166) at least in African cosmologies alienated from humans; they are the creators of the universe, of other deities and of mankind. The people from the Bantu language group are prevalent also amongst Afro-Brazilians. Beaver et al. (1987, pp. 165-166) argue that they address the creator named *Vidye Mukulu* by the Balube only in rare situations when a catastrophe threatens the whole population. Beaver & others (1987) do not give an explanation of the characteristics of the principal deities, however Singer (2001, p. 26) claims that all human deities up to the 6th century BC have always represented positive and negative principles. He could not find a deity in Indo-Asia or Europe before Zarathustra's teachings that would personify only good or only evil. With Zarathustra alone the need to purify the soul appears and the companion of the creator *Ahruna Mazde*, *Ahriman* is transformed into the messenger of evil (Singer, 2011, p. 26). With the appearance of Satan or evil in persona in religions of the world, deception, the feature of *malandragem*, also became the domain of the evil.

Despite the dissemination of *candomblé* in Salvador, the citizens are mostly Christians and it would be reasonable to expect that fraud has negative connotations between them. In any case we can suspect that fraud, when the cheater does not have evil intentions and the results of deception are rather positive, is tolerated amongst the Afro-Brazilian population. Since this appears in African cosmologies as well in the form of divine teaching techniques, the application of fraud could represent the identification with African ancestors, with primordial culture and religion. Undoubtedly in this case I can not interpret deception as harmful. My interlocutors listed some cases of acceptable deception when during the play of *capoeira* or in a street conflict, a *capoeirista* managed to avoid general physical force using *malandragem*. He managed to win the adversary with *rastera* (stumble) in the moment when the adversary was out of balance or with *corpo aberto* (exposed body). As they say, *malandro* would disappear from the *roda* almost unnoticed after such an act, not giving the humiliated a chance for payback.

Concealing intentions, deception, seduction, surprise and other similar techniques appear to be effective also in fighting a superior adversary and in this context can be understood as legitimate and acceptable fighting techniques. Such modes of combat between men and also

between mythological heroes are depicted in several world mythologies²⁷. For *malandro* to execute his actions effectively he has to dominate the techniques of deception and, even more importantly, he has to have ability to "read minds" and predict the intentions of others.

***Malandragem* and thought concealment**

In the concept of *malandragem* fraud and the ability to predict intentions represent legitimate and maybe the only possible mode to survive within this specific environment. African slaves and also *capoeiristas* were forced into hostile environments and situations through the process of diaspora and later on during the prohibition of *capoeira* and *candomblé* in 1888. Living conditions demanded quick adaptations and deception was probably the most appropriate and effective technique African slaves used in order to cope with the situation. They had to handle the relationships with the Portuguese and preserve psychological and political integrity. I suppose that at the beginning of the diaspora there was no chance to revolt in a physical sense, therefore the revolt had to be covered, masked, and it probably represented a cultural collision and the foundation of social institutions and political movements. New religions, traditions, institutions, fighting techniques and ways of recovering the social hierarchy and releasing frustration were developed. *Capoeira* can be seen as the social institution that provided the means for coping with frustration and distress, and it can also be understood as the institution of social enforcement and demonstration of physical strength. Masking, mind reading and covering, deception and manipulation that have been according to Young (2008, pp. 15-18) the adaptive solutions of the human brain for given challenges and stimuli from the environment and society in the last 50.000 years of human development and social life, were techniques that maintained the cultural and physical integrity of the enslaved population in Brazil. In this manner Afro-Brazilians managed to evolve proper cultural institutions and avoid punishment that was fatal for the individual and for the overall Afro-Brazilian society. Manipulation and deception were surely noted very early on by the Portuguese, which is why

²⁷ In Greek mythology Prometheus suggests to people to offer bowels sewn into the animal skin to the gods, as that part of the animal is the heaviest. With such fraud people managed to preserve the meat. With the deception Prometheus managed as well to provide fire for humankind, but he was punished for his acts. He ends up tied to the rock somewhere in Caucasus, where birds of prey ate his flesh day by day. Applying fraud and deception are socially accepted concepts, which denote simultaneous acceptance and punishment of cheaters (Pinsent, 1983). *Exú* teaches with deception how to be tolerant and respect subjective truths of others. He passes the village with a hat that is half black half red. The villagers from the opposite side of the street argue whether he had a black or red hut. When they nearly started to physically attack and insult each other, he revealed the fraud laughing (mythological story from the exposition of *candomblé* deities in Afro-Brazilian museum in Salvador).

the enslaved had to modify their deception techniques quickly and continuously not to be discovered, disabled or punished for not respecting the rules of the dominant class.

Young (2008, p. 21) argues that punishment - first altruistic²⁸ and then institutional - evolutionally succeed deception and therefore, the circle of mind reading and manipulation has been come together. These processes allow the evolution of the individual and social intelligence and the capacity of growth of the human brain. In the developmental process of the human brain the cognitive functions evolve through several phases: resonance, empathy, deception and punishment, and today's evolution of domination, intimidation, etc.

Thee ambiguous function of *malandro*

Evolutionary theories of the human brain also provide, beside the understanding of human characteristics, explanations for some characteristic features of West-Central African deities that are many times only reflections of human personalities. With the theory of deception and mind reading we can understand as well the approval and condemnation of *malandro* in Brazilian society and the social function of *malandragem*. While *malandro* revolts against the dominant class and strives for emancipation, he is socially accepted and admired in the eyes of the repressed population and in the same time persecuted by the dominant class. Although *malandro* is condemned as well from a part of the repressed population as he is applying sometimes rather socially unexpected manners to achieve material and political merits.

Also, the perception of *malandragem* is ambiguous, because it can be used to achieve emancipation, to preserve physical and psychological integrity or to fulfil the egoistic benefits and goals. Despite the employment of *malandragem*, *malandro* is by default skilled in manipulation, intentional concealment, deception and mind reading, regardless of the fact that

²⁸ Young (2006, pp. 15-23) writes that the human mind has adapted to changes in the environment and society and has developed a so-called detector of deception. Cummins (1999) for example argues that dominant successful individuals are more likely to detect manipulation than subordinate ones. Deception of the weaker should in the first phase prevent the other from reading thoughts but more important to bring personal benefits to the cheater. Desire to punish the cheaters, who are destructive for society, has been developed simultaneously. Young (2006) uses the term **altruistic punishment**, where the individual wishes to punish the cheater, thus bringing personal delight to the punisher with justice. Such adaptation, in order to survive had to be followed by the evolution of more effective deception, which would not be discovered and punished. The adaptation and the development of an effective detector is the logical consequence of such evolution. Dunbar and Aiello (in Whiten & Byrne, 1997, p. 14) attribute intellectual advance and brain growth among primates to social pressures including fraud and mind reading. Such development according to Young (2006, pp. 15-23) caused the enlargement of the human brain by 60%, despite the fact that the paleolithic brain was able to execute all vital and cognitive functions of the brain of today. Thus we may suppose that the ability to manipulate, read minds, mask, and uncover deception are therefore inherent functions of the human brain (Young, 2006, pp. 15-23).

these functions are inherent to human cognitive structures or socially learned skills of every single individual. Optimal functioning of the individual in society is a complex task, therefore we can agree with Huberman (in Changeux and Chavaillon, 1996, p. 252) saying that:

...in any large distributed organization, agents choose strategies on the basis of guesses that they make about what other agents will do, the global behaviour of the system can be very different from that anticipated by the agents. This endless regression about thinking what others think can lead to extremely complex behaviour which at times can have disastrous consequences.

Malandragem can be understood as complex behaviour and acting. Such behaviour was not necessarily beneficial in the short term, but allowed quick adaptations and institutional changes. Flexibility in institutions and society has *suma sumarum* enabled the survival of *capoeira* and other Afro-Brazilian institutions. *Malandragem* has to be present in distinct Afro-Brazilian institutions like *candomblé* and *samba de roda*²⁹ as well in other cultural elements of diasporic culture. However, *malandragem* refers mostly to specific characteristic of persons who know how to handle life, if they are *capoeiristas* or not. *Capoeiristas* were considered rebels and good fighters; through employment of *malandragem* they have managed to avoid the punishment³⁰ that has brought certain social benefits to the punisher. The defeated was disgraced, sometimes physically harmed and in some cases he even lost his social reputation. *Malandragem* represents an efficient tool of social competition and hierarchal establishment. But if we consider *capoeira* as a means of social enforcement and political and cultural fight, *malandro* could not represent only a very resourceful person who knows how to handle life situations without using force, as Nestor Capoeira (2002, pp.45-80) wants to describe him. He is the personification of deception and applies it in negotiations and fights.

Modern perceptions of *malandragem* emphasize only its positive attributes and current *capoeira* masters would mostly use only diplomatic techniques to fulfil their merits. They are good orators with highly developed intuition; therefore, they would resolve many conflict situations without a fight. However, *capoeira* is and always was a martial art and in the fighting the blow or *rastera* are the techniques that determinate the winner. In some cases the

²⁹ Samba, danced in circle by slaves at religious and secular festivities. Rego (1968, p. 359) argues that *capoeira*, music and dance were always strongly connected. Through dance and *capoeira* slaves were supposed to relax from hard work, at festivities (*festas de largo*).

³⁰ In this context punishment is perceived as dishonour in the game or fight.

application of violence is a part of the tactics and *malandragem*. Liberac (2004), Oliveira (1989) and Aristeu (1996) describe *capoeiristas* as inexorable warriors, always ready to use violence, but *pela surpresa* (as a surprise). That is why they have to use *malandragem* - to deceive the adversary and attack him in the most vulnerable moment. *Malandragem* was employed through Brazilian history to ensure individual and socio-political interests. If violence is perceived as a possible tactic within *malandragem* and if consequently it becomes a main characteristic of *capoeiristas*, I can presume that violence is a constitutional part of *capoeira* or a manipulative technique. Some masters argue that several *capoeira* groups are promoting violence to acquire more students. They would aggressively play on presentations and in *rodas da rua* (street plays of *capoeira* where everyone can participate). Some groups managed to raise the number of students in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo using this tactic, even if they came from Bahia. In *capoeira* circles there is a certain rivalry and ideological disagreement between *capoeira*³¹ from Bahia and *capoeira* from Rio de Janeiro.

Despite the fact that fraud and violence are constitutional parts of *capoeira*, most of today's masters would connect *malandragem* with smartness and tactic. *Malandragem* is supposed to be the component of *capoeira* that connects art with daily life. Santos Silva (2000, p. 122) sees *capoeira* as *roda da vida* (life game), where it is interrelated in social, cultural and educational relationships and activities. With masking and revealing of intentions we can, according to the author, avoid violence and aggression. *Mestre* Henrique shares the opinion of Oliveira Lima (1996, pp. 96-97) that masking and disclosure of intentions are the most valuable skills of *capoeira* practitioners and start to evolve only after practicing *capoeira* for some time. *Malandragem*, as he argues, can save the *capoeirista* from unpleasant situations. The practitioner's first exercise technique and tactic of *capoeira*, *malandragem* starts to evolve when *capoeirista* does not have to think about the movement and technique anymore. He is able to predict many possible situations and can improvise in order to provide a solution.

Despite numerous theories regarding the emergence and the development of *capoeira* and *malandragem*, despite ambiguous explanations of *capoeira's* past and present social functions, we cannot argue that *malandro* has ever been a peaceful fraudster. He could not be defined as a peaceful fraudster even today although most of the masters would like to erase the so-called

³¹ Here *capoeira* is perceived as an institution with proper codices, myths, theories and people belonging to it.

dark side (*lado escuro*) of *capoeira*. Its social role is changing from prevalent emancipatory to prevalent educational institution, but *capoeirista* is still perceived inside the institutional discourse as a street warrior. The general public still relates their characteristics with the perceptions of *capoeiristas* from the beginning of the 20th century. Regardless if his goals were selfish or socio-emancipatory and regardless of his intentions, a *capoeirista* has always been an efficient warrior and sometimes a cruel murderer using *malandragem* in physical fights as well as in interpersonal and political conflicts.

1.3 The Social Role of *Capoeira*

To understand today's social role of *capoeira*, I could not approach the *capoeiristas* only as a researcher but I also had to become a member of the institution. I have already practiced *capoeira* back home and have made some acquaintance on the *capoeira* events organised in Slovenia and in Italy. *Capoeira* is widespread around the globe, and the *capoeira* events - I will present and analyse them in further discussion - are also frequently organised outside Brazil. Masters and *capoeiristas* from so called friendly groups are invited on such events - some are paid by organizers to come directly from Brazil and participate on several events of particular *capoeira* group. Thus even in Europe one can get acquaintances with Brazilian *capoeiristas* and I was easily accepted in the groups where I have already known the master. But even if *capoeira* is being present in Europe for at least thirty years, only after I became a member of few *capoeira* groups in Salvador I realised how popular it is in this city. According to my interlocutors' opinion, *capoeira* is the second most widespread activity after soccer in Salvador. Masters would often emphasize how popular *capoeira* is. However, I could not find any statistical data about the number of practitioners. In *capoeira* there is no head association that would keep statistical evidence. Most of the schools note the numbers and names of the members for internal purposes. They would need lists for graduations that are performed during *batizado*³², although a municipal or state list does not exist. And even if this list existed, it would still be hard to estimate how many people practice *capoeira*. Some practice on beaches and some in the streets, learning from others. *Capoeiristas* from *favela* in particular are self-taught, or have trained for a year or two in special social programmes (*projetos sociais*) sponsored by the municipality. They do not have the money to join the

³² *Capoeira* baptism where new members officially play for the first time with the masters and the first stage graduation is handed to them. Older members pass exams for higher graduations at such events.

capoeira school (*academia*); therefore they do not appear in the school's statistics. There is a current polemic between masters of *capoeira* to institutionalize the art even more and to found an overall Brazilian association, which would perform in and outside of Brazil. In any case, many masters disapprove of such a union, claiming that uniformity would harm the creativity and individuality of *capoeira*, which are two of its main characteristics. A uniformed style would prevent the spontaneous learning process with observation and interpretation as well, which is mostly used in the methodology of teaching youngsters and children. They are developing their own style through play with other *capoeiristas*. Most *capoeira* practitioners would agree that the diversity of styles, acrobatic elements of play, music and the dancelike movement of *ginga* are important aspects for *capoeira*'s popularity. Youngsters can get to know *capoeira* on the beaches, in Pelorinho and on the streets of *favelas* and that is how they become enthusiastic about the art that enables them a positive personal development. *Capoeira* teachers emphasize that through *capoeira* children learn about their origins (*raiz*), about the emergence and evolution of Afro-Brazilian culture and if they work hard they can survive teaching *capoeira*. This martial art is becoming popular also outside of Brazil; there is a demand for *capoeira* instructors in Europe, North America and even Asia, where many *capoeira* instructors manage to find jobs.

I doubt these reasons for *capoeira*'s popularity are the only ones and I am quite confident that the reasons to start exercising *capoeira* are very simple and pragmatic. Many parents for example would enrol children into the *capoeira* academy, since it is one of the cheapest physical activities available. They know that with an additional occupation besides school they would manage to keep the child away from the street, where children enjoy spending most of their free time. Some of the children train *capoeira*, because their parents were or are still training. In many cases youngsters would choose *capoeira* only to show off in front of their peers with the art that is admired in Brazil as well as abroad. We also have to consider the fact that *capoeira* is not only a sports activity and a martial art, but also the means of bodily communication, where intuition is needed and developed. Lashlie (2005, p. 101) argues that intuition and communication are important elements for the development of the personality in the growing up process. Lashlie (2005, pp. 134-135) also writes that men mostly use nonverbal communication, while women use verbal communication, which is why playing represents the ideal communication polygon and means of relaxation especially for boys (*ibid.*). As I have not noticed any differences between boys and girls regarding willingness to play within institution of *capoeira*, I argue that playing is an important tool in

the learning process for boys and girls, only that the modes of playing might be different for them. Bateson (1972, pp. 177-200) argues that play is a necessary factor in the learning process of meta-communication, which allows us to differentiate between the metaphoric and the real. Employment of meta-communication allows us to understand the rules of the game or the context of communicated symbols. For Bateson (1972, p.178) one of the most important phases of communication learning is the learning of the organism's automatic response to mood signals of others. Participants in the communication become able to recognize the signs as signals. Through play they learn to understand that signals are only signals that can be trusted or not, confirmed or denied, falsified, repaired, etc. (Bateson, 1972, p. 178). If we propose that all human organisms learn through play, we can conclude that play is as useful for girls as it is for boys. According to the development of the typical social roles of the men and women in human societies, though, it is comprehensible to expect that some games are more suitable for boys and others for girls.

Lashlie (2005, pp. 105-107) is convinced that sport represents one of the most important motivations of psycho-physical development of young men. Through sport they can prove that they are capable and competent members of the society and man's world which allows them to develop their competitiveness.

Capoeira for everyone

Despite the prevalent public opinion in Salvador that sports are mostly the domain of men³³, many girls practice sports, *capoeira* as well. Two of the schools where I conducted my research have an even higher number of female than male members. One of the schools is located near shopping malls and universities, the other is in a more posh part of town. Furthermore, two other schools included in my research where men were in the majority were located in *favela*. The reasons for unequal distribution of women and men inside the *capoeira* institution can be historical, social, economic and even urban, therefore in my thesis I will not argue about the ratio of women and man involved in *capoeira*. I would only like to mention that in the past 20 years the number of women in *capoeira* has been growing. I have noted many of them, but the statistical data is not available. Some of my interviewees have mentioned sexual discrimination in *capoeira* but only in the context of play. Men are

³³ We have to consider that sport activities where men are in the majority are soccer and martial arts.

supposed to play more carefully with women, be calmer. A man would however find himself in an embarrassing situation if his woman opponent played better than him. Because of the belief that a man should not play roughly with women, he cannot overplay her with force, but if he does not want to be embarrassed he cannot allow himself to lose.

By the end of the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century, when *capoeira* was stigmatised as street fighting and politically persecuted, the number of women involved in *capoeira* was lower than today, when the social role and reputation of *capoeira* are changing. In any case, Liberac (2004, p. 112) writes that female *capoeira* fighters from the end of the 19th century were as merciless as the men. Therefore it is hard to conclude whether sports in general or only martial arts in particular are male or female activities. We can only say that men perceive sports differently than women. Maybe *capoeira* in its essence represents an exclusively male method for coping with and releasing frustration³⁴, since there were more male slaves on *senzalas*. They would use martial art masked with dance to gain social value and re-establish the status that was taken away from them with enslavement. In such a manner the male necessity to prove themselves in combat was at least partly satisfied. As an effective *capoeirista* the enslaved man gained the status of warrior, first within the Afro-Brazilian population and later on when *capoeira* was established as a street fighting technique and a political institution, also in the broader Brazilian society. Women have probably developed other techniques to cope with frustration like dance, singing or making jewellery.

These days a play of *capoeira* enables youngsters of both sexes the continuous testing of skills and the development of competitiveness, despite the fact that it is not organised as a competitive sport. At *capoeira* presentations, trainings and events at *rodas* are performed, where individuals can test their skills playing with others.

³⁴ Scholars do not agree on the definitions of frustration. Berkowitz (in Geen, 1998, p. 52) says that the term can be connected sometimes with external events and sometimes with internal emotional reactions. The causes of frustration might be poverty and its difficulties or disappointment caused by a lower reward than expected. In the year 1939 frustration was defined by scholars of Yale University as the obstacle on the way to achieve an expected reward and not as an emotional reaction. Lawson (in Amsel, 1992) divided the frustration theories into *self-contained theories* and *theories integrated with general behaviour theory*. The first one comprises the Rosenzweig (1934, 1944) hypothesis of **frustration - aggression**, Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears' hypothesis (1939) **frustration - regression** and the hypothesis **frustration - fixation** (Klee, 1944; Maier, 1949, 1956). They are called *self-contained theories*; scientists considered frustration as the main object of the analysis and they have not considered behavioural theories. Definitions in these categories are different; but they all have a common basis in the analyses of reactions on stress, conflict and obstacles.

Capoeira and the magical

In Salvador *capoeiristas* are considered as people with supernatural body abilities due to high agility and almost inhuman body and movement manipulation. In history some magical abilities have also been ascribed to them, most likely because of the connections between *capoeira* and *candomblé*. They have indeed used some techniques to protect themselves against influences of evil energies and spirits, but they claim that such acts were never meant as sorcery³⁵ or to harm others. Yet such claims are contradictory as they all agree that with magical techniques you might achieve *corpo fechado*³⁶ and get protected against *mão-olhado* (evil eye) and *mandinga*³⁷, which could be performed by an adversary, the adversary's friend or relatives. Despite the belief that magic can influence the game of *capoeira*, today's magic techniques are used only by few *capoeiristas*. In some schools magic is a relevant part of the ritual when important *rodas* are being organised. The master would sing protective words and phrases already in *ladainha*³⁸. Some skilled *capoeiristas* would protect themselves spiritually before important *rodas*. Some of *Mestre Pastinha* students fasted three days before entering an important *roda*. Fasting only included not eating some foods and no sexual intercourse. Malinowski (in Segal, 1998, p. 174) argues that magical techniques used in important events have the cultural function of surmounting obstacles and irregularities, which a man by himself cannot handle. The magic brings up the notion of success and equips the man with pragmatic mental tools for technically difficult tasks (ibid.). *Capoeira* is considered as a technically complex and difficult art and even the greatest masters would claim that they do not master it completely and that there is always a good chance that they can be surprised by the adversary.

However, in the context of magical techniques used within *capoeira*, *mandinga* cannot be considered only as a defence technique. If there exists the necessity to be protected, there must also exist the danger of being attacked, otherwise protection would be useless.

³⁵ Here sorcery and magic are differentiated according to Evans-Pritchard (1976, p. 176).

³⁶ Protected body is a crucial ability of the *capoeiristas* to protect themselves from the opponent's hits, punches and magical activities as well. There are many techniques known to achieve *corpo fechado*. *Mestre João Oliveira dos Santos-João Grande* states the following: "Sexual intercourses should be avoided three days before entering *roda* and the place where *roda* will happen has to be cleaned with smoke and constant appeals for help of one of the *Orixá*" (Oliveira Cruz, 2006). Some of my interviewees claimed that most *capoeiristas* involved in *candomblé* worship *Ogum* or *Oxalá*.

³⁷ *Mandinga* means sorcery but has a different context within *capoeira*. It might also be a body movement that confuses the adversary. Waving hands in front of the adversary's face, body rolling, jumping, etc. should freeze the adversary's reaction. Through this the chance to surprise and kick can be achieved.

³⁸ Introduction song by *capoeira*, where the oldest of the masters, present in *roda*, sings a certain story and announces the beginning of the play. Stories can regard *capoeira* history, may praise famous masters or important events or they are just simple stories from *capoeiristas* everyday life.

Even if it seems that only the adversary benefits from performing *mão-olhado* or *mandinga* in the *roda* of *capoeira*, there is always a school and the master behind the individual that can gain respect or be ashamed according to the outcome of the fighting or play. We can suspect that *mandinga* might be performed also by other members of the group.

In any case, most credits regarding the outcome of the play go to individual *capoeiristas*, who improve their health or increasing their pride and self-respect. *Mandinga*, as a part of *malandragem* is a legitimate fighting technique; its performance could lead to victory and with it connected benefits for the individual, the group or society. Most of my interlocutors would agree with this claim and argue that *malandragem* is not discriminatory towards the techniques that lead to victory. After all *mandinga* is mentioned in some *capoeira* songs. A very popular song, which was sang at almost every *roda* I went to, is:

Solta mandinga yeh (release sorcery)

solta mandinga

solta mandinga é capoeira (release sorcery, this is *capoeira*)

solta mandinga.

Solta mandinga (release sorcery)

É berimbau, (is *berimbau*³⁹)

Solta mandinga

É atabáque (is *atabaque*)

Solta mandinga

É meu Mestre (is my master)

Solta mandinga

É capoeira. (is *capoeira*)

Words can be understood with a double sense here. Firstly, release sorcery while it is the constituent part of *capoeira*, and secondly, release yourself from sorcery because you are playing and not fighting *capoeira*.

However, protection against evil energies has a completely different meaning if we consider *capoeira* as a means of emancipation. *Mão-olhado* and *mandinga* can be the results of

³⁹ *Berimbau* and *atabáque* are musical instruments used in *capoeira*.

activities by slave owners, political opponents or members of the dominant classes. *Capoeiras* have to protect themselves against such acts and they have to be free of frustration caused by repression, not pushed into depression. Mental and spiritual deprivation can cause physical decline. I look at the connections between *capoeira* and mental health later in this thesis.

Despite the claims that sorcery is connected with *capoeira*, today's *capoeiristas* argue that it was common in the past and that today *capoeira* is a healthy sport activity and a means of relaxation.

Aesthetics in *capoeira*

Beside the importance of the effectiveness of *capoeira* play many also claim that the play of *capoeira* should be pleasing to the eye and acrobatic. Acrobatics in *capoeira* can be the tool to seduce the adversary, but the player has to master it and integrate it into his play. In any case, acrobatics is only the moves that excite the audience and serve to prove the *capoeirista*'s physical abilities. When we were practicing *capoeira* Mestre Henrique often emphasized the following about acrobatics:

I do not have anything against acrobatics if they are used in a certain moment, but I think that effective play should not include many of them. The player gets exposed and vulnerable using acrobatic moves. Some are able to show their abilities through acrobatics and in this way they scare the adversary, but in most cases acrobatics serve only to show off.

During one of our discussions Mestre Alabama also expressed the similar thoughts:

Acrobatics represent potential danger if the *capoeirista* is not able in any moment to transform them into attack or defence. Only complete domination of the move and the right distance from the adversary can assure its good and effective application in the game.

There have been several differences in *modo do jogo* (play styles) noted between presentations on the streets, *rodas* during trainings and *batizados*. At presentations youngsters were keen to show as many acrobatics as possible, whereas at trainings and private *rodas* they played with much more caution, trying to protect their bodies. Therefore, I suppose that acrobatics in contemporary *capoeira* is mostly used to impress the audience and not to delude and frighten the adversary, which is supposed to be the primary function of acrobatics in *capoeira*.

Capoeira in middle and upper social classes

It is not a common practice to come across *capoeira* in the streets of richer parts of Salvador, although there are not many such places in the centre of the city. In any case, these parts of the city also host several schools of *capoeira* and some fitness studios that offer *capoeira* as part of their services. Many *capoeira* schools have their classes at nearby faculties, since *capoeira* is popular amongst students. They are the prevalent population in the school of *Mestre Alabama*, where my research took place. I have caught sight of *Mestre Alabama*'s school while coming out of the shopping mall. As he is one of the masters in *capoeira* group called *Nação Capoeira*, the group I belonged at that time, I entered the *academia*, presented myself as a member of the group from abroad and asked if I could participate on the lessons. I was welcomed to practice and already on the next day I met *Mestre Alabama*. During my first visit to Salvador I only frequented his lessons as a student, however, the next year in 2004, when my visit to Salvador was a part of fieldwork preparation, I presented myself as a researcher on the field of *capoeira*, but I still continued to practice it as a regular student. The school is positioned in the centre of the city near a shopping mall, two secondary schools, a faculty and a library. The manager of *Academia Mestre Alabama* is a master of *capoeira* and other martial arts like: hapkido, kick-box, aikido, and box, which are also practiced in his school. His school also offers other activities such as: fitness, aerobics, swing, belly dance and salsa. *Mestre Alabama* perceives *capoeira* as one of the most complex martial arts, which are constantly exposed to changes and transformations caused by social changes and influences of other martial arts and institutions. Today many *capoeiristas* practice other martial arts and try to implement their techniques into the play of *capoeira*. He is of the opinion that creative masters have to develop techniques that neutralize various attack moves influenced by other martial arts. The basic task of every *capoeirista* is to protect his physical and psychical integrity and only once he has control over a given situation, he should attack by surprise. As *Alabama* claims, *capoeiristas* should be like cats, when pushed into a corner they have to attack the most vulnerable point of his adversary. This is how master *Alabama* describes *malícia* and *malandragem* of good *capoeiristas* who expose themselves only to provoke the opponent's attack. Even if *Mestre Alabama* was a member of the national Bahian ballet group in the 1970s that presented *capoeira*, *candomblé* and *samba* at folklore festivals worldwide, today he teaches *capoeira* as a martial art and perceives acrobatics (*floreho*) as a *chamariz* (decoy, temptation). According to his teachings, a *capoeirista* should only use *floreho* if he is

capable to transform each movement into an effective kick or escape. His students agree on all points with their master's philosophy and claim that *capoeira* is a martial art with elements of Afro-Brazilian culture. Some influences of *candomblé* are to be noted in the rituals of *capoeira* and are mostly connected with rhythms and the importance of the circle. They suggest that people are enthusiastic about *capoeira* also because of its variety.

Furthermore, *Mestre Henrique*, master of the second school where my field research was conducted, has a similar opinion about *capoeira* as *Mestre Alabama*. Both schools are part of the group *Nação Capoeira*, one of the most popular and widespread groups around the globe. The founders are some of the best known masters of *capoeira* in Salvador. His school is located in *Pituba*, one of the richest parts of Salvador. His *capoeiristas* are also mostly students or members of the middle social class, between 20 and 50 years old. For him, *capoeira* is a martial art and an important element of Afro-Brazilian culture; therefore it is of the highest importance that both its tradition and uniqueness are preserved. *Capoeira* has to adapt to other martial arts and implement some of their techniques, but not destroy the image and style of *capoeira*. For him *ginga*⁴⁰ is the most important movement of *capoeira* and has to be constant and fluid. Without this movement *capoeira* is just another martial art, deprived of its magic and particularity. *Capoeira* becomes a fighting with terminal kicks and techniques similar to some other martial arts. He is against the incorrect⁴¹ implementation of ju-jitsu into *capoeira*, while such behaviour turns *capoeira* into a violent martial art. Master Henrique's most frequent statement is that a good *capoeira* player is not violent but rather dangerous.

Some other aspects of *capoeira*

Despite the fact that most masters would agree that *capoeira* is primarily a martial art, they would claim that we can also describe it as a sport activity, folklore, educational and cultural institution, therapeutic technique, tourist attraction or an institution of emancipation. Some *capoeira* groups emphasize its cultural function and in these groups the physical part of the class is followed by lectures on *capoeira*'s history and its connections with African rituals and customs. Lectures are followed by discussions on *capoeira*'s importance in the emancipation

⁴⁰ Basic movements in *capoeira*, similar to dance. This term, however, is used to describe every movement within *capoeira* that is not a kick or a tactical escape movement named *esqiva*.

⁴¹ Implemented moves from ju-jitsu for example might interrupt the fluent movement if they are not adapted to the play of *capoeira*. According to the master's beliefs, ju-jitsu techniques should be used in *capoeira* together with new techniques to avoid grips and escape with the *ginga*. That is what he calls *implementar os movimentos* (implement the movements).

processes of Afro-Brazilians and its cultural values. Beside *capoeira* youngsters also learn other Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations, for instance the *maculelê* dance (dance with poles or machetes) and *samba de roda*.

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Despite the fact that my interlocutors have mostly glorified *capoeira* and emphasized the positive influences of the art, we cannot be satisfied with such a positivistic aspect of the art. Its function and application depend on the people who practice it and especially on people who teach it and pass on their knowledge of the art. Some *capoeira* groups are evolving into an aggressive type of play and are motivating their students to play violently in *rodas* of *capoeira*. According to numerous masters, though, many teachers are not qualified to pass on this knowledge. They might cause injuries and malevolent acts by *capoeiristas*. Some of the professors are also blamed for passing on corrupt information about the development, history and rules of *capoeira*. Nevertheless, I would not completely agree with this last statement. Inconsistent explanations of the rules and *capoeira*'s history, different names for *capoeira* moves and instruments and different understanding of several play modes dictated by different musical rhythms⁴² are to be expected from such a great number of various theories of *capoeira*'s emergence and development. I have noticed that most masters are aware of such inconsistencies and when faced with the problem of coming to a consensus, they claim that each professor should pass on the knowledge as he received it from his teacher or master. Some of them would agree that their way is not necessarily correct but it is in accordance with the beliefs of their *capoeira* lineage and should be learned as such. Differences are not only notable between the two major styles called *regional* and *angola* or between different groups of *capoeira*. Sometimes they also appear within the same group, which might be the result of the structural organisation of the group or passing knowledge by word of mouth. Professors from the same group do not have a definitive contact with their master. Therefore, the interpretations of the acquired knowledge might change through time. The other crucial fact is that *capoeira* literature is ambiguous regarding history facts, rules of the game and social roles of *capoeira*. One reason for this might be the lack of scientific works in the field,

⁴² *Berimbau* is the main instrument in *capoeira* and dictates the mode of play. Through the rhythm of the *berimbau* the beginning, the change and the end of the game are marked. Basic rhythms vary between two major styles: *angola* and *regional*. Some masters claim that six different rhythms are known in *capoeira*, others claim that there are seven. Oliveira (2006, p. 203) names seven basic rhythms of *capoeira*, others are supposed to be variations of these.

namely many writers are *capoeiristas* and would write according to their knowledge. However, inconsistency in rules and knowledge might also be the result of continuous changes in *capoeira* and its adaptations in given socio-political-economic situations throughout history. *Capoeira* is considered as a flexible and adaptive art, which is always changing and with it its perceptions change, which are ambiguous and inconsistent. *Capoeira* inspires respect and in the same breath disdain. It is considered as a *cosa do preto*, *cosa do Brasileiro* (the black thing, the Brazilian thing)

La no sangue da raça Brasileira

Capoeira

E a nossa cor. (There in the blood of the Brazilian race, *capoeira* is our skin colour).

1.4 *Capoeira* and Violence through History

Capoeira is, after all, a martial art and to some degree aggression and violence are to be expected. All martial arts were developed to protect the interests of specific social groups, regardless of their status. *Capoeira* is supposed to have developed between the lower class marginalised and repressed Afro-Brazilian population as a means of emancipation. Revolt against exploitation and repression was dependent on efficient undercover acts. In any case, we should not reduce the repression and revolt to a physical level. It is important to understand that with enslavement the means of identification and social integration were taken away from the people. This reduced their chances of fulfilling the human needs of belonging, identification and individualism. Cultural patterns and adaptations might be changed in the process, which might lead to the development of new, more appropriate cultural institutions. Bateson (1972, p. 93) claims that every society adapts and undergoes some changes in contact with other societies. Sooner or later in every society the behaviour patterns are re-established in order to maintain contact with other societies (Bateson, 1972, p. 93). Enslaved Africans were forced to develop new behaviour patterns in order to communicate amongst each other and with the Portuguese, resulting in the re-establishment of the social balance. Identifications of individuals within the new society had to be developed. Santos Silva (2002, p. 22) thinks that the need for identification in enslaved Africans influenced the emergence and the development of new identification modes and cultural institutions. Culturally repressed individuals developed mechanisms for constructing

identities. The dialogue with the dominant society was achieved and new social relationships were formed. In his opinion, *capoeira* could also be developed for the same purpose of physical, psychological and cultural emancipation.

For new institutions to allow emancipation new communication modes had to be developed where the *malandragem* process played a significant role. However, in the case of purely physical fighting, slyness and the covering of intentions are not sufficient acts that disable a more powerful and better equipped and more numerous enemy. In most cases the fighting for physical survival demands the application of violence. If we agree with the statement that *capoeira* developed in *senzalas* and *quilombos*⁴³ as a means to enable the flight, the main goal of the fighting is to kill or neutralize the opponent⁴⁴. Furthermore, since I argue that *capoeira* was the method for re-establishing social value, presenting fighting skills to other enslaved men, and a mode to achieve freedom, I suppose that fighting techniques in *capoeira* are heterogeneous and also violent. Through the application of such techniques the adversary has to be shamed, subjugated, neutralized or killed. The basic kicks in *capoeira* are simple and oriented towards the most fragile points of the human body, however, there are also many techniques that only imbalance the adversary or disable him for further fighting. The peculiarities of *capoeira* are *rastera*, which is used to throw the adversary on the ground, and *mea-lua de compasso*, a strong circular leg kick that aims for the knee of the adversary. Typical *capoeira* techniques are also *cabeçada* (headbutt) and *cotovelada* (elbow kick). They are considered the most dangerous kicks in short distance fights.

In any case, I have reviewed the assumption that *capoeira* served as an effective technique in physical fighting against stronger, more equipped and bigger in number colonizers. In such cases, the *capoeirista* had to act smartly, quickly and effectively. The aggressive behaviour would have to be excluded by *de faultu*, since it would have immediately been repressed by the Portuguese. However, the slaves had to apply a high degree of violence once they were involved in the fight. Master Henrique is convinced that a physically weaker slave could not approach the guards, but he had to attract them in his proximity. The best chance presented itself when the chains were being put on the slave's hands or at the moment of punishment.

⁴³ Enclave of escaped slaves mostly located in the western part of Brazilian territory that was difficultly accessible and therefore relatively safe.

⁴⁴ Some authors like Rego (1968) claim that African slaves had to face a technologically and physically stronger enemy to be able to escape from plantations. They had to neutralize armed guards and fight against slave hunters (*capitães do mato*), to reach *quilombos*. Once free, they had to protect *quilombos* from the attacks of the Portuguese army and paid soldiers.

Master Henrique argues that a *capoeirista* used this moment to avoid the blow of the punisher with *esqiva* (move to avoid the kicks in *capoeira*) and then with a counter-attack he threw the unprepared guard on the floor using *rastera* or some other throws or kicks. The hit would have to be strong and precise to neutralize or even kill the opponent.

Slaves learned fighting techniques already in Africa and used and developed them in confrontations with their enemies. The cultural mix was responsible for the heterogeneity of fighting techniques. We have to consider that enslaved men were in many cases members of the higher class of former societies and also warriors or hunters, who possessed knowledge of martial arts. Confrontation of several fighting techniques caused the heterogeneity of fighting styles already at the beginning of *capoeira's* development. Styles and techniques changed and evolved also later on when *capoeira* became a street fighting technique and when it was confronted with oriental martial arts. *Malandragem* has transformed and fighting techniques have become more sophisticated. It has also become more common that *capoeiristas* act aggressively to show their physical strength.

Despite all involvements in political activities *capoeira* in the 19th and 20th century still represented the means of leisure and relaxation. Regarding the supposition that *capoeira* presented competitive techniques between men of the same social class, I can argue that techniques were developed for fighting with unknown but more or less equivalent adversaries. *Malandragem* served to disguise knowledge and to reveal the intentions of the opponent. Such suppositions stand up against the general belief of *capoeira* that the art was in first place developed as a fighting technique against the Portuguese colonizer. I do not neglect the theory that *capoeira* was used as a physical combat against repressors. In any case, I have to claim that it was first developed as a technique to re-establish social hierarchy between slaves. Once enforced as an efficient fighting technique it was used as well to fight the oppressor. I also claim that violence is an inherent characteristic of *capoeira*, since the *capoeirista* had to win the combat to be recognized in society or to be able to escape.

For better understanding of today's role of *capoeira* and its relationship with aggression and violence in the next subchapter I argue about its connections and attitudes towards aggression and violence through history.

1.4.1 Diaspora

The term diaspora has been used in the context of *capoeira*'s development for two reasons. Firstly, because the latter emerged and developed amongst slaves brought from Africa and secondly because the emergence of *capoeira* coincides with the evolution of other Afro-Brazilian religious and cultural institutions such as *candomblé*. According to Johnson (2007, pp. 30-40) such institutions can be defined as **diasporic institutions** firstly because they were developed between cultural groups that were forced to leave their original homeland but have managed to preserve a collective memory of the homeland, and secondly, groups where these institutions were developed maintain imaginary contact with the original homeland. Thirdly, these groups also developed other institutions, customs and rituals representing **diasporic culture**. Fourthly⁴⁵, such groups are at least partly different from the prevalent culture in the new homeland and have nostalgic, idealized perception of their ancestors.

The situation into which African slaves brought to Brazil were forced was crucial for the development of Afro-Brazilian **diasporic cultural institutions**. There are many theories concerning the development of *capoeira*, but if we consider it as a technique of physical fight, the following factors need to be mentioned regarding its development: for slaves the access to weapons and technologies was obstructed, therefore they had to develop other techniques and technologies to fight. The opportunity to fight openly was limited by the constant supervision of armed Portuguese forces. The preparation for battle through fighting dances and rituals was disabled, as well as the use of weapons, techniques and strategies from their homeland. And finally interpersonal conflicts and the establishment of their social hierarchy could not be sorted out by physical fighting in public spaces.

Many Masters I have discussed with mentioned, that the Portuguese introduced a technique of mixing slaves from different cultural groups to prevent uprisings and revolts. The idea was to disable the communication between slaves, which was much easier within bigger groups of the same ethnicity and common language. Smaller groups were later allowed to practice their cultural and religious rituals in order to precede the conflicts between originally hostile

⁴⁵ We have to consider that only contemporary Afro-Brazilian identifications are in accordance with dominant Brazilian national identifications. Brazilian national identification has drastically changed in the last two centuries. Even if in the first three centuries of colonization Hispanic identifications were prevalent, Brazilians started to emphasize indigenous elements after the liberation. Twentieth century has brought the africanization of the identities through efforts of Afro-Brazilians to become integrated into Brazilian society. Today's Afro-Brazilian identifications are expressed in music, dance, sport, folklore and even religion.

groups. This technique was probably only efficient for a short time since diaspora can lead to horizontal cultural merges. Displacement or migration causes, in many cases discontinuity, confusion, and vulnerability. However, incoherence might lead to new connections, fraternities and sodalities (Weber, 2002, p. 47; Sennett, 2007, pp. 39-41). As Johnson (2007, p. 39) states, classifications and merges are not flexible and voluntary processes. Relocated groups are subject to cultural interrelations and imitations between themselves and between them and the host. Such processes might lead to merging or separation. However, there still exists the question: why and in which moment the institutional rules and mechanisms started to adapt and transform into diasporic ones? Slaves in Brazilian *senzalas* were pushed to live together and they probably had to forget about original conflicts and despite their discrepancies establish communication and interrelations. Such acts have led to the diffusion of several African cultures and their elements, and as a consequence new social institutions have been established. Such institutions have joined certain cultural elements of mixed race people. New modes of merging and cultural diffusions have caused the development of institutions such as *capoeira* or *candomblé*.

The chronology of diaspora is known but the exact determination of the dates and reasons for the formation of the **diasporic institution** is rather a mystery due to the rareness of the documents on this topic. Regarding the foundation of such institutions Johnson (2007, p. 15) asks: "*What are the external conditions that call forth this particular kind of production-the making of the now and here using the tools of the then and there?*". Umberto (1999, p. 18) writes that the slave trade in Brazil started in 1549 and lasted until 1888, when slavery was abolished in Brazil. About 3.600.000 persons were sold to Brazilian landlords. There were three major groups in Bahia: Bantu, Daomeranian (both spoke the language *gêge*) and Yoruba from the Nagô people. People were exposed to constant threat and forcibly mixed, therefore it is probable that they were forced to found new alliances and start interrelating between themselves. The invention of new rituals started incognito in *senzalas* or in the wilderness.

Concealment, secret gathering, seduction and smartness have become indispensable elements of cultural, spiritual and later on physical fighting for liberation and emancipation. Despite the general belief that *capoeira* emerged as a means of physical fighting for fighting against the Portuguese, I presume that it was developed as a physical means of social re-evaluation and cultural gathering. That is the reason why it is strongly interrelated with other cultural elements of Afro-Brazilians such as religion, music, dance, initiation rituals, work, etc.

However, the process of imitation, assimilation and diffusion of cultural elements cannot be reduced to African groups in Brazil. They have been in constant contact with indigenous groups and the Portuguese. Even if only African people lived in *senzalas*, they had contact with landlords, and sometimes they managed to escape and find shelter amongst the indigenous people. Some slaves gained the status of *caboclo* (half liberated slave) and visited city fairs, where they according to some authors and masters, amused themselves with *capoeira*. On the other hand it is believed that escaped slaves formed *quilombos* (enclaves), where they could practice African rituals and maintain their culture. When I argue about **diasporic cultural institutions** in Brazil, I cannot omit the three important locations related with diaspora: market, port and church. In the context of *capoeira* the first two are more significant than the third one, more connected with the formation of religious institutions.

In what follows I will look at street and port activities related to *capoeira*. Due to the lack of information about such activities in *quilombos* I will not study the development of *capoeira* in these places. For now I will suppose that *capoeira* was practiced there for the same reasons of social evaluation and as fighting technique to defend *quilombos* in the case of attack. In any case, I have to consider that for the defence of settlements military technology is needed, meaning weapons and defence infrastructure. A martial art can be used in man on man fights; therefore I will presume that the development of *capoeira* in *quilombos* was not a crucial factor regarding today's style of *capoeira*. If *quilombo* is considered as the place of *capoeira*'s origin, it would be reasonable to expect also the foundation of a similar institution or martial art in Caribbean bay, where the centre of slave trade was located. Why then was there not *capoeira* or a similar martial art developed in the Caribbean area, despite the fact that like Brazil, slaves were brought there from Western and Western central Africa. Many slaves also managed to escape and form enclaves due to shipwrecks and other circumstances. They sought help with the natives of the islands and helped to fight potential conquerors. I suppose that in the Caribbean other types of slavery were developed. The Portuguese, Spanish, British, Dutch and French were trying to overtake the dominion in these waters and some islands were still under the rule of indigenous people who were themselves slave owners and landlords. Because the Central American archipelago is difficult to navigate, many ships were shipwrecked and Johnson (2007, p. 62) argues that the survivors developed a culture and lifestyle corresponding to the lifestyle and culture of the natives. According to Johnson it is a mystery how and what sort of communication and coexistence the Africans managed to establish with the so-called yellow Caribbean people. Johnson states that black Caribbean

people cohabited with yellow Caribbean people, but there were constant tensions between them. The Africans and other ship wreckers were better traders and more easily provided guns and other technologies. It is supposed that on St. Vincent Island there were more than 500 armed and in martial art trained black Caribbean people in 1720 (Johnson, 2007, pp. 66-67).

I can believe that numerous rivals and traders in the Caribbean caused specific conditions in which *capoeira* - as martial art full of trickery - was not necessary to develop. The slaves could use other means of social evaluation and fighting. In Brazil the vastness of the territory was subject to different economic and political conditions. The territory was most of the time under Portuguese rule which allowed them better control of the trade between escaped slaves and other colonizers. They were also not willing to negotiate or trade with escaped slaves and were merciless with the ones they recaptured. Such conditions represented an additional obstacle supplying resources and guns so other fighting techniques were needed. *Capoeira*, if its purpose was already developed as a re-evaluation technique could serve as an efficient martial art to defend freedom. However, there is a lack of information regarding *quilombos* as they were all seized and destroyed, therefore the knowledge about the development of *capoeira* in *quilombos* is based on heroic myths and stories. I can believe that the theories of *capoeira*'s development prior to 18th century are subject to speculations of individual scholars and authors.

1.4.2 *Capoeira na rua (Capoeira in the streets)*

"A capoeira nos primórdios do século passado era bem mais que uma forma de resistência escrava. Era uma leitura do espaço urbano, uma forma de identidade grupal, um recurso de afirmação pessoal na luta pela vida, um instrumento decisivo do conflito dentro da própria população cativa." (Soares Ribano, 1999, p. 32)⁴⁶

As Soares Ribano argues, *capoeira* in the 19th century was not only a cultural institution and means of social evaluation and emancipation but also represented a means of group identification in an urban context. It represented the means of personal confirmation and the instrument to resolve interpersonal and intergroup conflicts. For its development not only the

⁴⁶ *Capoeira* at the beginning of the 19th century was much more than just the resistance of the enslaved. It was the literature of the urban space, the means of group identification, the resource of personal affirmation in the fight for life and deciding instrument of the conflict within the proper enslaved population (author's translation from Portuguese).

political and economic changes in the 19th century are of great importance, but also social changes and identity formations in the urban space.

I suggest that the following historical events had significant influence on the establishment of the political and the social role of *capoeira* in the 19th century:

- Leisure time of slaves *caboclos* and the working class. Africans amused themselves with different martial dances on *sensalas* and on city streets;
- The development of *capoeira* as a martial art to defend *quilombos* from the Portuguese;
- Expansion of *capoeira* on the streets, city squares and ports of Brazilian cities where the art was confronted with other oriental martial arts. In that epoch white sailors and immigrants also learned this previously almost exclusive Afro-Brazilian art;
- Brazilian war against Paraguay between 1864 and 1870, abolition of slavery in 1888 and republican victory at the 1889 elections;
- Foundation of the first *capoeira* school in 1937;
- Promotions and presentations of *capoeira* around the world in the 1970s.

In addition to these events *capoeira* also had to adapt because of the turbulent changes in global markets from the middle of the 19th century to today. Globalization of commerce has increased inter and intra-state. This scenario has caused the rise of urban population, the globalisation of commerce and the formation of sub-cultural groups within the urban space, and consequently, higher rates of inter-group conflicts. Ianni (2004, p. 68) argues that through globalisation relationships, processes and structures are getting moulded, activating inequalities, antagonisms, and finally conflicts and separations.

If I presume that *capoeira* became a street activity in the 19th century, I can suspect that it represented one of the main modes of resolving conflicts between individuals and groups and also that it turned into one of the most important means of urban identification between lower classes.

Even if primarily I am concerned with the development of *capoeira* in Salvador, I have to mention its evolution in Rio de Janeiro. Political conflicts on the streets of Rio de Janeiro in the 19th century and the persecution of *capoeira* and street gangs after 1889 have strongly influenced the development of the *capoeira* institution and significantly marked today's image of *capoeira* in Brazil and as well around the world. In any case, if I want to answer the questions why and exactly when *capoeira* has emerged on the streets of Brazilian cities, I

have to consider the events from the beginning of the 18th century. The discovery of gold in Minas Gerais in 1693 and in Mato Grosso and Goiás over the following two decades caused massive migrations to and around Brazil. There was an increased demand for slave labour force in the mining and transport sector. Through the distribution of goods the slaves that helped with the transport gained access to ports and markets in growing Brazilian cities. In such places slaves were in constant contact with other immigrants and sailors. It is supposed that those who transported goods to ports and markets had some free time while waiting for other goods to be transported back or for the merchants to sell the goods. Therefore ports and markets represented a place of gathering and amusement. *Capoeira* at that time as is today was practiced as a leisure or competition activity. The statements of *capoeiristas* like: "*Vamos jogar capoeira. (Let's play capoeira.)*", "*Vamos vadiar. (Let's divert ourselves.)*", "*Vou jogar na roda pra valer. (I will go and play in roda for my reputation.)*", would speak in such favour. Nestor Capoeira (2002) and Oliveira Cruz (2006) argue that port workers amused themselves playing *capoeira*. Through constant exchange of techniques between slaves, sailors and immigrants, today's *capoeira* was developed.

However, other authors claim that *capoeira* in the cities was not simply a leisure activity. Liberac (2004, p. 99) for example claims that in the period of industrialisation and globalisation *capoeira* transformed from the slaves' emancipation institution into the emancipation institution of the working class and a street survival technique in growing Brazilian cities. Escaped, semi-free slaves and liberated Afro-Brazilians had to learn how to survive in urban places not only physically but also politically, amongst the privileged white population that discriminated them. However, the conflicts did not exist solely between the privileged and the working class but also between sub-cultural and geographical groups.

Emancipated slaves, Europeans and Asians have migrated to cities, and in process of adaptation to urban life some identification of the original cultures were preserved in spite of that new identifications regarding religion, dance, music and other customs that were also developed. According to Johnson (2007, p. 41), diaspora may have caused formation of subcultures due to the influences of ex-rivalry cultures and to the opportunities and demands of dominant cultures. This claim can also explain the emergence of different *capoeira* groups and styles if we consider urban migrations as diaspora.

Capoeira has probably changed through adaptations to social changes and through cultural mixing in cities. According to the supposition of continuous overtaking, synthesis and

absorption of knowledge, and construction and reconstruction of ritual rules, I can understand Soares Ríbano (1999, p. 31) statement that *capoeira* of the 19th century was already a formed cultural institution with routine rules and codices, as a supporting statement of the cultural immobility. Santos Silva (2002, pp. 44-46) perceives changes within *capoeira* only in the context of the technical adaptation of the game. These are supposed to be consequences of the appearance of other players and martial arts in the *rodas* of *capoeira*. Santos Silva claims that *capoeira*'s main function in the beginning of the 20th century was a leisure sport of port workers (ibid.) Rego (1968, p. 359) has a similar opinion and even claims that *capoeira* originally emerged as a leisure activity at folk festivities. It represented a means of amusement and a release of frustration. Music was the main reason for the gathering of *capoeiristas*; therefore they participated at popular and religious festivities. Fighting or the so-called game represented a mode of relaxation from hard work, torture and deprivations that slaves were exposed to. Music was the central point of attraction for *capoeiristas* through centuries; that is also why it has been integrated into it as a fundamental characteristic.

Such claims contradict some theories explaining the emergence of *capoeira* as a martial art to fight the coloniser. For my research it is still more acceptable to suggest that *capoeira* emerged as a technique to release frustration and re-establish social hierarchy. The Portuguese were technically, politically and organisationally a superior force and it would be unreasonable to believe that they would overlook the dangerous martial art, which was being developed amongst slaves. Rego (1968, pp. 359-360) agrees that slaves practiced techniques of physical defence in their free time, but he claims that these were mostly used in fights between themselves and only in rare inevitable occasions against the dominant classes. Thus, if I put together my claims about *capoeira*'s role in the early and middle period of slavery, I can say that it was developed as a means of coping with new social, political and economic conditions that the marginalized classes were confronted with in Brazil, and as a technique to cope with frustration and re-establish social hierarchy.

According to my consideration of linking, mixing and overtaking processes of the cultural elements between different groups, I can suggest that ritual rules and fighting techniques have changed through centuries, at first because of the mixed slave population and later on due to confrontations with other martial arts on the city streets and ports.

I have mentioned that migrations from Europe and Asia to Brazil increased in the 19th century, probably because of the industrial revolution and population growth. Therefore Brazil was confronted after its independence with radical socio-political and economic changes including the first republican beginnings. These events have according to Rego (1968, p. 314) influenced the development of *capoeira* from a street fighting technique into a political institution. Beside these factors I also believe that changes in the slave market had some influence on the development of *capoeira* as a street art. There was a recession of the trade in the 19th century and new slaves were mostly supplied to the Americas. By 1850 slavery trade was abolished at the initiative of the British Empire that wanted to sell new machinery. However, the last slaves brought to Brazil from other parts of America did not have the same status as the old slaves born in Brazil. The other slaves and also the landlords perceived them as members of the lowest strata of Brazilian society. Newcomers did not have access to cities like the old slaves, *caboclos* and emancipated slaves. They had to win their social status. I can suppose that such evaluation was done through physical fighting, in the case of Brazil through *capoeira*.

Slaves with a privileged status, *caboclos* and emancipated slaves represented a significant part of the urban population or daily migrations. In the 19th century many *capoeiristas* could be found amongst *caboclos* and European immigrants. Soares Ríbano (1999, p. 33) writes that in the second half of the 19th century racial and social structure within *capoeira* changed. If in the first decades of the 19th century *capoeira* was almost exclusively the domain of the enslaved African population, in the second half of the 19th century it was widespread between the emancipated population and immigrants; furthermore *capoeira* started to penetrate into the higher social classes. It became the means of socialisation and identification for Afro-Brazilians, immigrants and also sailors. As the object of identification for the lower classes it evolved into the means of political fight. On account of *capoeira*'s popularity amongst different social and cultural groups, not only its social role changed, but also its rituals, institutional rules and fighting techniques.

As some authors claim (Nestor Capoeira, 2002; Liberac, 2004; Oliveira Cruz, 2006), *capoeiristas* in big Brazilian cities at the beginning of 19th century formed street gangs or *maltas*, which at the beginning fought between themselves and from the 1870s on provoked conflicts at political gatherings. Liberac (2004) does not ascribe any political value to Salvador *maltas* and writes that they were divided by city districts, but conflicts between them

supposedly did not have political background. The point of these confrontations was to prove the supremacy of certain districts (*bairro*). Each *bairro* had proper colour slogans and a flag that was captured by the winner of the fight and through this the social value within the *barrio* and the *capoeira* institution was obtained. Rego (1968) and Oliveira's (1989) opinion is that fights between Salvadorian *capoeiristas* served as instruments of group identification and confirmation of belonging to a group. In any case, contrary to Liberac, they claim that *capoeiristas* in Salvador were also politically active and involved in political fights.

Capoeira in Salvador from the middle of the 19th century can be understood as politically oriented and should not be seen as a banal form of street violence.

Despite discrepancies between various authors I can say that in the 19th century *capoeiristas* gained the image of dangerous, mysterious and ruthless street fighters. Some worshiped them, while for others they were the emblem of evil and street violence. I suspect that *capoeira* had a similar social role in all big Brazilian cities. However, it was more politically active in Rio de Janeiro, which was the capital of Brazil at the time. Soares Ríbano (1999, p. 105) writes, for example that two bigger social subgroups were formed on the territory of Rio de Janeiro by the middle of the century: *Nagôas* and *Guayamús*. Members of the first identified themselves with African roots and ancestors, with slave history, while members of the second group found their identification amongst the working class, regardless of origin. There were constant conflicts and fights between both groups where *capoeiristas* were considered as the main protagonists.

Raised tensions between the coalition (conservative party) and the opposition (republicans and abolitionists) caused radical institutional changes in *capoeira* as politicians have often hired *capoeiristas* to sabotage their opponents' political gatherings. *Capoeira* transformed from a means of cultural emancipation, social evaluation and leisure activity into the instrument of political repression and street fights. Rego (1968, p. 360) claims that the first fundamental structural change of the *capoeira* institution was caused by its involvement with political life in the 19th century. If its essential role was leisure and coping with frustration, now it became an instrument to achieve political ideals. Originally rare violent confrontations between *capoeiristas* became more frequent from the middle of the 19th century when *capoeira* was enforced as a political institution.

1.4.3 Political institution

As I have established, political, economic and demographic factors influenced the transformation of *capoeira* in the 19th century. Brazilian economy was forced to compete on global markets, therefore politics and consequently society had to be changed. The court coalition was enforcing a non-profitable economy based on a slave – latifunde system, which disabled the state’s industrial revolution. Therefore the ruling power was confronted with a strong opposition from the middle of the 19th century. The court was in an unenviable situation in the 1870s, dealing with oppositional street gatherings and open debates against the ruling power. The coalition was forced to implement all resources to fight against republicans and abolitionists and started to appeal to the excluded Afro-Brazilian population. *Capoeira* that was already enforced by the Afro-Brazilians as a cultural institution, and as an important instrument of identification and glorified as *nossa luta* (our fight) became of great interest for the ruling class. *Capoeiristas* that were already famous as fierce warriors were hired as bodyguards for important politicians and even king Pedro I’s bodyguard was a *capoeirista* (Soares Ribano, 1999). *Capoeira* was slowly transformed into the means for political and social class fights. However, as Rego (1968) and Soares Ribano (1999) write, *capoeira* still represented social gathering and leisure. It was still practiced on the streets on ordinary days after work, on weekends, or accompanying popular and religious festivities. It still represented a way of socialising and spending leisure time. Not all *capoeiristas* participated in political fights and there were not many occasions when the violent groups were needed to sabotage political gatherings. Liberac (2004) writes that the 19th century *capoeira* was very fragmented and divided in various groups with proper values, rules and codices. Such divisions and conflicts for sure did not help to raise the political value of the art. Some other historical events can be denoted as important for *capoeira*’s political power establishment.

Nestor Capoeira (2002), Liberac (2004) and Oliveira Cruz (2006) claim that *malts* (gangs) that originally fought between themselves and against the police, became politically active in the second part of the 19th century and that in Rio de Janeiro most of the groups were politically influenced already in the 1860s. *Capoeiristas* were the leading party’s solders who attacked political opponents. However, the authors do not explain why *capoeira* became involved with politics. Soares Ribano (1999, pp. 212-240) proposes that the most important years for political development of *capoeira* were between 1865 and 1889, when *capoeiristas* collaborated with the conservative party. Due to Brazilian war with Paraguay the army integrated many escaped and emancipated slaves into their forces. Rego (1968, pp. 257-258)

writes that *mesticos* (mixed), liberated slaves and *caboclos* (children of the landlord and a female slave), have constructed a myth of brave *capoeira* warriors after the Brazilian victory in the battle on the river Paraná, that is frequently praised in *capoeira* songs. From that moment on *capoeirista* was turned into a symbol of Afro-Brazilian warrior and hero fighting not only for the emancipation of a certain social group but for the patria and freedom of the whole nation (Soares Ríbano, 1999, p. 212). For the first time the *capoeirista* was presented as the defender of the country's sovereignty and therefore the first step toward the integration of Afro population into Brazilian society was made (Soares Ríbano, 1999, p. 213). Even today's *capoeira* myths and words of the songs describe barefooted *capoeirista*, armed only with bayonet stuck on pole, fighting against well-armed Paraguayans in some important battles. This image was only an addition to the already existing construct of unarmed *capoeiras*⁴⁷ who were capable of disabling armed Portuguese guards and managed to escape into the woods. The ruling conservative coalition used *capoeira* as a manipulative instrument, believing that Brazil was ready to integrate Afro-Brazilians as equals into the rest of Brazilian society. After the war, as Soares Ríbano (1999, pp. 218-219) writes, black soldiers and *capoeiristas* gained the status of free citizens. They were hired as bodyguards by some Rio de Janeiro politicians and were allowed to build their houses in Rio de Janeiro's districts owned by the same politicians (ibid.). The government also politically supported the Afro-Brazilian population and mitigated the prosecutions against *maltsas*. Some *capoeiristas*, members of *Flor da Gente*⁴⁸ (Flower of the people), accused of violence were even defended at court by Rio's leading lawyers. In exchange the gangs sabotaged the opposition's political gatherings, executed assassinations and therefore played an important role in preserving the political *status quo* of the state between 1870 and 1873 (Soares Ríbano, 1999, pp. 232-234).

Through such activities *capoeiristas* found themselves in a paradoxical situation partly identifying with African ancestors, roots and slavery and in the same breath supporting the people that had been their oppressors for centuries. By supporting some politicians of existing system they indirectly worked against the emancipation and development, however, as Soares Ríbano (1999, p. 244) writes, the alliance was just the best option to protect *capoeira*'s interests and could be interrupted in any moment.

⁴⁷ *Capoeira* is according to Rego (1968) archaic word to denote capoeirista or other member of *capoeira* institution. It was mostly used in plural not to be confounded with *capoeira* as name of the art and institution.

⁴⁸ *Flor da Gente* was initially the strongest Rio de Janeiro *malta* and later on also important Afro-Brazilian political institution.

With such claims I question the prevalent idealistic paradigm about *capoeiristas*' emancipation role in the 19th century. Of course we do not assert that it did not have an important role in fighting for liberation, but in that time it did not represent a concrete political opposition for the ruling class that supported a latifunde economic system, although the period had significant influence on the development of the *capoeira* institution and *malandragem*. To win political fights, a *capoeirista* had to be a smart, expert *malandro* and so did the institution of *capoeira*. The main protagonists in oppositional parties were capitalists and did not represent a better political option for Afro-Brazilians than the coalitional ones. However, some *capoeira* groups, as Soares Ribano (1999, pp. 247-248) argues, supported abolitionists and protected them against attacks by the police or other *capoeira* groups that supported the conservative party. Soares Ribano (1999, p. 257) writes that the conservative party was also divided into two camps. The first one named *Rio Branco* spoke in favour of emancipation and the abolition of slavery, while the second one, named *Cotegipe* promoted the existing system. In this context it can be understood why *capoeira* searched for allies where the outcome of the benefits was expected to be greater. Ideologically they were supporting the abolition of slavery, therefore it was pragmatic and in accordance with the concept of *malandragem* to support these abolitionist in power, however, flirting with the opposition.

Identification

Identification crises were to be expected due to the ambivalent political activity of *capoeiristas*. Later on they mostly liberated slaves or *caboclos*, therefore they shared a history of diaspora and oppression. In any case, more and more members of gangs and new age *capoeiristas* were European immigrants or members of a growing working class. Soares Ribano (1999, p. 118) writes that *capoeiristas* in urban areas were members of the free or emancipated population. Therefore, identifications had to refer to geographical, class or even clan affiliations. Identification with slavery and African roots started to lose importance. *Capoeira* had to change institutionally to be turned into the object of identification itself. As it was already perceived as a leisure activity and means of social evaluation, and from the middle of the 19th century it was often used as street fighting and was enforced as a political institution, the social role of *capoeira* in that period was ambivalent. Ideologically *capoeira* still represented fighting for emancipation; however, its public image was spoiled by its

involvement in street violence and political fights. *Capoeiristas* were the ones causing street violence, supporting sometimes one and sometimes the other political party and such activities have blurred the almost mythological image of the barefoot, unarmed *capoeirista* fighter hero. To avoid extinction *capoeira* had to be transformed into an identification object *per se*.

Salvador or Rio de Janeiro?

One of the strongest Rio de Janeiro gangs, dominating quarter *Freguesia da Glória*, was called *Flor da Gente*. From 1872 the gang turned into political institution; however, even that party did not represent the political movement of a strictly black population (Soares Ríbano, 1999, pp. 218-219). Members were blacks, *mesticos* and even white immigrants, many of them were *capoeiristas*. Soares Ríbano (1999) who writes exclusively about *capoeira* in Rio de Janeiro quotes that members of gangs have been politically active, some of them were members of *malta Flor da Gente*, that was supporting politicians of conservative party (Soares Ríbano, 1999, pp. 118-119). He also writes that many *capoeiristas* that joined the Brazilian army in war against Paraguay came from Bahia. Some of them continued living in Rio de Janeiro after the war was finished (ibid., p. 209). However, it would be expected that *capoeira* in Rio de Janeiro developed differently than in Salvador. Political activities in the capital were more turbulent than in - at that time still neglected - Salvador. Also, some of the authors that refer to rare written documents about *capoeira*⁴⁹ do not agree about the social role of *capoeira* in Salvador and in Rio de Janeiro during the period from the middle to the end of the 19th century.

Soares Ríbano (1999), Liberac (2004) and Oliveira Cruz (2006) are more concerned with political activities in Rio de Janeiro than in Salvador, but they write that later on, some *capoeiristas* supported the conservative party and some of the abolitionists. In any case, they write that most gangs were politically undeclared. Politicians contracted individual *capoeiristas* as assassins or bodyguards.

I can argue about the following reasons for differences in political activities of *capoeiristas* in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador: firstly, in Rio de Janeiro urbanisation was different than in

⁴⁹ Many documents were destroyed; therefore they refer mostly to police files.

Salvador. Afro-Brazilian immigrants and European immigrants from the lower social classes have populated the steep hills (*morros*) of Rio de Janeiro when the nobles were already settled in flat areas near the coast. In Salvador though, the same population settled all around the city. Liberac (2004, pp. 50-70) writes that by the end of the 19th century there were several not completely successful attempts to relocate lower social classes to suburban parts of the city. Re-urbanisation resulted in the emergence of several enclaves of the lower class population all around the city. According to Liberac (*ibid.*) it had as a consequence the formation of street gangs whose members were also *capoeiristas*. Thus, polarisation was stronger in Rio de Janeiro, and it was easier to attract bigger groups as political supporters, while on the other hand in Salvador, where the lower class was more dispersed, such involvement in politics was not achieved. Secondly, with the arrival of the Portuguese court to Brazil in 1808 when they escaped from Napoleon's army, Rio de Janeiro was declared the new capital of Brazil. Since it was the centre of political activities it is understandable that street gangs and *capoeiristas* were more involved in politics than they were in Salvador. Thirdly, due to urbanisation factors *maltas* in Rio de Janeiro were bigger and controlled more territory. Political parties found it easier to collaborate with stronger and bigger groups than with dispersed small gangs that had their own goals (Soares Ríbano, 1999).

However, in Salvador many *capoeiristas* supported *Flor da gente* whose paramilitary fraction was *guarda-negra*⁵⁰ (black defence). Liberac (2004) describes *capoeira* in Salvador as a street fighting martial art and claims that the governor of Bahia, Antônio Moniz, founded the *guarda-negra* in 1916, and that it consisted of street gang's members and other vagabonds. That paramilitary unit had support from the chief of Bahia police at the time, Álvaro Cova. The *A Tarde* journal criticized the governor, saying that he used the *guarda-negra* and got involved with *capangagem*⁵¹ to achieve his political goals and fight adversaries (Liberac, 2004, pp. 87-88).

1.4.4 Repressing the political adversary

The political situation has changed with the declaration of the first Brazilian republic on 15th of November 1889, when republicans came to power. Even if the conservative party was

⁵⁰ In Rio de Janeiro *Guarda negra* emerged from *Flor da gente* already in the 19th century and was an important paramilitary organisation.

⁵¹ The name for *capoeira* as a phenomenon at the time.

defeated it continued attempts to overtake the rule. The new coalition was more than aware of potential conservative threats supported by *capoeiristas*, therefore the first task was to change the penal code in a way to criminalize *capoeira* (Oliveira dos Santos, 1996, p. 67). For the new coalition it was not a difficult task to stigmatize the already unpopular street fighting art *capoeira* that was amongst the general public considered as the main agent of urban violence. *Capoeira* and other violent activities were prohibited with the introduction of Article 32 into the penal code of the Brazilian Republic⁵². Again *capoeiristas* found themselves persecuted by the police, the army and the Brazilian courts. Liberac (2004, pp. 70-82) describes engagements between *capadócios*, *valentões*⁵³ and the police where *capoeiristas* many times managed to escape using *malandragem*. Liberac understands these engagements as symbols of fighting against ruling elites' repressive apparatus and states that such conflicts were important cultural aspects of *capoeira* not only in Bahia but all around Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century. As *capoeira* was criminalized, *capoeiristas* had to hide again and change the image of the art and institution. Persecutions were stricter in Rio de Janeiro than in Salvador (ibid.). However, Salvadorian *capoeiristas* also had to act *incognito*. Between 1889 and 1937 the second big change of *capoeira*'s social role was in progress. Some of the rituals that are still in use were reinvented and new codices and rules established. In Johnson's words (2007, p. 124) rejuvenation of tradition happened, meaning the process of ritual changes and enforcement of traditional values. Such processes occur when societies are exposed to drastic political or economic changes, offering new challenges of social and physical environment (Johnson, 2007, p. 124). New situations demand new ways of coping and *capoeiristas* were forced to develop even better *malandragem* techniques in order to ensure the survival of *capoeira* as an institution.

Change of Image

Some of today's masters claim that the already mentioned encounters with the police or army were unavoidable for *capoeiristas* of the persecution period as they did not want to be

⁵² Penal code of Republic of United States of Brazil orders with ordinance 847 from 11 October 1890, in XIIIth chapter of paragraph 402 entitled: *Dos vadios e capoeiras* the following: "Subjects performing on the streets and public squares the physical activity known as *capoeiragem*, passing in the streets armed with weapons or instruments that can cause physical damage, and these disturbing public order or threatening others, will be punished with 2 to 6 months of jail" (Rego, 1968, p. 292).

⁵³ *Capoeiristas* were named as such by the end of the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century. The first term had a negative connotation used by members of the dominant class, the second one stems from the word *valente* (brave) and was in use between *capoeiristas* and members of the working class.

captured. However, *capoeira* was still present on the streets of Salvador and even Rio de Janeiro only now it was masked as a folklore activity accompanying big Afro-Brazilian cultural events and festivals. *Capoeiristas* were urged by the political change to infiltrate *capoeira* into Brazilian society as a useful and imperceptible net. In the same breath *capoeira* has by *de fault* rejected the dominant classes' values and established a political system following the still valid myth about *capoeiristas* as rebels. In this period once again *malandragem* became the main *capoeira* characteristic. I suppose that in this period the notion about the harmless and peaceful but still dangerous *capoeirista* dancer-fighters emerged as all the fighting techniques had to be covered and only musical, dance and folkloric features were brought forward and emphasized. Even today a good *capoeirista* is perceived as dangerous but not violent and most of the masters and my interlocutors are convinced that violence is the last resource of *capoeira*. The only violent *capoeiristas* are the ones who want to prove their strength and aggression, showing such attitude already with their body posture⁵⁴, comportment and speech. *Mestre* Henrique is convinced that *capoeiristas* during the persecution period could not act in such a manner as they would be immediately captured by the police.

Underground

Despite the presumably quick transition of *capoeira*'s image I might suggest that in the first years after criminalisation, *capoeiras* had to act incognito. Nestor Capoeira (2002) considers the last decade of the 19th and the first few years of the 20th century the period of *underground capoeira*. *Capoeiristas* had to step out of the public sphere since the execution of such activity was penalized with 3 to 6 months of imprisonment. Liberac (2004, p. 160) writes that from the end of the 19th and in the first decade of the 20th century *capoeira* developed as a popular culture in hidden streets on the hills around cities and on smaller and concealed beaches. Once again *capoeira* was organised as a leisure institution in city quarters. It represented the ideological resistance against authorities and a means of cultural preservation. However, it still remained a way of social evaluation and street fighting, only the fighting methods and techniques changed. If in the period of the second kingdom *capoeiristas* formed *malts* and performed organised violence, in the period of the first republic *capoeira* had to be performed incognito. *Capoeirista* became a solitary street warrior whose identity had to stay hidden. He

⁵⁴ Muscular people that have the habit to challenge others enter into conflicts and demonstrate their strength on every given opportunity.

attacked his opponents by surprise, waiting behind corners, and was able to disappear as quickly as he appeared, unnoticed. In any case, *capoeiristas* still gathered and tested themselves in the so-called *rodas da rua* (street rodas). *Mestre Pastinha* (in Oliveira Cruz, 2006, p. 21) says about this period:

Foi um tempo triste da capoeira. Eu conheci, eu vi. Nas bandas das docas... Luta violenta, ninguém a pôde conter...(There was a sad time of *capoeira*. I have seen it and learned it. On the port piers...a violent fighting that no one could confront...)

Myth of the new age *capoeirista*

In the period of prohibition there lived one of the most charismatic *capoeiristas* called Manuel Henrique Pereira- *Besóuro Preto de Manganga*. Stories and beliefs about him are incredible; he has turned into a *capoeira* myth almost equivalent to *Zumbi*. His *apelido* (nick name) or *nome da guerra* (warrior name) *Besóuro* means beetle or more specifically *Besóuro Preto*, black beetle. Liberac (2004, pp. 137-158) and Oliveira (1989, pp. 24-25) state that he was capable of avoiding stronger adversaries in a way so that the opponent was not aware when he disappeared. Even today's *capoeiristas* claim that he was able to transform into a black beetle and escape unharmed. Liberac (2004, pp. 137-158) describes the time when he jumped down the waterfall, disappeared in the river and managed to escape from the police. Oliveira (1989, pp. 24-25) writes about *Besóuro's* fighting with 20 policemen from which he escaped unnoticed. According to Oliveira (ibid.) there were eyewitnesses claiming: "*Virou besóuro e fugiu. (He transformed into the beetle and escaped.)*". Those who knew *Besóuro* claimed that he always had a *corpo fechado* (protected body), which is why he was invulnerable. Sadly his life ended tragically since he was stuck in the back with a bone knife called *faca de tucúm* in one of the Salvadorian bars. *Capoeiristas* argue that only *faca de tucúm* can open *corpo fechado*. There is a belief between some authors and *capoeiristas* that his murder was ordered by a Salvadorian whom *Besóuro Preto* had offended. In spite of his tragic end and stories that hurt his reputation *Besóuro Preto de Manganga* is considered to be a mythical hero and many *capoeira* songs have been written about him and his infamous death. One of the songs' refrain goes like this: *Faca de tucúm matou Besóuro Manganga (Knife tucum has killed Besóuro Manganga)*. In his book that is considered as one of the most elaborated and extensive works of the 20th century in the field of *capoeira*, Rego (1968, pp.123-124) collected eight

songs about *Besóuro preto* or *Besóuro Cordão de ouro*. Some of these can be heard also at today's *rodas* as the one below, about his abilities:

Quem é voçe que acaba de chegar, quem é voçe que acaba de chegar

Mas eu sou Besóuro Preto ninguém pode me matár...

(Who do you see coming? I am *Besouro Preto* and nobody can kill me...)

Not only *Besóuro Cordão de ouro* but all *capoeiristas* from the persecution period of *capoeira* are considered as smart and fearless heroes that have not allowed to be repressed and have managed to preserve the institution of *capoeira*. *Capoeira* of that period is idealised and mystified.

Re-created ritual

Some authors (Oliveira Cruz, 2006; Rego, 1968) argue that in the period of persecution today's ritual of *roda de capoeira* and its behaviour rules were established. It is almost certain that some rhythms on *berimbau* like *toque do berimbau cavalaria*, which served to warn *capoeiristas* of approaching police units when *rodas de capoeira* were performed, emerged, as did some folkloric features of *capoeira* that covered its martial nature. Oliveira dos Santos (1996, p. 67-69) says that the persecution of *capoeira* in Salvador was the worst between 1920 and 1927, when the chief of police was Pedro de Azevedo Gordilho. He formed horsemen units to persecute *vadios e capoeiras*. Therefore at performing *rodas*, one of the *capoeiristas* playing *berimbau* had the role of a scout. The approaching police horsemen's unit was announced by the rhythm *cavalaria* and the *capoeiristas* dispersed immediately. *Angoleiros*⁵⁵ still use regular clothing playing *capoeira*, to preserve the memory of the times when the art was persecuted and the identities of *capoeiristas* had to remain secret. It is also believed that use of nicknames (*apelidos*) comes from that period.

I presume that the persecution period of *capoeira* had the most important influence on today's style, ritual and social role of *capoeira*. In my thesis I will only present a brief analysis of the ritual development as I am not concerned with *capoeira's* style and fighting techniques. Most of today's *rodas* are performed in the following manner: *capoeiristas* form a circle consisting

⁵⁵ Those who practice the style of *capoeira* named *Angola*.

of players and people playing instruments in *bateria* (formation of percussion instruments used in *capoeira*) in which three *berimbaus*, one or two *panderos* and, depending on style, *atabaque* are to be found. Most *rodas* would start with *ladainha*. *Capoeiristas* enter the play using *as portas* (the door) found where *bateria* meets the circle of other players. They first salute the master playing the central *berimbau* with an arm gesture, they give thanks to spiritual forces and then they greet one another before starting the game. Such form of ritual is unique in *capoeira* and is not found in *candomblé* and not even in *samba de roda*. Yet *capoeira* ritual includes at least some of the elements of the latter two such as: play in the circle, repetitive drum rhythm, protection techniques, and similar instruments. There is an interesting connection between *capoeira* and *samba de roda*, which use similar instruments, including *berimbau*. This instrument can already be seen in paintings from the 18th and 19th century, showing popular festivities of Afro-Brazilians. The next similarity is the final goal of both activities. As I have noticed during my observations and discussions with *capoeiristas*, in *samba de roda* one has to oust another from the circle with a stumble in order to dance with the girl in the circle. In *capoeira* one tries to knock down the opponent to demonstrate supremacy. The main similarities with *candomblé* are the repetitive and monotonous rhythm that can cause the state of trance among participants, and some protective techniques. Yet why did a necessity for consistent ritual and rules emerge within *capoeira*?

Olivera Cruz (2006, pp. 22-23) and Oliveira dos Santos (1996, pp. 70-71) write that white clothes, silk scarf⁵⁶ and a hat were used by *capoeiras* at the beginning of the 20th century. White clothing wanted to show *capoeira* as a positive and not violent activity, different to violent practices of *as maltas*, *os vadios* and *os vagabundos*. Besides new clothing there was a tendency within *capoeira* to emphasize its folkloric elements since the ruling power wanted to push *capoeira* from public life. The art was practiced as a leisure activity at popular and religious festivals. Music, dance and *jogo cheio de floreio* (game full of decorative elements) became its most emphasized elements. The style of *capoeira*, which today is preserved under the name *capoeira angola* developed, and some of today's *capoeiristas* claim that it has the most similarities with the original *capoeira* practiced on *senzalas*. In the first decades of the 20th century *capoeira* became indispensable at religious and popular festivals. Olivera Cruz (2006, p. 163) argues that it developed into a game that amused players and spectators. At such events Salvadorian *capoeiristas* from all over Bahia joined and different game styles and

⁵⁶ It prevented perspiration and served as protection against *navalha* (razor).

ritual rules were confronted at these gatherings. Consequently the consent about rules and ritual form had to be achieved and Rego (1968, p. 37) claims that in the 1930s new established rules were already considered as traditional and fundamental rules of the art known as *capoeira*.

Established consent about ritual and game rules within *capoeira* can be considered as a re-created tradition, significant of immigrated cultural groups that re-establish homeland institutions once they are in the new environment. Routines and practices of a specific group, as Johnson (2007, p. 104) states, are confronted with those of other cultural groups and ritual experts are keen to promote the revival of traditional practices. At such occasions masters of specific practices are group's collective memory guardians.

It is reasonable to believe that *capoeira* masters from the beginning of the 20th century wanted to preserve the art that represented collective memory of the diaspora, enslavement and emancipation. Yet in this case the new environment for *capoeira* was not a material space but rather changed socio-political conditions that were pushing *capoeira* out of the Brazilian society public sphere. In order to assure the survival of *capoeira* as a cultural institution, traditional practices had to be restored and edited, and new elements of the art emphasized.

1.4.5 *Capoeira* as a cultural institution

"A ritual can mediate between the lived place and remembered homeland, or between present and past, in very different ways. The homelands tradition is itself a sign, a thing represented to consciousness." (Johnson, 2007, p. 235).

I have ascertained that *capoeira* persecution between 1889 and 1937 motivated institutional changes of the art. However, persecution was not the only and main reason for re-examination of *capoeira*. If I refer to Lefebvre who argued how new spaces uncovered new versions (Lefebvre, 1991), in the context of *capoeira* we could claim that not only new political but also social and economic situations have influenced new history discoveries and re-created ritual and rules of *capoeira*. In the beginning of the 20th century tourism was in development all around the world. Brazil started to promote itself through music, dance, folklore and its natural beauty. By that time Brazilian music, dance and folklore were strongly influenced by African cultural elements and old identifications with European and indigenous cultures were

insufficient. Somehow Afro-Brazilians had to be integrated into society and cultural institutions such as *candomblé* or *capoeira* that emphasized elements of the most represented African people Yoruba from South Nigeria, were appropriate institutions to be promoted.

Africanisation of *capoeira*

The tendency to emphasize Afro-Brazilian cultural elements on a national level had for consequence additional africanisation of Afro-Brazilian religions as well as *capoeira*. Yoruba cosmology and their pantheon prevailed in Afro-Brazilian religions. Johnson (2007, p. 211) argues that the reasons for identifications with the Yoruba culture and cosmology should be sought in the organisational structure of the Yoruba society. Their African kingdom has represented an authentic independent African culture, not influenced by Mediterranean cosmologies and cosmogonies or even Islam or Christianity. Their developed cities, court, hierarchical social organisation, political and religious systems represented the peak of the African civilisation. In spite of the fact, as Johnson (2007, p. 211) writes, that the kingdom dissolved by the end of the 17th century, Yoruba managed to found the independent city-state Ibadan in the 19th century from where products, customs and gods were exported. According to Johnson (2007, p. 212), cultural and political renaissance amongst the enslaved Yoruba people began in the 19th century, followed by other enslaved nations. He further writes that Yoruba culture represented the perfect mixture of high and authentic culture with highly developed art and a complex religious system, and yet few direct connections with Mediterranean societies – thus they can not be blamed to have borrowed cultural elements or to have been culturally influenced by these civilisations. Such accusations depreciate the position and importance of the Yoruba culture. Bastide (1978, pp. 280-281) writes about Puritanism of the Yoruba culture and mixing of other West-central African cultures. Thus the identification with pure and authentic Yoruba culture was more welcome than the identification with other cultures, for example the one from Congo's people that was colonised and Christianised already in the 15th century. Renaissance of Afro-Brazilian culture consequently recreated religious and folkloric rituals. The strongest protagonist of Afro-Brazilian culture turned to be *candomblé*. As most of *capoeiristas* of that period were connected with *candomblé*, it was to be expected that *capoeira* rituals would at least partly show some similarities with the ritual of *Orixá* incorporation *feira de formatura* within *candomblé*. Some similarities can be noticed in protective and cleansing techniques used by

capoeiristas during the playing of *atabaque* drum, and in the formation of the circle (*roda*) where *capoeira* is played. Regarding the latter we have to consider that the circle has an important ritual role and meaning in most West-central African cosmologies, representing the universe, cyclic perception of time and the flow of energies.

Revitalisation and stigmatisation of the *malandragem*

The period of persecution had the greatest influence on the revitalisation of *malandragem* (trickery) that became *capoeira*'s most important characteristic. Tricksters are found in many mythologies and trickery is also characteristic of *Exú*, the most significant god in the Yoruba pantheon. His behaviour, his message transmission techniques, teaching and influence modes are unpredictable and subjected to the task for which he was employed. Many times *Exú* represents an obstacle in search of the knowledge and a barrier between the material and spiritual world called *Axé*, where ancestors and gods live. As I have already mentioned, the Catholic Church in Brazil has equated *Exú* to Satan⁵⁷, since it was aware of the deity's importance for Afro-Brazilian religions' survival. However, such comparisons have influenced the stigmatisation of the *malandragem*. It can be seen in the context of relationships as the obstacle towards an honest relationship and the ability to predict intentions of the other person, yet for *capoeiristas* it represented the most desired characteristic. *Exú* is not an adversary *per se* and represents an obstacle only if his untameable nature is not satisfied. He is one of the most important universal principles, like tricksters in other mythologies. In the Navaho mythology the trickster appears as a coyote. According to Henderson (in Jung, 1964, p. 126) in Navaho mythology the coyote was the one that sorted out the stars when he participated in creation of the universe. He also introduced necessary coincidental death and helped people to survive in the era of the big flood by letting them into the spiritual sphere's safe shelter. Navaho's trickster is a link between the earth's material world and the spiritual world.

Although the Navaho trickster is not described as a deceiver, he has the unpredictable and instinctive trickster nature, similar to *Exú*. Since *Exú* represents a link between two worlds and has an educational and protective role in some West-central African religions, I argue that his characteristics had a significant influence on the development of the *malandro* concept

⁵⁷ The word originates from Hebrew and denotes adversary or obstacle.

between enslaved people brought to Brazil. This kind of behaviour was a necessary quality that enabled survival in given social, political and economic circumstances.

In spite of the fact that deception was part of the cultural, emotional and even physical survival tactics on Brazilian *senzalas*, I propose that today's concept of *malandragem* used in *capoeira* was mostly developed at the end of the 19th century and is still in the process of transformation. In that time *capoeira* represented part of the deprived population's political movement and *malandragem* was not only a part of a street fighting tactic between *malts* or political opponents, but also a means of Afro-Brazilian integration into Brazilian society. *Capoeirista* was always *malandro* in his relationship towards the ruling elite, the state repressive apparatus and hegemonic culture influenced by European settlers. *Capoeira malandro* from the end of the 19th century appears to be conformist following established social norms and completely integrated in society. It appears that *malandro* lives following given rules of society, however, already considering that *capoeira* is criminalised and persecuted, he is by *de faultu* in conflict with laws and in opposition with the ruling class. Nestor Capoeira (2002) depicts a romantic image of that period's *malandro* and tries to idealize his smartness. For him *malandro* could be anyone using slyness to survive or achieve a goal, without violent methods or weapons.

This definition of *malandro* could be understood on an individual or social level. Individual *capoeiristas* can use intelligence, slyness or charm to attract the victim from which he wants money or other material benefits. His targets are members of higher social classes yet in his local environment he would always act as protector. On a social level *capoeira* can represent a game and working class trivial activity yet at the same time the means to promote and preserve Afro-Brazilian culture and therefore, the opposition to hegemonic culture. In order for it to be effective in its ambivalence, it has to employ *malandragem*.

***Capoeira* and social integration of the Afro-Brazilian population**

Santos (2002, pp. 38-39) argues that in the 19th century *capoeira* represented physical and ideological fighting against the political and economy system of the time. To achieve maximum material benefits and profits for capitalists, the slave and miserably paid labour force was exploited.

Despite the fact that from the end of the war with Paraguay and till the dawn of monarchy *capoeiristas* from Rio de Janeiro supported the conservative party and court, they have always identified themselves with slavery and the working class, therefore representing opposition to a given political system. Thus 19th century *capoeira* was organised as an emancipated and politically active institution of the Afro-Brazilian and the marginalised population. Since *capoeiristas* had good relationships with the coalition until the foundation of the first republic (Soares Ríbano, 1999; Liberac, 2004), they also supported Princess Isabella in her endeavours to abolish slavery. Some of the merits for abolishment, according to (Oliveira dos Santos, 1996, p. 53) were ascribed to Princess Isabella, as she signed the *Lei Áurea* (Aurea decree or Golden Law) in the absence of her father Pedro II. The *Áurea* decree, prepared in collaboration between the government and the opposition, on 13th of May 1888 abolished slavery with the Act 3.353. The Act was in preparation for three years and its predecessor the Sexagenários Act liberated all slaves older than 60 years already in 1885 (ibid.). Since the law came into force in the time of the king's absence and with Isabella's signature, the myth about goodhearted Isabella was constructed in *capoeira* and songs were dedicated to her.

By the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century *capoeira* had an important emancipation and integration role; it was one of the institutions promoting africanisation of Brazilian culture. Afro-Brazilian cultural elements became more important when dominant classes decided to erase the dishonourable memory of slavery and decided to integrate the unprivileged Afro-Brazilian population as equal members of the Brazilian society. However, already in the 18th century the hierarchy between Afro-Brazilians had significant importance in the constitution of Euro-Afro relationships. Due to the increase of emancipated and half emancipated Afro-Brazilian population and due to many sons of masters with female slaves (as some *capoeira* masters argue they were treated as proper sons just not being legally recognised in order to be excluded from inheritance) the conflict between Afro-Brazilian population emerged, which prevented significant riots and formed different relationship between Afro- and Euro-Brazilian population than for example in the USA. Already in 17th century to some of the semi-free slaves a special status of *capitães-do-mato*, was given, which made them enemies of the proper Afro-Brazilian enslaved population. The distinction between *pretos* (blacks) and *brancos* (whites) referring to social status is not clear in the Brazilian context, such determination refers literally to the colour of the skin. Due to different social positions of Afro-Brazilian population *pretos* were also *capoeira*'s targets. Words of a *capoeira* song describe enemies of enslaved population as follows:

Nos matos verdes e baixos (in green and low bushes)

Cujo nome é capoeira (whose name is *capoeira*)

Em ânsia de liberdade (requesting freedom)

Nasceu a luta brasileira (Brazilian martial art was born)

Era arma utilizada (it was a weapon used)

Por escravos desnutridos (by undernourished slaves)

Contra brancos, forte armados (against good armed whites)

E os negros bem sucedidos... (and good situated blacks) (Oliveira dos Santos, 1996, p. 45).

Therefore, *capoeira* cannot be treated as ideologically completely africanised. In spite of the re-africanisation that was necessary for the equal integration of Afro-Brazilians at the beginning of the 20th century, and according to described historical development of *capoeira* I argue that in the last seventy years Brazilisation and globalisation of the art have been in progress. First it was the means of emancipation of the marginalised Brazilian population and from the middle of the 20th century it became the Brazilian promotional instrument widespread around the world.

Change of image and the social role of *capoeira*

The image and social role of *capoeira* has changed many times from the 19th century to the present time. Tendencies to connect *capoeira* with Angola arose by the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. *Capoeiristas* believed that *capoeira* is an art developed in Angola and it was brought to Brazil by slaves, only that in Africa it was called N'golo (João Pequeno, 2001, p. 30). Consequently, as many masters commented, West African Portuguese cities like Luanda and Benguela were the biggest centres of slave trade on the territory of today's Angola, yet we have to consider the fact that the slaves from all around West-central Africa were deported. Assuming that *capoeira* has Angolan origins is less possible. However, from the period of the first republic to the dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas, there were strong tendencies to Africanise *capoeira*. All masters mentioned that in that period the connection between *candomblé* and *capoeira* was established and that *capoeira* was perceived as *coisa do Africano* (the art of the Africans). Also Santos Silva (2002, pp. 43-44) writes that in that

time *capoeira* transformed into authentic manifestation of identity for Afro Brazilians. With the abolition of slavery the Afro-Brazilian population was pushed to the margins of Brazilian society as unnecessary labour force. Liberated, they found themselves in an unenviable situation, jobless and without the means to survive (ibid.). Immigrants from rural areas of Brazil represented threats to the former city population which marginalised and stigmatised them. Many joined street gangs learning *capoeira* to survive on the streets. Regarding past political involvement and the established social situation of Afro-Brazilians that practiced *capoeira*, the art was considered as an activity of vagabonds and violent street people (Liberac, 2004, pp. 31-36).

Despite trivialisation and criminalisation, *capoeira* from the beginning of the 20th century represented an institution of protection for the marginalised and weak. As a martial art it has offered protection on an individual and as well on a social level. Mastering the art enabled the preservation of physical and psychological integrity of the *capoeirista* and his local society. Oliveira Cruz (2006, pp. 42-45) recognises many cases of *capoeiristas* helping people in dangerous situations. They often managed to prevent thieves and protect neighbours from violent street people. Also today's masters teach youngsters and adults how to protect themselves from street attacks. Even if they are advised to avoid conflicts, *capoeiristas* often want to solve the problems with thieves, violent people and drug dealers. I witnessed the occurrence of three young men, one of which was *capoeirista*, who captured the thief that was active for some days in our neighbourhood. They caught him robbing a local market and beat him so badly that he hardly survived. They recognised his face and brought him to his family's house screaming: "*Aquí voçe tem seu filho da puta!*" (Here is your son of a bitch!).

***Malandragem* and image changes**

Malandragem had a rather important role in the change of *capoeira*'s image and its social importance. The notion of *malandragem* did not represent only individual slyness but also the Afro-Brazilian population's ability of masked integration into Brazilian society and the ability to change the public image of its cultural institutions, amongst which *capoeira* was of great importance. Many masters commented that the main obstacle of *capoeira*'s survival in the beginning of the 20th century represented police persecution and the change of social relationships in Brazil. The new Brazilian government decided to stop street crime once and

for all. *Capoeiristas* were perceived as the most dangerous and violent street people, due to their 19th century activities. The prohibition of public *capoeira* gatherings could mean the end of the institution since knowledge is transmitted primarily through gatherings. *Capoeira* was learned through fighting or play experiences from *rodas* organised at public and religious festivals. *Malandragem* was therefore a technique to deceive spectators of the *roda* of *capoeira*. These had to believe that they were watching a folkloric event instead of a fight. *Capoeira* had to be perceived as a leisure activity, game, even dance. *Capoeiristas* have charmed spectators with their smooth movements, acrobatic performances and supernatural agility. However, *capoeira* had to change its rules and rituals to be perceived as a folkloric performance. According to actual discourse in *capoeira* about how and by whom *capoeira* was practiced in the first decades of 20th century we can assert that today's rules to perform *roda* were established during that period, firstly, because of the strong willingness of Afro-Brazilians to be integrated equally into Brazilian society and secondly, because of the necessity to change *capoeira's* institutional rules in a way to preserve the art and construct its new social role. When today's masters talk about persecution of *capoeira* they refer to the period from the end of the 19th century till the end of 1930s. They emphasize that even if today's *rodas* are organised similarly like were the ones from the beginning of the 20th century, there are several differences to be noticed in the structure and course of the *roda*. One of the older masters explained how *rodas* were performed when his master was still a young *capoeirista*:

In those days, even before *Pastinha* or *Bimba* established their academies, *capoeiristas* practiced on the streets. They joined in a small *rodas* and played for amusement or money. Such *jogo* (game) was a dangerous one, because everyone was equipped with a knife or a razor. You had to watch your neck while playing. Also the kicks were different, pointed in the soft parts of opponent's body. However there were certain rules to be followed and *berimbau* was the key instrument dictating the course of the *jogo*. They always had a scout carrying *berimbau* nearby where the *roda* was organised. He advised the players about approaching police using the rhythm *cavalaria* which goes like this: *ti ti tam tim, ti ti tam tam tam tim*. That was the warning for participating *capoeiristas* to change their game into a folkloric presentation or to disappear in the crowd.

Presented as a folkloric activity, *capoeira* had more similarities with other Afro-Brazilian cultural institutions and consequently a better chance to survive. Some authors (Liberac, 2004; Nestor Capoeira, 2002; Oliveira Cruz, 1989; Rego, 1968) claim that *capoeira* style and its rules were already developed in the 17th and the 18th century, yet their claims have stems in suppositions that *capoeira* was a martial art of the enslaved. They would also glorify *Zumbi*

and other legendary heroes from the 17th and the 18th century. However, they would refer to the time of prohibition, when claiming about today's role of *capoeira*. Regarding *roda* rules and manners to organise *capoeira* events such as *batizado*, they claim that *Mestre Pastinha* and *Mestre Bimba* are the real founders of contemporary *capoeira*. All the *capoeiristas* I spoke to identified *Mestre Pastinha* and *Mestre Bimba* as the most important authorities regarding *capoeira* rules and styles. Therefore I claim that re-creation of tradition, africanisation and folklorisation of *capoeira* institution found place at the beginning of the 20th century.

Capoeira needed to be transformed in order to survive, yet it was not supposed to lose the essence of martial art. If this happened the knowledge and fighting techniques would be lost as they were only passed through observation and oral explanation. Not only that, also the image of *capoeira* as fighting for emancipation and liberation would be lost through an unwise transformation. Therefore the change of *capoeira*'s social role and image urged for the transformation of fighting techniques.

Fighting or a folkloric event

Capoeira game at public events at the beginning of 20th century appeared as a dance-folklore presentation. While playing, *capoeiristas* executed many unnecessary moves for fighting. They used many *floreho*, which makes the game fluid, soft and similar to dance. Music and other folklore elements were emphasized during *roda* and proper rituals included some special rules and moves that were meaningful only for *capoeiristas* when on the other hand such moves represented only a part of the whole choreography for the unskilled observer. Despite its folklore appearance, *roda* was taken very seriously by players as some kicks and stumbles were executed with full power and by surprise, therefore they could cause serious corporal damage. Yet *capoeira* was transformed into a cultural institution due to urgent structural changes and *capoeiristas* were amongst promoters of revised and institutionalised Afro-Brazilian cultural elements. Despite the fact that *capoeira* was strongly connected with *candomblé*, and some dances such as *samba de roda*, *maculelê* and *puxada de rede*⁵⁸, it continued to exist as a martial art and a synonym of emancipation. In Bahia Afro-Brazilian culture predominated and the so-called institutions were part of the popular customs together

⁵⁸ Dance and music depicting fishermen's life in Bahia.

with Bahian national costumes and typical Bahia food such as *carurú*, *vatapá*, *muqeca*, *acarajé*. Due to the prevalence of such cultural elements in Bahia, I also use the term Bahia culture to describe Afro-Brazilian cultural elements.

Capoeira and religion

As I have argued, *capoeira* from the beginning of 20th century was strongly connected with religious festivals and *candomblé*. Rego (1968, pp. 242-243) states that in this period *capoeira* songs celebrated the saints connected with Afro-Brazilian religions such as São Cosme and São Damião, the most popular saint in Bahia. Both are connected with the *candomblé* deity *gëgë-nagô Ibeji*. The São Bento protector against poisonous bites is frequently mentioned in *capoeira* songs as well (Rego, 1968, pp. 242-244). *Capoeiristas* pray to São Bento for protection in *roda*. Beside verbal asking there is a custom in *capoeira angola* to play rhythms São Bento *pequeno* and São Bento *grande* on the *berimbau*. By singing the songs dedicated to Catholic saints, *capoeiristas* were officially showing their favour toward the dominant catholic religion, when in parallel they praised original African deities personified as catholic saints. In this context *malandragem* represents deception to achieve positive results and possible integration into Brazilian society. In many ways *malandro* as such could be compared with *trickster*. The latter is present in many mythologies as a childish, problematic and instinctive hero or deity and would use deception to achieve positive results. Henderson (in Jung, 1964, pp. 112-113) describes Radin's heroic myth as an evolutionary circle classification referring to the North-American indigenous people Winnebago. They talk about four evolutionary cycles regarding heroes' myths, namely: *Trickster cycle*, *Hare Cycle*, *Red Horn cycle*, *Twin cycle*. The trickster represents an early primitive life stage and acts according to his physical necessities. His main goal is the fulfilment of his basic needs; therefore his behaviour might be cruel, cynical and senseless (ibid.). In many cases he appears in animal form using deception to fulfil his goals. For example in European mythologies a trickster is depicted as a fox, when in China he is represented as a monkey. In Greek mythology trickster characteristics are personified in the humanlike hero Hermes who already as a child stole a cow from Apollo to feed mankind. In some mythologies tricksters can evolve and become socialized beings, able to control instinctive tensions and reactions. As such we have already pointed out *Exú* in the context of *capoeira*. His knowledge passing and his social usefulness are masked under the notion of

deception. As *malandro* follows the same matrix his teachings are meaningful only to those who share the same cultural set and are familiar with the ritual of *roda*⁵⁹. Since *capoeira* was practiced at religious festivals it can be perceived as a leisure folklore activity or as a means to praise the ancestors and deities.

Political and economic influence

Capoeira from the beginning of the 20th century was strongly ambivalent. Due to new political and economic circumstances it represented both, the Afro-Brazilian political institution and the folklore institution. Since public presentations were attractive to spectators it became interesting also for tourists.

Tourism in today's sense started to develop in Brazil in the middle of the 19th century when the railways were constructed. The first tourist destination was Guarujá near São Paulo, and over the next decade, the first hotels were built in Rio de Janeiro along the famous beach of *Copacabana* (Ignarra, 2003, p. 7). Also Salvador attracted tourists due to its beaches and baroque old part of town. In the 1920s and 1930s there was investment in the town's promotion and construction of the first luxury hotels. The so called cultural tourism was developed based on representation of Afro-Brazilian folklore elements (Ciccone, 2012).

Tourism also influenced the relationships and processes within the institution of *capoeira*, as the art suddenly became a potential source of income. *Capoeira* gatherings on beaches, streets and squares did not only have leisure or knowledge exchange appeal, but also served as a means to earn money. Tourists were ready to pay for presentations. According to some masters' opinion, these *rodas* were tourist spectacles in which *capoeiristas* performed symbolical fighting for money. In such dance fighting large set of acrobatic moves were applied to attract spectators. In the 19th century fighting for money was performed as a gambling activity between *capoeiristas* and was extremely dangerous for the performers, with the development of tourism and under the influence of the prohibition it evolved into a touristic show. Money was 'stolen' out of tourists' pockets; *malicia* (smoothness, smartness) and *floreho* (aesthetic acrobatic moves) served to charm the tourists⁶⁰ and make them keen to

⁵⁹ Some ritual rules and some songs are meant to praise the ancestors and deities.

⁶⁰ Foreign tourists in Brazil are called *gringos*. In Bahia the term is mostly used to denote white skin strangers. Despite the fact that this expression is frequently used in offensive context, my interlocutors claim that the

pay for the performance. Many masters I have spoken to said, that as a tourist attraction, *capoeira* gained several benefits such as not being persecuted by the police, political power and social reputation, and last but not the least the art was turned into a means of gaining money.

After the revolution and the decay of the first republic in 1930s the Brazilian president turned to the in the first round unsuccessful presidential candidate Getúlio Dornelles Vargas. Oliveira do Santos (1996, p. 71) quotes that Vargas permitted many popular performances including *capoeira*. In the next decade the main social functions of *capoeira* were tourist promotion of Brazil and popularisation of Afro-Brazilian culture. Through this changed social role of the institution *capoeiristas* had the opportunity to earn money with public presentations and teaching. Rego (1968, p. 256) writes that *capoeira* masters from the beginning of the 20th century sang songs that would appeal to the spectators, so that they would donate some money to *capoeiristas*.

Regardless of the increased popularisation and trivialisation of the institution I cannot neglect the importance of *capoeira* in the process of integration of the African diaspora into Brazilian society and the promotion of its culture. Some of these masters did not agree with this kind of development of the art and institutionalised *capoeira* as the official Brazilian martial art. However, *capoeira* has preserved the notion of public spectacle and folklore activity even today. I look into today's role of *capoeira* in the follow up, yet it is important to mention that today, its folkloric elements serve to spread *capoeira* around the world and penetrate the global market of martial arts. *Capoeira's* ambivalent image and function are still of great importance for the preservation of the institution.

denotation is neutral without insulting connotations, and serves as a synonym for word *estrangeiro* (stranger). I have noticed that the expression was used to describe foreigners' characteristics or abilities. In *capoeira gringo* is occasionally used for a foreign student who does not have the same notion of *capoeira* as Brazilians do. The word *estrangeiro* was used in cases when the speaker was not emotionally attached or involved in situations including strangers.

Influences of the persecution period in today's *capoeira*

Today's public performances of *capoeira* are different to the ones from the beginning of the 20th century. Since *capoeira* is recognised as a martial art, many more kicks and other attack movements are used in the *rodas*. However, there is also an increased employment of acrobatic elements. Yet some of the old masters of *capoeira angola* preserve the memory of the difficult times of persecution, following the rules and customs of the *roda* ritual, developed at the beginning of the 20th century. The so-called *chamada* (call), which serves to test the co-players abilities, yet for the spectators it appears as a part of the choreography, is often used in the play. *Chamada* was developed to challenge the equal opponent using smooth dance moves by which the opponents preserve body contact. Such dancelike movement decreases attention to the player being called and offers the opportunity of unexpected attack to the player that performed the *chamada*. Therefore the *chamada* is considered as a test of quick and smart reaction, frequently used between skilled players.

Chamadas and play for money are not used in many contemporary *rodas*. Such play could be observed on special occasions such as religious festivals and on some locally organised *rodas*. I was present at many *rodas*, where *chamadas* were used and "traditional" rules were followed, but I saw play for money only once. At *Mestre Olavo's* group at the Sunday *roda* two of the older *capoeiristas*, around sixty years old, entered the circle and knelt down beside the central *berimbau*. With hand gesture they advised master Olavo to change the rhythm of the music. He started to play the rhythm *Santa Maria* that according to some masters was used to announce the game for money. Yet some masters claim that this rhythm was used to announce the play of the masters and not necessarily the play for the money. At this stage one of the *capoeiristas* threw a crumpled banknote for 5 *reais* on the floor inside the *roda* and *capoeiristas* started their game. For the first few minutes I was not aware of the game's meaning, as two players moved around the banknote kicking it from one side of the *roda* to the other. The master that invited me to the *roda* explained that this ritual aims to illustrate how dangerous such play is. In the "old times" *capoeiristas* usually picked up the banknote with their mouth, which was extremely dangerous when knives and razors were used, because when *capoeirista* grabbed the banknote their neck was exposed to the opponent. Players were forced to use *malicia* and *malandragem* to achieve the position that enabled access to the banknote with *corpo fechado*. Because Article 32 of the penal code of the first Brazilian

Republic prohibited the possession and use of any kind of weapons that can cause serious injuries, the play for money was modified in order to cover its original meaning. Because of its interesting choreography it turned into a tourist attraction. I suppose that the change of style, ritual and game elements of *capoeira* diminished the persecution of the art. In Salvador it was not as strict as for example in Rio de Janeiro, where *capoeira* became almost extinct during the period of persecution and repression.

Liberac (2004) and Rego (1968, p. 291) write that Article 32 was not exclusively against *capoeira*, but rather against all activities connected with street violence. *Rodas* that did not show signs of violence were allowed and *capoeiras* still had opportunities to come together. The style of the art is what changed. Rego (1968, p. 291) writes that Article 32 was only the addition to the penal code from 1830, which has not explicitly prohibited *capoeira*. Lawyer João Viera (in Rego, 1968, p. 291) argues that *capoeira* did not even exist under this name in the 1830s. When it reappeared later in same century and represented a threat for the ruling class and public safety, it was prohibited in 1890 together with other violent street activities.

1.4.6 The nascence of the academy

Capoeira passed the fundamental institutional, ideological and style changes from the end of the 19th and in the first decades of the 20th century. These processes caused the change of its public image and its social role and lead to the institutionalisation of the art as a martial art and national sport in the 1930s. In the second and third decade of the 20th century Bahian *capoeiristas* organised encounters on beaches and squares in Salvador. Oliveira Cruz (2006, pp. 77-81) writes that every year on the 8th of December, when *Festa de Conceição*⁶¹ is celebrated, several *rodas* on the streets of Salvador were organised under the supervision of *Mestre Amorzinho*. *Capoeiristas* from different parts of Bahia were present on these occasions. As I have already argued, *capoeira* style was modified so that the art appeared more as dance and play than as a martial art, in order for the performances to be allowed in public places. The *roda* of *capoeira* was in the first place a leisure activity and presentation of the Afro-Brazilian culture.

⁶¹ *Festa* means party, gathering or religious festival. *Festa de Conceição* is *Festa de Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia* and takes place on the beaches of *Cidade Baixa*. It is a Catholic festivity dedicated to the initiation of the construction of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia* church in 1549.

The majority of today's masters would agree that such gatherings were organised in order to improve *capoeira's* reputation, which was spoiled by political and street violence *capoeira* was involved in during the second half of the 19th century. The desire to improve reputation was connected with the yearning of the Afro-Brazilian population to be accepted as an equal part of the Brazilian society. As liberated slaves became a part of the emancipated population and the pluralistic Brazilian society became stronger, a necessity grew for new identifications. *Capoeira* and *candomblé* represented excellent means of identification, therefore institutional rules, beliefs and foundations had to be systematized. If *candomblé* represented a connection with the African homeland and with ancestors, *capoeira* denoted diaspora, fighting for emancipation and Brazilian history of the dark skin population. It represented an ideological secular institution, connected with religious institutions. *Capoeira* was often performed at religious festivals and also had other similarities with religion such as: standardized ritual, group identification, application of various techniques to communicate with the spiritual world, implementation of internal experiences into daily life, reestablishment of social norms and hierarchy and harmonisation of interpersonal relationships at the family and local social level.

Johnson (2007, p. 142) argues that political acknowledgment of a specific group is achieved through the acknowledgment of its religion and similar practices. To reach this aim the specific group has to systemize its beliefs, practices and distinctive tenors. Consensus regarding the orthopraxy and orthodoxies has to be publically discussed and reconsidered.

If I propose that *capoeira* represented a religion-like institution whose members used several Afro-Brazilian religious and magical practices and techniques, I can claim that it was as important as *candomblé* for the Afro-Brazilian social integration. I suggest that *capoeira* has become one of the most important Afro-Brazilian cultural institutions, in the context of identity formation and political acknowledgment of Afro-Brazilian population. Firstly because it was not declared as a religious institution by dominant classes or by Afro-Brazilians, and as such was appropriate for people of all classes, beliefs and convictions. And secondly, to practice *capoeira* one does not need to possess special abilities, which are demanded in some religious practices.

However, *capoeiristas* of this period could be perceived as preservers of the Afro-Brazilian culture (like the priests and shamans in **diasporic societies**), since they preserved the social conceptions of how an Afro-Brazilian person should look, act and behave. For example the

necessity of the shaman to fulfil cultural demands as Johnson (2007, p. 116) writes, restores relative stability and consistency between their methods and repertoires, despite the different environmental influences and influences of neighbouring societies. Personal stories as well as their duty tasks are similar within the same society (Johnson, 2007, p. 116). If I look at the correlations of such presumptions with *capoeira* I can argue that within the *capoeira* institution the consistency of practices and methods was re-established through masters of *capoeira* who met and played at traditional gatherings. Thus, frequent meetings amongst people with similar interests and activities led to the formation of organisations and associations. Oliveira Cruz (1989) writes that Bahian *capoeiristas*' gatherings brought about the formation of *Centro de Capoeira Angola Conceição da Praia*. White clothes were used in *rodas* to demonstrate the positive character of the stigmatized *capoeira*. In this period the art was considered as the skill of loafers and miscreants (*vadios e vagabundos*). The gatherings led to the reestablishment and the consensus of the *roda* ritual. Rules about the formation and execution of *roda* and behaviour playing in the *roda* were restored and reconstructed. The first *capoeira* informal association was renamed at the beginning of the 1930s into *Centro Nacional de Capoeira Angola* with headquarters in the district of *Gengibirra* (ibid.). Shortly after two most significant masters of that time formed the first two schools of *capoeira*.

Today's masters' opinions on why the institutionalisation of *capoeira* happened are inconsistent. Some understand institutionalisation as the consequence of a new image creation within *capoeira*, which has allowed institutionalisation, while others are convinced that especially Manuel dos Reis Machado-*Mestre* Bimba was unhappy about the fact that *capoeira* was turning into a trivial activity to amuse tourists, due to some masters' greed and style changes. One of the masters I was talking to says that because of the disagreement with such banalisation of the art, *Mestre* Bimba wrote down the teaching methodology and behaviour codex for *capoeiristas*. He introduced some elements of the African martial art called *Batuque* and elements of oriental martial arts into *capoeira*. In 1937 he managed to register the first *academia* (school-academy) of *capoeira*: *Centro de Cultura Física Regional*. I suppose that such acts would be impossible without the excellent political connections and sympathies of President Vargas toward *capoeira*, mentioned by some writers (Rego, 1968; Oliveira dos Santos, 1996). Despite the distinct name of Bimba's martial art *Luta Regional Baiana* (Bahian regional fight) the foundation of the first academy was at the same the decriminalisation and legalisation of *capoeira* in general. Vicente Ferreira Pastinha followed the example of Bimba

and when he received the title of *Mestre Geral da Capoeira Angola da Bahia*⁶² by *Mestre Amorzinho* in 1941, he founded his own school *Centro Esportivo de Capoeira Angola* CECA. He was the first to use the term *capoeira* in the denomination of the legally founded and recognized association (Oliveira-Cruz, 1989). Without doubt, these two events were crucial for further development of *capoeira* and its social role. Integration of *capoeira* into Brazilian society and its political acknowledgement would not be possible without drastic changes in *capoeira*'s image and reputation achieved by the application of *malandragem*, masking and covering unwanted elements of *capoeira*. Bimba also managed to introduce *capoeira* into higher social classes using *malandragem*. Authors like Rego (1968) and Nestor Capoeira (2002, pp. 171-172) argue that *Mestre Bimba* taught *capoeira* members of higher social classes and thus improved *capoeira*'s reputation. However, they do not have the information how Bimba managed to contact and attract these people. Some masters mentioned that his changed style was more appropriate for white Brazilians, yet Oliveira dos Santos (1996, pp. 68-69) argues that Bimba changed the style because *capoeira* was not effective enough in the fighting against repressors, police, the army and consequently the higher social classes. In Bahia *capoeira* was strongly persecuted between 1920 and 1927, when chief of Salvadorian police was Pedro de Azevedo Gordilho. He persecuted *capoeiristas* using cavalry and they rarely managed to defend themselves. During this period some *capoeiristas* were even sentenced to death (ibid.). My interlocutors quote that because Bimba managed to change *capoeira* into an effective martial art it has become respected by the general public and even by the police and the army. This suggests that the repressive apparatus became subordinate to revolt, which is less probable. On the other hand some masters claim that Bimba managed to popularize *capoeira* supported by friends, medical students who invited university colleagues to *capoeira* classes. Regardless of how Bimba managed to found his academy, institutionalisation was a great change and has opened new horizons for *capoeira*'s future development. The recognition of *capoeira* as a part of Brazilian culture and a national sport had a positive impact on its reputation. Yet Nestor Capoeira (2002, pp. 171-172) perceives some negative consequences in this change. According to him (2002, p. 172) with the institutionalisation *capoeira* underwent a radical change:

Capoeira was moved from the street to the *academia* (academy,) and so lost its role of "magical theatre" representing life itself. It was no longer *malandro* philosophy of life, but rather a sport institution, closed behind the walls of the academy.

⁶² Head master of the *Capoeira Angola da Bahia* institution.

I have to reconsider two matters. First, I have to ask myself why institutionalisation would repress "*malandro* philosophy of life". If *malandragem* was developed as the necessary ability to adapt to changes and new conditions, it would be reasonable to propose that such changes provoked *malandragem*. Bimba's and Pastinha's schools were soon joined by many other schools, new schools with new styles and teaching techniques. Despite the fact that even today there is a strong division between Bimba and Pastinha styles (*regional* and *angola*), every group and school has its style and values particularities in order to gain more students. *Malandragem* has turned into a technique to penetrate the market and gain costumers. Secondly, I have to question the existing explanations about the origins of *capoeira*. If I suggest that with institutionalisation *capoeira* was for the first time moved from the public to a private place by *default* I neglect the theory of the art's emergence in *senzalas*. If slaves wanted to develop a martial art it had to be practiced in secret and private places, i.e. in private and not public spheres. Therefore, if I agree that *capoeira* was practiced on *senzalas*, I have to claim that already from the beginning the art was closed behind walls in a private sphere, even if it was part of social life. *Capoeira*'s breakthrough into the public sphere happened first in the 18th and 19th century when according to Oliveira dos Santos (1996, pp. 49-50) the art was used by city vagabonds and thieves and practiced in ports and marketplaces as leisure activity (Rego, 1968). Yet Dos Santos does not state if these were liberated slaves or European immigrants mastering *capoeira*. He only writes that from 1809, when chief of the Rio de Janeiro police became Miguel Nunes Vigidal, police forces also used *capoeira* to fight street violence (ibid.).

To conclude the debate about the public and private appearance of *capoeira* I can suggest that the art always appeared between both spheres. Knowledge has to be passed from generation to generation and the private sphere can not meet the same level of creativity as the public sphere where everyone can participate. In many cases people living on the streets and mastering the art of *capoeira* did not have houses, therefore public places were only available to them for practicing the art, to pass and absorb knowledge.

As I propose, institutionalisation has caused some radical changes within *capoeira*, but surely it has not suffocated the *malandragem* and its ability to adapt to new circumstances. Gradually *capoeira* was asserted as a national sport activity and since the formation of the first school has being included into educational programs of many schools and other institutions. Even if I suggest that the changed political and social situation in Brazil has

promoted institutionalisation, I could also claim that yearning for emancipation of the Afro-Brazilian population and mastering the *malandragem* provoked social changes in Brazil. The foundation of the first republic, the Afro-Brazilian effort to be integrated into society, introduction of military political systems in the 1930s and economic changes were the main reasons for new political strategies. However, without constant power relationships between dominant and repressed classes including Afro-Brazilians, such changes would not happen. As Foucault (1982, pp. 225-226) claims:

Every strategy of confrontation dreams of becoming a relationship of power and every relationship of power leans toward the idea that, if it follows own line of development and comes up against direct confrontation, it may become the winning strategy.

Street children

In the 1930s the Brazilian political and general public was concerned also with poverty problems in Brazilian society. By that time the number of homeless in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador has drastically grown and between them there were many children named *menhinos da rua*. They also formed street gangs and used *capoeira* in fights, following the example of older vagabonds. However, their aggression and violence were even more banal than that of the adults. As Liberac (2004, pp. 117-118) writes, there were hundreds of homeless children on the streets of Salvador in 1901. They did not have parents or guardians or they ran away from home. Some were the children of very poorly paid workers and passed the nights at home, yet Liberac also includes them in *menhinos da rua*. Such youngsters' gangs have robbed and threatened other citizens. The members were between nine and eighteen years old as it is obvious from the police records of the time. Most people convicted of physical assaults in Salvador were between 15 and 25 years old. Thus according to Liberac (2004), violence among youngsters in Salvador has at least hundred years old tradition, and is probably connected with urban life, working class and street culture⁶³.

As city authorities were not able to prevent this violence, proper citizens were forced to deal with the growing problem. Some older *capoeira* masters have dedicated their work in *capoeira* to educate *menhinos da rua*. They have taught *capoeira* to these children and taught

⁶³ By street culture I mean all customs, habits, behaviours and institutions that are constituted during street gatherings and interactions.

them new values. Such new approaches in the teaching process of *capoeira* lead to the institutionalisation of *capoeira* as educative means. Jorge Amado, one of the most significant Brazilian writers from the beginning of the 20th century also writes about the positive educational role of *capoeira* and describes the encounter between members of the youngsters gang *Capitães da Areia* (sand captains) and the famous *capoeira* of the time:

João Grande came to the beach. The wind was trying to slow down his steps and his body was twisting forward resisting the wind which was playing with the sand. He meant to go to Porta do Mar, where he wanted to enjoy the glass of cachaça⁶⁴ with Querido-de-Deus that just came back from fishing in the South Seas. Querido-de-Deus is known as the most famous *capoeira* in town and respected all around Bahia. Querido-de-Deus served with the news and mentioned that on the next day he will start *capoeira* lessons on the beach again. He will continue to work with Pedro Balo, João Grande and Gato (Jorge Amado in Liberac, 2004, p. 119).

Liberac (2004, p. 121) supposes that Amado described the role of *capoeira* in regards to the education of *menhinos da rua*. *Querido-de-Deus* was a famous *capoeira* master in 1920s and 1930s performing social voluntarily work with youngster living or hanging on the streets. He taught youngsters about *capoeira*'s culture and its social role. He emphasized positive effects of *malandragem*, so that they would be able to distinguish between the world of chaos and order and manage to cope with life's challenges.

The situation regarding violence among youth and the beneficial influences of *capoeira* is not much different today than it was at the beginning of the 20th century. In all discussions about street violence my interlocutors would be indignant over violent youngsters between 15 and 20 years old. Oliveira et al. (2000), Ianni (2004) and Abramovay et al. (1999) argue that most cases of violence involve men between 15 and 25 years old. There might not be the same number of homeless children today as it was at the beginning of the 20th century, but the majority of youngsters spend more time on the streets than at home. Today's children are not exposed only to the violence but also to drugs, organised crime, prostitution, kidnapping, etc. The educational role of *capoeira* is even more important. Children that join the *capoeira* group spend at least two hours per day training or playing *capoeira*. In such cases the master represents the father and the group is a substitute for family. Through *capoeira* youngsters learn the hierarchies and valid social rules. Violation of the rules is punished so that a reasonable level of discipline is achieved through *capoeira* practice. The master is not the

⁶⁴ Sugar cane spirit.

only one who is respected but also other *capoeiristas*, especially the better ones. This social role of *capoeira* is explicit in *favelas*, where *capoeira* is perceived as a martial art and a technique to survive on the streets.

Preserving tradition

Since *capoeira* still refers to the recreated tradition from the beginning of the 20th century, and founders of the first two schools are glorified within the institution, the art represents the means to preserve Afro-Brazilian rituals, habits and customs. *Capoeira* teachers give *capoeira* lessons almost for free in poor parts of the city. Students pay 5 to 10 *reais* per month, which covers only the master's transportation costs, in case he does not live in *favela*. The way of teaching is different than it is in richer parts of the town. They teach children how to survive on the streets and how to avoid crime and drugs. Through the practice of *capoeira* students acquire a proper education, knowledge about culture and self-esteem. However, to teach in the *favela* is rather a difficult task and the master has to be a charismatic, skilled warrior because many good young *capoeiristas* challenge their own or other teachers with effective and aggressive play. In *favela* the master has to constantly prove his supremacy, which becomes a difficult task, when he starts to lose his physical strength and agility. The cultural function of *capoeira* and *malandragem* are of great importance in such cases and old masters are respected according to their wisdom. Through mastering the art of music and *malandragem*, their supremacy is demonstrated. As they are physically less capable than younger *capoeiristas*, mastering the *malandragem* is the only way to maintain their respect. In what follows, I will analyse today's social role of *capoeira*, its educational function and capability to harmonize social relationships in *favelas*.

Favela

"*Capoeira não é só luta. É cultura, é o modo de vida, é a própria raiz brasileira.* (Capoeira is not only a fight. It is culture, the way of life, and represents the stems of Brazilians." (one of the masters; author's translation).

The citation above includes many of today's definitions of *capoeira*. Many of the answers to the question what is *capoeira* and how would you describe *capoeira* could be summarised as:

Capoeira is lot more than just a martial art; it is culture, a part of the Afro-Brazilian heritage, a sport and a therapy. Despite the fact that my interlocutors have named many *capoeira* characteristics that would help to understand the most frequently used phrase between professors and masters: "*Capoeira não é sou luta, é muito mais (Capoeira is not only fighting, it is much more)*", these characteristics are general and common. *Capoeira* is perceived and defined as a sport activity, a martial art, folklore, cultural heritage and therapeutic means. Yet regarding such characteristics it is not much different than the other similar body activities as for example yoga, other martial arts, dance and aerobics. Every sport activity can be understood as a game or play that offers a player a set of skills to be learned, which are useful in real-life situations. Bateson (1972, p. 182) describes play as:

...play is a phenomenon in which the actions of **play** are related to, or denote, other actions of **not play**. We therefore meet in play with an instance of signals standing for other events, and it appears therefore that the evolution of play may have been an important step in the evolution of communication.

Capoeira as a play can be understood in this context as a learning polygon on how to cope with life situations. The statement *roda é a vida (roda is life)*, can be interpreted as: *roda* is a space where a soft kick denotes a life threat, and the tactic to avoid the kick and create a contra-attack is a way of coping with life challenges. Yet also in this context *capoeira* is not much different than other game forms. While I observed training techniques, interpersonal relationships between *capoeiristas* within the group or between different groups I perceived that in Salvador *capoeira* is strongly interrelated in local social relationships. What I have observed and analysed was *capoeira's* role in the establishment of family and neighbourhood relationships in a society where a particular *capoeira* group operated and how such interpersonal relationships influence the relationships inside the *capoeira* group and how its social role and play style are changed. In the following pages my observations and findings regarding inter- and intra-group relationships in *capoeira* and the relationships between *bairro pobre* or *favela* society and *capoeira* group are presented. The influences of modern political, social and economic circumstances on *capoeira* are also of great interest. As I have already ascertained, *malandragem* is the characteristic that allows quick adaptation to social changes. Therefore I suppose that the role, image and reputation of *capoeira* are going through stronger and faster changes than ever, due to globalization of economy and popularisation of consumer culture.

Capoeirista and his modern identity

Identities in *capoeira* are changing with the globalisation processes. Until the 1930s a *capoeirista* was perceived as marginal and dangerous; with institutionalisation he became either *angoleiro* or *regional* (practitioner of two different styles) and above all, a sportsman. As I have mentioned most of the masters and *capoeira* schools emphasized *capoeira*'s cultural value and its importance in the construction of a national identity. However, *capoeiristas*' lifestyle has changed dramatically over the last two hundred years. *Capoeiristas* of end of the 18th century were rebel slaves, in the 19th century street fighters and vagabonds, while the romantic perception of *capoeira* from the first half of the 20th century depicted *capoeiristas* as dressed in white and jolly *abadas*⁶⁵ with a *berimbau* in the hand. But today's *capoeiristas* have to work to survive and most of them practice *capoeira* in their free time. Santos Silva (2002, pp. 202-203) distinguishes between *capoeiristas* and those practicing *capoeira*. The former ones have a special lifestyle, specific culture and emphasised personal values according to the values of the group where they are members. The latter ones practice *capoeira* in their leisure time as a martial art, sport or for relaxation (ibid.). In any case, *capoeira* is now spread all over the world and is becoming part of a global culture, therefore I suppose that today's *capoeiristas* do not have a particular lifestyle that would be much different than it is of the common population. The complete identification with *capoeira* seldom occurs. *Capoeiristas* also have to study or work, have a family, visit shopping malls, go for a drink in the bar or for dinner, go on vacation or drive a car. Stronger identifications with *capoeira* might be perceived in *favelas*, where beside *capoeira*'s leisure function its educational and socio-therapeutic functions are also emphasized.

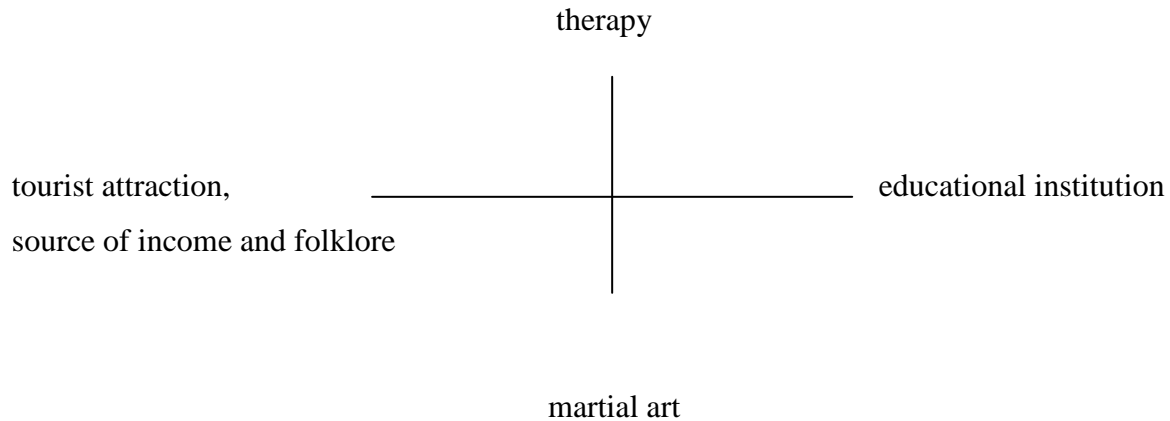
1.4.7 Social function of *capoeira* in *favelas*

Through talks, observations and active contribution at trainings and *capoeira* events in the city district of Boca do Rio, I gathered some information, beliefs and statements regarding the social role of *capoeira* and its function in relationship harmonization. Yet before presenting the data, I would like to point out some difficulties and advantages of the integration process into a *favela capoeira* society.

⁶⁵ *Capoeira* clothes, similar to kimono in karate.

As I have mentioned it was not difficult to start practicing at *Mestre* Alabama's academy as it operates as commercial sport centre. On the other hand it is not so easy to enter academia placed in *favelas*. The first difficulty is already to find the school in *favela* even if somebody would direct you to the one. Namely streets in *favela* are not fairly marked so you will have to ask for the way. Secondly the one can not just enter master's house, where as a rule the *aulas de capoeira* (lessons of *capoeira*) are taking place, without announcing the visit. Thus to participate at the lessons you have to be acquainted with the master. I have met the master of the first school included in my research already in Europe, so after I asked him for permission to join his school as both practitioner and researcher he agreed. I have met master of the second school included in my research - located in the same *favela* - on the event organised by the first master. Obviously if I was not *capoeirista* myself before, I would have much more difficulties to approach the groups and even more in the later process to become an insider in the terms of Čapo-Žmegač et al. (2006) and Šantek (2006). Being both practitioner and researcher and regarding the fact that spoke the Portuguese language, my integration and transformation into insider was not complicated. Actually I had more difficulties to maintain the outside-ness of objective observer being at the same time the practitioner of the art. My multi-sited research in several *capoeira* groups allowed me to retain the distance of the outside observer. However, incomplete integration in particular group opens the questions of trust toward the researcher, so that was rather the most difficult task during my fieldwork. Partly I have managed to gain masters and other *capoeiristas* trust because of my personal characteristics - I am always open to conversation, curious and even if I talk a lot I am ready to listen - partly because I was a good *capoeira* student ready to learn everything about *capoeira*, and most important, because Salvadorians are ready to enter in relationships even if it takes time to become friends. Thus good integration and balance between being insider and objective observer allowed me to collect a lot of fieldwork material, some even not connected with the topics of this thesis.

Below I have depicted most of the perceived functions in two dimensional system of coordinates. The data was gathered from 15 in-depth interviews, informal talks and participation-observation executed in several *capoeira* groups. Here are presented the 4 functions of *capoeira* that are most transparent in Boca do Rio:



People who practice *capoeira* are mostly convinced that in *favelas* the art serves primarily as a means of education and is trained as a martial art. The therapeutic role of *capoeira* is connected with its possible beneficial influence regarding violence and other social problems. Masters argue that personal growth is strongly dependent on good education about proper lifestyle and real values⁶⁶, which can be achieved by practicing *capoeira*. This function of *capoeira* is obvious; however, I suppose that the biggest socio-therapeutic strength lies in its ability to harmonize relationships between members of a specific *capoeira* group, between them and their family members and also within broader local society. The ritual of *roda*, *capoeira* trainings and masters' lectures create awareness about social hierarchies, interpersonal relationships, respect and communication. Larger *capoeira* events re-establish and maintain relationships between the group and the local society. Johnson (2007, p. 149) claims that the reestablishment of harmony within a broader family is an important part of the rituals' therapeutic effect. *Batizado* is a perfect opportunity to re-establish, maintain or harmonize relationships; group members, their families and friends from home and abroad are gathered on such occasions.

Yet *capoeira* events may not appear unitary for an uninvolved observer. Conflicts might arise at such events, but in most cases such conflicts are the preamble to the solution of more profound problems. Conflicts do not have to be seen as a destructive element, but rather as the means to restore communication that might resolve or even aggravate the problem. *Capoeira* is frequently compared with real-life as play in *roda* forces the players to face and solve the

⁶⁶ Real life style and real values, as masters argue, provide young men with education, employment and the possibility of forming a family. With a good life style the youngster will avoid a criminal life and drugs and will not do any harm to himself, his family or other people. Santos Silva (2002, p. 193) claims that *capoeira* promotes values of the dominant and also of the dominated class through tourist promotion of Brazil and the construction of national identity. *Capoeira* consolidates fraternity and solidarity through economic interests of individuals and society.

challenges of the game. *Roda* is perceived as a polygon where the player can learn to resolve everyday problems and confront difficulties. It is believed that through play in *roda capoeiristas* disclose their personal characteristics; they react similarly in play as they would in real-life situations. Santos Silva (2002, p. 122) sees similarities of *capoeira* and everyday life in its intertwining with educational, cultural and social institutions. Relationships and behaviours in *capoeira* influence relationships inside these institutions and *vice versa*.

The educational function of *capoeira* is most obvious in *favelas*, however, the not so transparent but not less important is its therapeutic function, regardless if we refer to its use in hospital or just at *capoeira* social therapeutic functions in relationship harmonization.

The cultural function of *capoeira* is the second by importance. Through this function Afro-Brazilian history and memory of exploitation and emancipation of the Afro-Brazilian population is being recreated and preserved. The cultural function also preserves folklore continuity of habits and ritual practises developed amongst the enslaved and marginalized Brazilian population. Even if they have African roots, developed as a product of cohabitation of different African people, native Indian groups and European colonizers, such practises differ from native African practises. Santos Silva (2002, pp. 48-49) perceives *capoeira* as the key product of African peoples' fusion on Brazilian territory. Coming from various African tribes, slaves did not know each other and hardly communicated due to cultural and linguistic differences. *Capoeira* was the universal means of corporal communication and represented the perfect merging system. For Santos its folkloric function is of great importance for the integration and identification of Afro-Brazilians and through social adaptations, the *capoeira* institution has managed to infiltrate economic, political, cultural and educational processes of the Brazilian state today.

Even if most practitioners interpret *capoeira*'s folkloric component as a way to attract tourists, raise popularity and promote the art, some would agree that this function is necessary to preserve Afro-Brazilian culture. In *favelas*, *parte folclórica da capoeira* (the folklore part of *capoeira*) stands for all activities that are not directly part of the play but are strongly connected with *capoeira*, as are for example *maculelê* (dance with sticks or machetes), *puxada de rede* and even *samba de roda*, performed at many *capoeira* events. Some masters argue that these elements are fundamental *capoeira* elements; others disagree claiming that *capoeira* is a martial art developed by slaves, parallel with other cultural manifestations.

As I have argued, the biggest changes within the *capoeira* institution, connected with its folkloric side happened at the beginning of the 20th century, due to the prohibition of the art. Integration of the folkloric element into the game happened before the institutionalization of the art was possible. The institutionalized tradition was recreated and identifications of *capoeiristas* and *capoeira* established. With folklore and acrobatic implements *capoeira* became more interesting for the spectators and Rego (1968, pp. 360-362) writes that this was the primary aim of *capoeira* masters at the beginning of the 20th century.

1.4.8 Modern *capoeira*

Different *capoeira* groups develop different game styles and distinct ways of promotion at events and presentations. Rego (1968, pp. 361-362) writes about modern *capoeira*, which has been promoted around Brazil and abroad after its institutionalization in 1940. The promotion of *capoeira* as a folklore activity already started in the times of the prohibition (ibid.), and the *malandragem* of the *capoeiristas* of the time contributed to its successful image change.

Besides the urgent image change of institution, we must also consider the context of tradition re-creation and implementation of folklore elements in *capoeira*, which with the institutionalization resulted in the establishment of two distinct styles of the art. Some masters are convinced that *angola* style follows the tradition of *capoeira* similar to the foundations developed in *senzalas*. *Regional* on the other hand is perceived as a modern style with stems in the *angola* style. Others claim that styles differ due to different beliefs of both founding masters regarding *capoeira* and due to completely different corporal characteristics in both. Bimba was a big and strong *negão* (black man), while Pastinha was small and thin. Each of them had to develop a proper style according to his physical abilities. Authors such as Santos Silva (2002), Oliveira dos Santos (1996) and Oliveira Cruz (1989) support the theory that *capoeira angola* is similar to the one invented by African slaves in Brazil. They argue that *capoeira* rules refer to *capoeira angola*, believed to be connected with culture of the ancestors of African slaves. *Mestre* Pastinha preserved the style and rules learned from his master, whereas *Mestre* Bimba invented his own ones (Santos Silva, 2002, pp. 52-53). However, Rego (1968, p. 313) writes about *capoeira*'s connection with *Guarda Negra* that represented the secret police fraction whose aim was the preservation of the monarchy and Princess

Isabella. In the 1880s many *capoeiristas* and brawlers were integrated into the *Guarda Negra* and surely they did not use any folkloric elements during the street fights and attacks.

Authenticity

Despite the fact that some authors have declared *capoeira angola* as authentic I suppose that neither *angola* nor *regional* are similar to the *capoeira* of the 17th, 18th or even 19th century. First of all if the art was developed on *senzalas*, systematic teaching was impossible, therefore it was absurd to develop rituals, game rules and techniques if they could not be performed. Slaves also did not speak the same language, which is crucial in rules establishment. And even if they did have some common cultural sets to communicate, they established rules according to their given conditions. Secondly, if *capoeira* was developed in *quilombos* as a fighting technique and a military martial art, folkloric elements were completely unnecessary. Thirdly, in the 19th century *capoeira* was first persecuted and used as a street fighting technique, between 1865 and 1888 was used as a means of political fight, after which it was criminalized again. Already in the 19th century its image changed several times, therefore it also has its proper style and teaching techniques. Fourthly, words of *capoeira* songs played in *rodas* of *capoeira* are written in Portuguese and not in an African language, and even *berimbau*, considered as the key instrument in *capoeira*, was introduced only by the end of the 19th century. Before that *atabaque* was the main instrument. *Berimbau*, as Santos Silva (2002, p. 80) writes, was used in other cultural manifestations, for example *samba de roda*. Moreover, if *capoeira* was illegal during the time of slavery, it would be at least naive if not even unwise to call attention to special music. That is why it is believed that on *senzalas* *capoeira* was practiced at dance festivities and archaic *ginga* was more similar to *samba de pé* than it is to today's *ginga*. Santos Silva (2002, p. 71) writes that later on in the 19th century *capoeira* music also represented a threat to the dominant system. Music was the means of communication and through music the memory of exploitation was transmitted. Furthermore, the need for integration of Afro-Brazilian culture into the Brazilian external image emerged in the middle of the 19th century and became stronger after the abolition of slavery. That is why it is reasonable to presume that folkloric elements were introduced in *capoeira* by the end of the 19th century when *capoeiristas* wanted to present the art as part of the Afro-Brazilian culture. Rego (1968, p. 115) writes that *Mestre Bimba* was the first to execute the official presentation of *capoeira* for the governor who wanted to present Brazilian cultural heritage to

his guests. At the presentation he used his own style called *regional*. I presume that the polemic about authenticities of styles is constructed by the first two *capoeira* schools founders to promote their groups and it still continues in the present time. Emphasizing the qualities and authenticity of a particular *capoeira* style is characteristic for today's *capoeiristas*. However, other styles and schools are not despised. Masters always explain that they have learned the rules and techniques from their masters who learned them from older masters and that they passed the rules and styles as they have learned them. Such statements are in contradiction with the actual learning process as almost every master practices an additional martial art and therefore integrates other techniques into *capoeira*. All masters also claim that *capoeira* is constantly developing, changing and adapting to given social and environmental situation, since a *capoeirista* does not want to be defeated.

Thus, as change is a normal process of all practices, we cannot speak about the existence of authentic untouched *capoeira* developed and institutionalised in a certain period somewhere in the Brazilian *senzalas*.

The rules of the game

I will presume that the appearance of the first *capoeira* academies had a significant impact on the codification of its ritualised form and pertaining rules. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983, p. 6) use the term **invention of tradition** in regards to the reestablishment of the rules of certain institutions related to a past tradition. Later on it is a conjunction of ritual activities performed in accordance with concealed or unconcealed established rules, which are implanted by norms of repeated behaviours. Such rules emphasise continuity with the past, not necessarily distant but rather with a blurred memory of it (ibid.). Regarding *capoeira* I can argue that memory of its past is blurred due to the almost non-existence of written documents of *capoeira*'s development. If the *capoeiristas* of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century re-created or invented ritual rules and rules of the game and practice, is not of great importance for my thesis. However, it is important to understand that within *capoeira*, the so-called "tradition" is continuously emphasized and that consideration of the rules, established by masters Pastinha and Bimba is of great importance. Those who are radically changing *capoeira* style are acting against valid ethics within the *capoeira* institution and are stigmatized as masters without any knowledge of the arts foundations. As such they are

mostly perceived masters that teach outside Brazil and the most common phrase used is: "*Ele se tornou Mestre no avião*" (he became master on the plane). It is believed that *capoeira* is losing its authenticity through loss of respect for the "tradition" and through becoming increasingly similar to other martial arts. One of the masters voiced the following opinion about that process:

Because many masters do not respect the tradition, *capoeira* has been exposed to the process of devaluation. Such masters are implanting elements of other martial arts into *capoeira* without the integration of such elements into the basic *capoeira* movement, *ginga*. Of course new elements should be integrated but not so that the basic characteristic of the art is spoiled.

As I can see, music, folklore elements, acrobatics, *ginga* and *roda* ritual are the characteristics of *capoeira* that differentiate the art from other sports and martial arts. Therefore, for most masters they are a crucial and indispensable part of the art and its learning processes. Masters who emphasize folkloric elements believe that through folklore, children are taught Afro-Brazilian customs. Despite the fact that the main goals of those who practice are to master gracefulness of body movements, to learn martial art, to do some sports or to turn into *capoeira* instructor and leave the *favela*, some schools of *capoeira* would like to preserve the culture and the tradition of the art.

1.4.9 *Capoeira* as a part of social life: fieldwork observations

It is hard to define the term tradition within *capoeira* as there are many theories regarding the arts foundations and development and that the art has passed through many social and political changes throughout the centuries. Tradition can be understood as a set of rituals, behaviours, myths, stories, songs, learning techniques and relationships utilised by individual *capoeira* schools. I practiced *capoeira* for thirteen months in the Boca do Rio quarter and realised how important the connections between *capoeiristas* were. If we want to speak about tradition in *capoeira* we have to consider the information such as who is whose master and who was his master, that are crucial to recognise style, origin and qualities of certain school. In recently founded schools tradition is re-created through such information. This connection also defines which groups are friendly, neutral or even hostile for a particular *capoeira* group or school.

To establish relationships with as many *capoeiristas* as possible and gain their trust and access to information about *capoeira*'s function regarding relationships between *capoeiristas* and their families, I trained *capoeira* in two schools that were part of the group *Capoeira Angola Palmares*. Both are located in Boca do Rio on the Northeast part of Salvador. Few other *capoeira* groups are active in this quarter, but *Capoeira Angola Palmares* is one of most highly considered in Salvador. Both schools were close to my house. Masters of both schools have a similar teaching and educational approach, but one of them lives in the society where he teaches, while the other has a second practice in the municipal centre for youth activities and lives outside Boca do Rio. The first master that I will call Laurence has daily contact with students and also with other members of the local society in district Alto São Francisco, where his house and school are based. The second master, in my research called Pavel, has contact in Boca do Rio mostly with his students and their families and as well with other instructors of *capoeira* in the district. Both masters have another profession beside teaching *capoeira*. Both believe that *capoeira* is a martial art but its paramount functions are educating the youth and the formation of real values⁶⁷ that are difficult to learn in *favela*. When *capoeira* as martial art is mostly learned at trainings that in master Laurence's school are performed 4 times a week and in master Pavel's school three times a week, education and learning values are also part of *capoeira* events and celebrations. Events and celebrations organised by Pavel are mostly performed in the school area and are more private, while Laurence always organizes his events in public spaces with many participants. In my thesis I analyse the events organised by Laurence. However, master Pavel's events are as interesting as master Laurence's to denote the differences between both schools even if both belong to the same group. As Laurence lives in the society where he teaches, he is frequently on the street and fully integrated into local social life. Pavel teaches children from the local society he does not belong to, so for him *capoeira* events represent moments when *capoeiristas* and their families are gathered. Laurence perceives *capoeira* events as festivities for the entire local society. Pavel's students are always present at master Laurence's events, which *vice versa* is not always the case. To clear the obscurities regarding this question, I asked both of them why some students come more frequently to events of the other master and why some do not. Both masters claimed that some lack the time due to other activities, that there is a significant

⁶⁷ Real values for them represent: respect for parents, teachers and peers, sport life without drugs and alcohol, success achieved through work and learning, participation in socially beneficial activities, knowledge of proper culture and stems.

difference in the students' age in both schools and that some events are more important than others.

In formal discussions both masters claimed that absence at less important events is not a big issue. However, I perceived the importance of reciprocity through everyday chats with both. If for example master Laurence or his students did not take part at certain events organised by master Pavel, he would act offended and sad. Master Laurence often promised that he would be present at Pavel's events, but he only came on a few occasions. Sometimes he would send his son with two or three students to refrain from offending the host. Now and then Pavel also complained that he was slightly neglected by master Laurence, because he is not his primary master, since his real master has already been teaching in Europe for several years. However, Pavel agreed that Laurence organises bigger and more important events and that he is honoured to be always invited and welcome. Master Laurence sometimes explained during his lessons why he was not present at Pavel's event and assured us that next time he would participate. In context of deprivation and enforcement of *capoeira*, Pavel's statement about the original master is of great importance, pointing out clan relationships in the institution of *capoeira*. Clan affiliation in *capoeira* is determined through the tradition of knowledge, through consideration of the cultural tradition of a certain group and through the loyalty of group members. In this context the principal master of the group represents direct contact with ancestors, namely his teachers, the group represents the clan and different schools could be understood as families. Since Pavel is the direct student of the "intruder", the master that does not have roots in *Capoeira Angola Palmares* and was not the principal master's student, and furthermore, his master is a known instructor in Europe, master Laurence has adopted master Pavel and through this the first has become mentor to the second. This position gives superior status to master Laurence and puts master Pavel into the position of *Contramestre*, an expression for the one being chosen to become *Mestre*. The preparation can in some cases last even ten years. Some groups use the expression *Mestrado* for master in preparation and obligations of these are to be present at all of the mentor's events. With their presence and performance at such and other events, a *capoeira* player invents and crates his value and recognition. *Mestrado* and his mentor are present also at events of other friendly groups or "capoeira clans", where he is introduced and recognised by other important masters. And lastly, *Mestrado* has to participate in public events of *capoeira* where he is obliged to play with unknown *capoeiristas* and instructors of hostile "capoeira clans". Through play in *roda*, through his knowledge of game rules, *capoeira*'s history, mastering of musical elements and

the demonstration of a certain "*capoeira* clan" style, he gains respect amongst *capoeiristas*. Only when the wider *capoeira*'s public consensus is that a certain *Mestrado* has reached sufficient consideration and maturity, he is proclaimed *Mestre* by his mentor. The criteria to be proclaimed *Mestre* are subjective and can also be seen from statements of my interlocutors regarding the question: How can someone be proclaimed *Mestre*? Most would agree that it takes much time, up to thirty years of *capoeira* practice to become a master. *Convivência* (to fully act and interweave with the group and loyally belonging to it) in *capoeira*, complete mastering of all arts elements, the ability to pass knowledge and educate, and psycho-emotional maturity is needed to become a master. Despite strict yet subjective criteria I have met many masters who have acquired this title already after fifteen years of practice. Opinions about such masters are inconsistent between the *capoeira* public. Firstly, if somebody has been proclaimed *Mestre* outside Brazil after a few years of practice, he could become one only through creating strong and numerous groups that allows his mentor enough financial income or if he has proclaimed himself as *Mestre* without recognition from others. Secondly, a young master in Salvador has to create and develop good and beneficial work with youngsters in *favelas* (*desenvolver bom trabalho na favela*), or be talented and capable of following the mentor's philosophy to be proclaimed *Mestre* after fifteen years of practice. Thirdly, there are rumours regarding some masters in Salvador and outside of Brazil that they acquired the title only because they passed over to another group with all their students. Such suppositions mostly regard masters outside Brazil and are related with masters who do not appear at Salvadorian *rodas*. Real masters have to be present at *rodas* organised by their group, friendly groups or those being held at public places. Furthermore, masters teaching outside Brazil visit Brazil once a year for a month and are expected to appear in *rodas*. I can presume that one of the most important obligations of a *capoeirista* is to attend events and play in *rodas* in order to increase his reputation.

The most important events that group members should not miss are *batizado*, celebration of group foundation, the day of each individual school's foundation and the master's birthday. Important *capoeira* events are not related only with one *capoeira* group. In the case of religious and municipal festivities several groups would collaborate and organise *roda da rua*. Such festivities in Salvador are *Lavagem de Bomfim* in *Lavagem de Yemanjá*⁶⁸. *Capoeiristas* appear at these events individually and it is arranged within the group who should visit the

⁶⁸ First event celebrates founder of the church *Nossa senhora de Bonfim* (Our lady of Bonfim) that smartly connected *candomblé* with Christianity. Second one is dedicated to *candomblé* goddess of the ocean *Yemanjá*.

event. *Rodas* are formed in accordance with the legitimate hierarchy where more important and older masters form several *rodas*.

While at group events only invited *capoeiristas* appear, at public events *capoeiristas* from all over Bahia gather to play. In what follows I analyse a few private *capoeira* events as important social interactions between *capoeiristas* and the local society. Such events are mostly organised in the vicinity of a *capoeira* school or directly on school premises. The location is related to the importance of the event. I have been present at five *batizados*, two school birthday celebrations, three foundations of the group celebrations, four masters' birthday parties and five public presentations.

Yet *capoeira* events are not only a way of social interaction, relaxation and good for *capoeiristas* to prosper in public. As I have mentioned social relationships within the group and between the group and the society also achieve harmony through them. Hierarchy is thus consolidated and Afro-Brazilian culture recreated and preserved through *capoeira* events. To illustrate the above mentioned I describe two events in the next section, namely *batizado* of the *Capoeira Angola Palmares* group and the birthday celebration of *Mestre* Laurence. Both events are different in function, dimension and purpose.

Batizado

Batizado is a formal event where *capoeira* players win their classifications, which are symbolised through *cordões*⁶⁹. Masters and instructors from the group and other friendly groups are invited as well as the *capoeira* player's families. Master Laurence's *batizado* was organised two times in a row in the local primary school. The second year we met each other at 9 o'clock on school premises. There was a stage in the hall where the *batizado* took place. When I entered some of the masters were already preparing instruments to start the *roda*. About fifteen minutes later one of the masters exclaimed *ieee* and so *ladainha*. At the *roda*'s entrances (*as portas*)⁷⁰ two older masters were preparing for the play, kneeled *na pé do*

⁶⁹ *Cordão* or girdle in *capoeira* represents the level of skill, although criteria of acquirement vary from group to group as well as the number and colours of girdles. Most would use green colour for first level girdle and white for master, yet some schools use black for master or even white for the beginner.

⁷⁰ *Roda* is not a completely closed circle. There are the so called doors on each side of *bateria* (composition of instruments), where *capoeiristas* enter and leave the play.

berimbau (on the foot of *berimbau*). When the leading master⁷¹ announced the beginning of the play, both masters performed, each his own technique of protection (some would recommend themselves to the forces of earth and air, some would cross and praise Catholic deities and some used special, personal signs of protection), then they would shake hands and begin with slow and smooth play of *capoeira angola*. This is a smart and sly game where *capoeiristas* aim to throw each other on the floor, using throwing techniques like *tisora* (scissors), *rastera* (stumble), *esquregão* (slip), *cabeçada* (head kick). They would try to obstruct or frustrate the others' movements, always adapting reactions in regards to the others' actions. After a few minutes of the game, the master on the central *berimbau* used a special rhythm to announce the change of players in the *roda*. The first set of players left the game through *roda's* doors, while the next two of players were already kneeling by the *berimbaus*, waiting to start their play. This inauguration *roda* went on for half an hour and its purpose was to warm up the players and get them ready for the *batizado*. Regardless of the fact that there were only *capoeiristas* from their own group and some other friendly groups present at the event, I observed aggressive and violent tensions between younger *capoeiristas*, aged between 17 and 25. Such tensions were caused by provocations and boasting and could lead into conflict if the event was not *batizado*. At such important events younger *capoeiristas* hold back out of respect towards or even fear of the masters, yet I have heard several *capoeiristas* claims that they would seek vengeance on other occasion. The wish for revenge is mostly caused by the supposedly violent or dissembling game of the opponent. I was surprised by the fact that *capoeiristas* complained about others' slyness, even if *malandragem* is considered as the essence of *capoeira*. However, interpretations of *malandragem* are heterogeneous. Despite the fact that many do not relate hypocrisy to *malandragem*, later on interpreted as a way of life and a philosophy as well smooth and sly movements that deceive the adversary, some claim that even hypocrisy or better to say dissembling of the game is a part of *malandragem*. Few people claimed that they are not *malandros*, as they dislike such philosophy, yet I noticed a good amount of tricks and disguised moves in their play. I realised that conflicts were not the result of appliance but rather the inability to apply *malandragem* and achieve compensation. There are many *capoeiristas* present in *roda* on *batizado* and change of girdles and baptism are the main purposes of these events. Therefore, players have a very short interval to beat their adversary. If a player is deceived, he does not have enough

⁷¹ Expression is used for master playing middle *berimbau* named *viola*. This *berimbau* in *capoeira angola* should be held by the most experienced master, which is not a strict but frequently respected rule. The person playing the *berimbau* decides about rhythm, tempo and style of the game and calls *capoeiristas* into and out of the game.

time for pay-back and compensation has to be postponed to another occasion. If the event is a public *roda* and not a *batizado*, many such short plays would end up in violence. I have seen violence at many events and gatherings. These entering into a conflict were frequently members of the same or friendly group. When I asked three *capoeiristas* for the reasons of the conflict, I received the following answers:

Sometimes boys want to show off in front of the audience and if someone has more flexible and beautiful kicks and moves, this might be a reason enough to start the fight.

Players coming from *favela*, desire to show to the ones from richer quarters that they are equal if not better in *capoeira*. Many times such desires might cause violence.

If I have the chance I play more aggressively just to test how a real fighting situation would feel. Of course you have to stay calm and have a notion about the right level of aggression; otherwise it can be easily turned into violence.

Santos Silva (2002, p. 123) argues that violence is to be ascribed to rivalry between *capoeiristas*. Since *capoeira* is not a competing sport, even if in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro there have already been some competitions (I have not heard of any in Salvador), sometimes the rivalry between *capoeiristas* is expressed through aggression, which might be transformed into violence. Stronger kicks performed by one of the players can provoke a sharper response by the other, therefore both players get stuck in a magic circle of the action-reaction concept and the violence intensifies. Mostly it ends up in humiliation, sometimes in a physical fight. Those who provoke violence are sanctioned by their *capoeira* group and by the local society. They are perceived as marginal and in cases of intense and frequent violence they are permanently expelled out of the *capoeira* institution. Those who are able to control their aggression are welcome to use it during the play, without the fear of sanctions, as long as they preserve the respect towards their co-player and others present in the *roda*. I experienced several times aggressive play that was expressed through faster kicks, in a more intense game, in the raised attention of the players, in more frequent body contacts, faster game rhythm and more elaborated and defined kicks. Aggressive *capoeira* includes also many *rasteras* and

other stumble techniques, yet this type of game hardly resulted in conflict; it was concluded with an *abraço*⁷² and a hand shake.

After this prefatory *roda*, *Mestre* Laurence introduced the visiting masters and thanked everyone who helped with the organisation; then he inaugurated the *batizado*. After his oration, other masters asked to speak, as is common during such events. They thanked him for the invitation, emphasized the importance of *batizado* for the preservation of the *capoeira* tradition and talked about the significance of *Mestre* Laurence's work at his academy, and also in the Centre for Youth Education, where he is employed. Afterwards Laurence's wife, responsible for the organisation of *Mestre's* academy, thanked the sponsors, parents and master Laurence. She also played an important role in the organisation of the event and master Laurence has mentioned once that he teaches *capoeira*, while his wife takes care of all other things, including finances. He is concerned with the education and youngsters' problems, while his wife offers him support and acts as the second mother to many children playing *capoeira* in this group. Everyone together with Laurence calls her *Dona Luça*, which denotes her role within local society. *Dona* and *Dom* are expressions commonly used in Brazil to address people of higher rank or social status. In Salvador these titles are used to express respect toward highly valued individuals in a certain society. A person can be valued on the basis of his economic status, educational status or social function.

Opening orations lasted for about half an hour and their common purpose was to address the importance of *capoeira*, to emphasize its role in emancipation and liberation of Afro-Brazilians and to remind participants of how important it is to be aware of the tradition, respecting the codified rules and more experienced *capoeiristas*. When masters argue about these principles they use very formal speech, even their intonation and loudness of voice changes. Bloch (1989, pp. 33-34) argues that the formalisation of the language spoken in rituals serves to pass the message and to emphasize the importance of the ritual. Orators wish to sound like their teachers, but their speeches are very similar to political orations. Orations were followed by folkloric presentations performed by the children, which changed the atmosphere at the event from a formal to a relaxed one. They presented some folkloric

⁷² *Abraço* is a friendly hug, in Brazil also used between men. It expresses goodwill, friendship and good energy between two individuals. Symbolically it can signify reservation of the conflict, achieved consensus or confirmation of agreement.

elements of Afro-Brazilian culture such as: *puxada de rede*, *maculelê* and *samba de roda*, which are connected with *capoeira*.

Then with the inaugural play of masters and co-masters, the baptism and examination of *capoeiristas* were announced. In this preliminary game only *Mestres* and *Mestrados* are allowed to enter the *roda*, showing to younger *capoeiristas* what it means to play *capoeira*, however, they would also value their and their adversaries' abilities. Students usually follow the game with admiration, trying to remember some of the best moves. Some argue that with this introduction masters want to show how younger *capoeiristas* will be able to play one day, if they practice with persistence and follow the example of their masters. To sum up, the introduction play of masters has an educational, a motivational and a competitive purpose.

During the game I always observed the expertness with which *malandragem* is used. Testing is disguised and perceived only by skilled *capoeiristas*. Even if they want to over-play the adversary they do not want to embarrass him in front of less skilled *capoeiristas*. And even if they find a place and time to apply *rastera* or an effective kick, they would act subtly. The move is only indicated, transformed into another one that allows fast escape from adversary's contra-reaction. The person that has been tricked perceives the threat and admits the adversary's good move with some funny bodily gesture or with the *esqiva* (technique to avoid threats) out of the opponent's active space⁷³. For a regular observer *malandro* play can be boring and abstruse. Players may avoid attacking for longer periods of time, trying to provoke an error from the other player. Both are convinced that by employing *malandragem* they will delude the adversary, yet they are aware that the other one is trying to do the same. Sometimes they would play just slightly more openly and exposed, but still perfectly ready to re-establish *corpo fechado* in the case of danger. When the game is finished they hug each other acting relaxed and happy, even if they know who won and that they have played for real. They would try to convince spectators that they have played a relaxed and open game. Everything is supposed to be *brincadêira* (fun game), as *capoeira* is mostly called by those practicing *capoeira angola*. However, when the game was over, I heard the following statements from present masters:

⁷³ Active space is the distance between players, where kicks from a player can be dangerous. Some masters claim that distance is the most important feature of *capoeira* play. *Capoeirista* has to perceive at what distance the co-player can be dangerous and from what distance he may attack him.

Ele pensou que vai brincar conmigo. Não cosegiu, ja mostrei a ele duas vezes que sou rápido. Eu entrei n'ele pra acabár con jogo. (He thought that he could play with me. Again he did not make it; I have already showed him twice that I am fast. I almost entered to finish the game).

Esse Mestre jogo violento, sem respeito pra os Mestres mais velhos. Não pode! Têm que jogar tranquilo e com malícia. (This master played violent, without respect toward older masters. That is wrong! He has to play calm with many *malícia* (smartness, slyness)).

The trickery mode of the play was notable at all important events where no one's intention was to embarrass the other or to be exposed to criticism due to violent or inappropriate play. I have only seen aggressive and sometimes even violent games at unimportant events when even masters fell on the floor by *rastera* or *tisora*. However, at one *batizado* a master that was applying aggressive and penetrating game was present. He did not only mark *rastera* but fully performed it and many skilled players lost their balance playing with him. It was noticeable that some played more aggressively with him than they would with the others and the game became similar to a fight. (*jogo* and *brincadéira* turned into *luta*). Some were discontent and disagreed with this kind of game and after the *roda* was finished they commented out loud that the play of a particular master was humiliating, without respect towards older players and physically less able masters. To show respect towards long-term work in *capoeira* and contribution to society the older masters have done, one should play openly with them and not try to dominate them using physical strength. A conflict emerged between this particular master and one of the instructors from the group that organised the *batizado*. The conflict was diplomatically solved by one of event's organizers. Over the microphone he mentioned that sometimes players take certain actions of their adversaries too seriously and too personally. This is frustrating and the ego suffers. He continued that he personally does not have any complaints against dynamical and aggressive play, however, he does not want any conflicts at his event where he is trying to build a positive energy and collective spirit. He mentioned that the master had already tried to apologize to the instructor, who did not want to accept the apology. For him these were personal decisions not to be involved in the event, which had a different purpose. Once more he emphasized that *capoeira* denotes the integration and preservation of culture and tradition, because the art always represented fighting for emancipation and not simply fighting between *capoeiristas* themselves. Such statements are in complete accordance with today's perceptions of *capoeira* amongst practitioners. The art is glorified and mostly it is forgotten how rough *capoeira* from the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was. *Rodas da rua* are excluded from this context. Statements of this sort are

applied when *capoeira* has to be presented in its best light or when conflicts have to be solved. On the other hand in day to day conversations *capoeiristas* would pride themselves with fights in *rodas da rua*. Some masters have told me how they broke somebody's nose or applied a good *rastera*, because the opponent was arrogant and presumptuous. Younger practitioners love to explain how they managed to play equal with somebody that has the reputation of being dangerous or invincible. As we can notice, aggression and violence have ambivalent meaning within *capoeira*. If both are expressed in the wrong context they are stigmatized notions, otherwise the honourable employment of both contribute to *capoeira*'s social reputation. Yet *capoeiristas* would like to present the art as positive and socially benevolent, which might be understood as *malandragem*, because *capoeira* today is present in schools, it is part of the touristic promotion of the state throughout Brazil, and it is promoted as a healthy activity, which was hardly the case for *capoeira* from the beginning of the 20th century.

Capoeira's image however, has not changed only because of the changes in the style of play on the streets and the re-creation of ritual and traditions. As Santos Silva (2002, pp. 104-106) writes, the first literature about *capoeira* from the beginning of 20th century changed the art's image in a positive way. In the year 1902, Burlamaqui wrote his first book about *capoeira*, entitled *Ginástica Nacional Capoeiragem*; in 1907 an anonymous author published the book *Guia da Capoeira*; and in the same year *capoeira* was pulled out of the Brazilian penalty code as a dangerous and prohibited art. But even if in 1972 *capoeira* was proclaimed a national sport (ibid.), the art does not have an elaborated competing system, therefore the evaluation of quality is still the domain of the construction of social reputation. Social reputation is established through playing in *rodas*, regardless if it is at events or on the streets. *Confederação Brasileira de Capoeira* (Brazilian *capoeira* association) has put together a valuation system of the play and some competitions are already in progress. However, the difference in style of each and every group or even individual players is the principal obstacle in trying to institutionalize *capoeira* as a competing sport. There are also differences in hierarchies and in the knowledge levels between groups, therefore *capoeiristas* have to constantly prove their qualities. *Roda da rua* or events as *batizado* are only opportunities for *capoeiristas* to show their martial arts abilities and are one of the modes to gain social capital. Although *capoeiristas* are rivals, they are forced to respect hierarchy, domination and submission to preserve the institution. As Bateson (1972, p. 109) would say about competitors, they work in accordance to symmetrical schizogenesis, and also with

complementary schizogenesis. In the first the actions and energy input of everyone involved are similar, which is common for competing processes and rivalries. In the second, the first element's action should cause the second the opposite but equally forceful action. This is common for domination-submission and control-dependency relationships (ibid.). These relationships between *capoeiristas* motivate continuous competition to prove themselves, as well as respect for the hierarchic system in *capoeira*. Respect for older and more experienced masters is demanded, but it is desirable and ethical to demonstrate your qualities and gain respect, even if you have to challenge older and more experienced players, and thus be exposed to criticism. Such challenging of older players is common at events like *batizado* and is performed in the moment when *capoeiristas* have to show the qualities and gain a higher level girdle. Such examination plays at *batizado* are as a rule performed straight after the play of the masters.

At Laurence's *batizado* masters played together for more than twenty minutes; after a short brake and an announcement the examination started. First the players without girdles entered to play in the *roda*. *Batizado* for them represents the first time they play with a master, but I noticed at trainings that already everyone got the chance to play with his own master before the *batizado*. As there were many masters, co-masters and professors present at the *batizado*, newcomers' baptisms passed quickly. The game was interrupted again and the examination of other level *capoeiristas* was announced. They started with lower levels and the game became more and more difficult when masters changed girdles of more skilled *capoeiristas*. Players passing examination for the fourth or a higher level had to play with at least two or even three masters and professors. At the end also elected professors and co-masters had to pass the examination. This is rather a formality as they already had to prove themselves over several years of practice supervised by a mentor. In some groups the title of the co-master and master has to be approved by masters from all groups.

When the examination finished *batizado* was concluded with acknowledgments of all important guests. After we left the school we gathered in a local bar, where *Dona Luça*, her daughters in law, some female *capoeira* players and mothers of the *capoeira* youth prepared snacks and drinks. Beer and *refregerante* (refreshing drink) were free; other drinks had to be paid by participants. Master Laurence's sons and other professors brought with them samba percussions for party to be accompanied by live music. Most of the participants started to dance; others drank beer and discussed *capoeira*. They discussed the events of the day and

news about other recent events where they were present. They also commented on the behaviour of some *capoeiristas*, announced who was recently proclaimed as master or co-master and argued about who deserves to be proclaimed as master and who does not. The party lasted for a couple of hours, and late in the afternoon *capoeiristas* went home. Laurence's family and his close co-workers joined him for dinner at his house.

Despite the fact that entertainment elements are present at every *capoeira* event, *batizado* is a completely different event from the master's birthday party, for example. *Batizado* is a formal event where rules and hierarchies are given, whereas for example the anniversary of the academy and the master's birthday are events with less protocol and structure. Hierarchies and rules are not strictly clear at such events; they are consequences of respect towards *capoeira* rituals, masters and the academy.

1.4.10 Interpretations: analysis of *capoeira* and *batizado* functions

I have discussed different types of *capoeira* events, now I would like to sum up the main points of a *batizado* analysis and argue about some of the social functions of that event. I would like to reveal the less obvious meanings of the *batizado* ritual. In formal conversations regarding *batizado*, my interlocutors have claimed that this is the most important event for students, because they are getting rewarded with a higher level girdle for their hard work. It is also the perfect opportunity to learn from others and to socialize. Some of them claimed that *batizado* is a kind of event where almost everyone gets a chance to play with different masters and where new masters and professors are initiated. Others connected *batizado* with respect claiming that by appearing at the *batizado* you pay your respect to the organiser, while he has already paid respect with the invitation. Few of them argued that at *batizado* "things are put in order", it represents the end of a period of work, creation and union, yet also the beginning of another. I can suppose that beside individual meanings, *batizado* also implies social or group meanings. The socially regulative function is not denotatively expressed, if we refer to Johnson's explication of ritual meanings expressions (Johnson, 2007, p. 178). For him ritual means: "...a spatial question of locating and pointing to select events, objects and actions. Ritual is memory, history and continuously existence of certain group".

Since *capoeira* is widespread also outside Brazil, *batizado* is always an event where domestic *capoeiristas* and as well the teachers practicing abroad are invited. More guests are present from abroad, the more famous and the more valued the *batizado*, which satisfies organisers and the people invited. If a master or professor is capable of organizing a big *batizado* with many masters and guest practitioners, the event is considered successful. The perceptions of excellence are automatically oriented towards the organiser, who is considered to be successful. Different situations are not discussed publicly, yet criticism can be perceived in everyday chats. I have heard comments like:

This year he could not organize the *batizado*, I do not know if he was not putting enough effort into it or if he is losing students.

He always assures that in this year he will organize a *batizado*, however, but then he comes up with a bunch of excuses like work or not enough students to organize the event, etc.

The criticism behind these statements in regards to an individual *capoeirista's* qualities is also evaluated in the capability to organize big events. Such evaluations consolidate the hierarchy within *capoeira* that is created and re-created over behaviour rules at *batizado* and play in *roda*. For example: instruments can be used only by those who have sufficient experience and by all instructors; an especially strict rule is who can play the three *berimbaus*, the ritually most important instruments in *capoeira*. The rule about who can call somebody to play with or throw somebody out of the game is highly respected as well. One may "buy the game" (*comprar o jogo*)⁷⁴ only from equally or less experienced *capoeiras*. Masters, co-masters and professors alone decide who they want to play with and they may be pulled out only by other masters, co-masters or professors. There is a clear hierarchy at use here, for example, the master can be pulled out only by another master, and age is an important factor. One of the masters explained his attitude towards his mentor:

Despite the fact that my graduation is as high as it is from my mentor, I do not even think about pulling him out of the game. He has 40 years of experience in *capoeira* and me only 25.

According to this I would like to discuss *batizado's* primary function, which is the formal and informal reestablishment of hierarchic relationships. The formal component can be

⁷⁴ With a special gesture the person who wants to enter the *roda* denotes who he wants to play with and who he wants out of the game.

understood as a normal progression of the individual over the girdle scale and informal as the established consensus within the *capoeira* public about who is good, capable and has potential, who earns respect and who is to be criticised.

The second function concerns the harmonisation of interpersonal relationships between *capoeiristas* and between them and their families. The harmonisation of relationships between different families' neighbours, etc. also has to be mentioned. These relationships are re-established and harmonised with the cooperation of parents and *capoeiristas* helping to organize the event, with gratitude towards professors, masters, other *capoeiristas* and some of the parents and is expressed publicly, with unions on and after the event and with positive commentaries about somebody else's children . One of the parents have for example praised others children as follows:

This boy has really developed from last year. How beautifully he moves and how smartly he plays. That is not only a result of a good teacher, much talent is also needed.

Similar comments and chats between parents reconcile practitioners' families. A broader social cell with resembling interests is formed, and in such groups people can cope with less problems of everyday life in *favela*.

As the third function of *batizado* I want to look at the reestablishment and maintenance of relationships that appear during the play and unions at *capoeira* events. Two players are familiarized with each other while playing in *roda*. The relationships of friendship or violence and resentment are enforced through the play. Last are usually the consequence of *circulus vitiosus* of action and reaction to violence, as Santos Silva (2002, p. 124) claims. According to Santos, *capoeiristas* get involved in a violent game that is difficult to stop, due to their personal characteristics or because they do not understand the rules of *capoeira* (ibid.). In this context *capoeira* is the active means to reform relationships, yet its effect depends on the *capoeiristas*' intentions. These may be the consequence of his personal characteristics, however, many interlocutors claim that most students react in accordance to the group or the master's philosophy. In some schools violent *capoeira* is promoted, yet Santos Silva (2002, p. 124) is of the opinion that such deviations are rare and have to be analysed as pathological unacceptabilities.

Others do not agree, they claim that a professor does not have the power to influence someone's decision whether to play violently or not. An individual, in order to be able to train in a violent group, has to prefer violent play. Each person is capable of making decisions and thinking for themselves, therefore those who do not share the group's or master's philosophy leave the group and find another teacher. One of the *capoeiristas* explained what his search for an appropriate teacher looks like:

I trained with an accurate master only for a few years now. I have changed several groups, because I did not agree with their philosophy and teaching methods. Many teachers have promoted a violent game, telling us that we should play with *capoeiristas* from other groups rough in order to hurt them, if the opportunity presents itself. In the last school I trained we visited others group's events only to sabotage them. We were told to hurt younger *capoeiristas* in the game, which would spoil the event's atmosphere. I turned around and said goodbye to the group. I decided to stop with *capoeira*, if everyone thinks like that. Then I found a group where everything is different. Master is teaching us how to defend ourselves from those trying to hurt us and how to cope with violent situations. He never promotes aggression and prohibits violent behaviour.

I have argued about the social functions of *capoeira* and *batizado*. Of course there are other functions that I have not named, but they are not of great importance for this research. How can I define *capoeira's* social function? If I presume that the art was developed amongst African slaves as the opposition against a hegemonic colonizer, it should represent a fundamental element of Afro-Brazilian culture. Yet *capoeira* today is practiced by members of all social classes and different cultures all around the world. Santos Silva (2002, p. 128) argues that *capoeira* is a manifestation of Afro- Brazilian culture but not its typical cultural element. Therefore it accepts members of other cultures. Since *capoeira* is an urban space phenomenon, it can be easily integrated in and adapted to each individual urban culture around the globe.

Regarding promotion of violence I can conclude that youngsters practicing *capoeira* can avoid violence on the streets. It is true that in some cases, due to the personal characteristic of practitioners and their poor knowledge of ethics within *capoeira*, violent acts and behaviour appear, yet such behaviour is sanctioned within the broader *capoeira* public. An irresponsible teacher that motivates potentially violent youngster with aggression or even with violence, claiming that violence is legitimate or even desirable in *capoeira* is stigmatised and eliminated from the local *capoeira* society. He and his students are not welcomed at events where violence is persecuted. Violence in *capoeira* is mostly related with the 19th century

period, when violence was the only way of *capoeiristas* to survive. Today violence is perceived as part of the historical development of the art. Santos Silva (2002, p. 144) writes about the appearance of violence in *capoeira* as follows:

Relacionavam a capoeira á violência, de forma equivocada, sem considerar que seus aspectos agressivos no passado eram atitudes simplesmente de uma luta de resistência contra o sistema político e econômico que determinou circunstâncias históricas na vida de muitas pessoas. (*Capoeira* was connected with violence in equivocal form, without considering that aggressive aspects in the past were simple attitudes of fight, resistance against political and economic system that determinates historical circumstances in many people's life; author's translation).

Today's political and economic circumstances in Brazil are very different from the ones at the end of the 19th century. My interlocutors are convinced that Brazil is among world's strongest economic powers, its internal and external politics emphasize unity and equality in the Brazilian population. Its tourist promotion is based on the multicultural concept of putting forward three biggest groups: Euro-Brazilian, Afro-Brazilian and Native-Indian. *Capoeira* has most likely contributed a big part to the promotion of Afro-Brazilian culture, therefore its today's role has changed compared to the last century and so have its ethical codices. Most masters emphasize the importance of hierarchy, respect, knowledge of rituals, rules and *capoeira's* history. For them this art is a sport, national gymnastic, therapeutic technique and means of preservation of the Afro-Brazilian culture. The frequently mentioned *muito mais* meaning of *capoeira* is notable at events that are a way of recreation and preservation, many times emphasizing the tradition of *capoeira*. Reestablishment of positive relationships and friendships, preservation of the culture, building of *capoeira's* positive image and spreading the art all around the world, are practitioner's obligations mostly mentioned by *capoeiristas*. Through this also other aspects of Afro-Brazilian culture are promoted, for instance dances such as *maculelê*, *puxada de rede* and *samba de roda*. Dance, ritual and musical elements of these three activities are preserved through the ritual of *batizado* and other promotional or leisure events.

Master's birthday

The tradition of *samba de roda*, *samba* and *capoeira* is transmitted to the younger generation also through less formal *capoeira* events. In what follows I will describe master Laurence's birthday celebration, which took place at a local bar on Alto São Francisco's main square.

Some of the guests gathered at 11 o'clock at master's Laurence's house, where *Dona Luça* and her daughter in law started to prepare the cake. The sons left to buy bread and meat. Around noon everyone moved to the main square, where male *capoeiristas* started to prepare for the *roda*, while female *capoeiristas* brought the food and drinks into the local bar. After the *roda* started we played for about fifteen minutes without master Laurence, and when he appeared everyone was singing:

Parabéns pra você (happy birthday to you)
a nessa data querida (on this desired day)
muita felicidade (good luck)
e muitos annos da vida. (and many more years).

While singing this song, master Laurence began to play *capoeira* with one of the present masters. He chose his co-players and managed to play with everyone. Then the *roda* was interrupted and we gave our best regards to *Mestre* Laurence. He left the *roda* and grabbed a beer at the bar. The *roda* continued and new invited *capoeiristas* joined the play. Master entered the play once in a while just to play with newcomers, than he continued conversations at the bar. The game was amusing and in many aspects similar to a humoristic performance when some of the masters embarrassed one of the less skilled *capoeiristas*. Everyone present enjoyed the game that was also much more relaxed and theatrical that for example at the *batizado*. Master Laurence is a strong and big *capoeirista*, therefore on many occasions during the game he would grab his opponent, put him on his shoulders and start to run in a circle. Then he put him on the floor like a child and through this gesture he demonstrated his supremacy in a funny way. It is true that at events like this *capoeiristas* use acrobatic elements, although they are not as spectacular as at public presentations. Here the point of the acrobatics is for the player's amusement and relaxation and not so much for the spectators who are part of the *capoeira* public. Yet younger *capoeiristas* love to boast on any occasion, not to miss an opportunity to show their qualities if at any time a beautiful girl passes by. It is

easier to arrange a mistress and gain more admirers, if you pass as a good, fast, agile and fearless *capoeira* player.

Roda lasted at least four hours with few showers that did not disperse the players, but when it started to rain continuously, we brought the instruments into the bar and the party proceeded inside with *samba de roda* or *samba de pé*, as the dance is called between people. The party was accompanied with food and drinks and did not terminate till late evening. Despite the fact that much alcohol was used during the party, I did not notice any physical conflicts that are common for some Brazilian public parties. I noticed that conflicts were mostly caused by jealousy, envy or family resentment and were most common when the people were under the influence of alcohol.

1.4.11 Violence, stigmatization and popularisation of *capoeira*

It would be naive to think that people forget about their problems and frustrations when participating at somebody's birthday party. Besides personal characteristics that determinate behaviour under alcohol use (some would act funny, some sleepy, some sexually aroused and some violent) there are other factors influencing behaviour under influence of alcohol. The possible reasons for people's reasonable behaviour at events like master's birthday party might be:

- It is a small scale party where everyone knows each other;
- Many *capoeiristas* have mentioned in informal conversations that on *capoeira* parties there are no fights because *capoeiristas* from the same group respect themselves. There are always masters and other teachers present which decreases the possibility of the fight due to fear from and respect toward them and also possible uninvited subjects perceive very soon that this is *capoeira* party where making problems would not be a good idea;
- Some of the masters quoted that these days masters hardly ever start a conflict in public places, since they want to preserve *capoeira's* improved image and consequently the students.

Mestre Laurence became amusing under the influence of alcohol. He always danced and spoke with friends at parties. It is true that his game in the *roda* became a bit uncontrolled, but

never violent or even aggressive. Professors and students from the same group did not want to be ashamed; therefore beside some sharp and offending words and looks I did not witness any serious conflict at his parties. I received dark looks and threatening words from one professor, reminding me that I should not dance too close to the girl that he wanted to fascinate that day. His threat was covered in a smile and completely discreet. The professor and I knew each other for two years already, but there was always a certain level of tension in our relationship. However, I did not find myself the subject of provocation, therefore I returned the same waggish smile I received from him and left him alone. After that our relationship became more relaxed and we even entered in some informal discussions, where I found out that he teaches *capoeira* in one of the biggest Salvadorian *favelas*. He had already been involved in some dangerous situations with the local mafia, when they wanted to kill one of his students, claiming that he owed them money. He was shot in front of the school where *batizado* was in progress, and luckily he managed to escape into the school. Professor had to stand up for him and the leader of the gang assured him that he will leave the student alone for now, only because of respect toward *capoeira* and the good work the professor is performing in the local community. However, the professor was warned that the student should pay the debt otherwise he would have to die. Professor himself was once a member of the gang and only *Mestre* Laurence managed to turn him away from crime to *capoeira*.

Similar stories denote a paradoxical role of *capoeira* in regards to violence. Despite the fact that within institution violence is sometimes promoted, only to achieve economic goals and momentousness, values of interrelation, cooperation, respect and prevention of violence are emphasized and worshiped. Even if violence is a part of everyday life in *favela*, many youngsters learn to express aggression in a non-violent form. Youngsters are supposed to develop self-control and learn how to relieve aggressive tensions through play, music and dance. *Mestre* Laurenc has mentioned that *capoeira* is the most frequently practiced activity in Salvadorian *favelas*. I have already ascribed reasons for its popularity to price and location accessibility and to its connectives with the Afro-Brazilian culture. Even though *capoeira* is a part of Afro-Brazilian culture, Santos Silva (2002, pp. 140-144) claims that not so long ago, the art was stigmatized also amongst the Afro-Brazilian population. Older people can still remember how they were told by their parents not to practice *capoeira* or were even forbidden to visit *capoeira* classes. My interlocutors supported the idea that twenty years ago, *capoeira* was perceived as a violent art of the marginal society. It was mostly connected with *candomblé* that in the south of Brazil is even today understood as a dangerous, primitive

religion and sorcery. According to some of my interlocutors, master Bimba contributed much to the popularisation and de-stigmatization of *capoeira*, when he separated *candomblé* from *capoeira*, promoting it as Brazilian gymnastic, suitable also for Euro-Brazilian members of Brazilian society. Santos Silva (2002, p. 137) argues that the most important role regarding popularisation and de-stigmatization of *capoeira* was played by modern electronic media promoting the art all over Brazil and the rest of the world.

Masters are convinced that *capoeira* was integrated into Brazilian society only because of some masters' hard work and due to smartly manoeuvred public relations with local and other societies. Masters of *capoeira* familiarized the world with *capoeira*. The first international presentation was executed by master Pastinha with his students in the 1940s. *Capoeira* today is already strongly integrated into Salvadorian society; however, the process of the art's popularisation is still in progress. With migration *capoeira* is being widespread around the world and there have been efforts to institutionalize *capoeira* as an Olympic sport, but some masters would rather preserve the art in a folkloric form as it has existed already for centuries. Despite the future orientations of the art's development, public relations with Brazilian society will always be of great importance for the art. They are re-established at *capoeira* events, presentations and also through everyday trainings.

1.4.12 Relationships between *capoeiristas* and society

Relationships between *capoeiristas* and the local communities in *favelas* are beside *capoeira* events re-established also in informal sociability on the streets. *Capoeiristas* live very similar to other *favela* inhabitants, therefore they have regular contacts with people from the community. After they return from their regular job in the afternoon they start their work with *capoeira*. There are only a few masters who can survive only by teaching *capoeira*. For example *Mestre* Laurence teaches *capoeira* in a public centre for youth education and at his academy, *Mestre* Boa G. is the owner of local radio station, *Contramestre* Pavel works as a vegetable and fruit grower and *Contramestre* Niki works in a company for hospital air-conditioning maintenance. I observed that *capoeiristas* are respected members of the community, due to their simplicity, life-style, adaptability and role that they have in youth education. They are perceived as working, responsible and mature personalities by the local society where they live. Parents trust *capoeira* teachers and therefore are willing to leave their

children in their care while also searching to identify with aspects of *capoeira*. *Capoeira* does not represent only a leisure activity, but also a certain group's life-style. Through events and practice, members of a certain group get to know each other, developing relationships of respect and collaboration. Santos Silva (2002, p. 115) claims that the most important role of *capoeira* is its ability to diminish racism and prejudice. Today *capoeira* is popular amongst the Afro-Brazilian population and amongst Euro-Brazilians. As *capoeiristas* search for identifications in art and its elements and because *capoeira* comprehends certain Afro-Brazilian folkloric elements, they learn to respect other practitioners and their specific culture, even if it does not represent the exact cultural set of each individual practitioner.

Urban culture

Throughout the history *capoeira* has changed from an institution of revolt against the political and economic system into an urban society culture. In the globalisation and individualisation era the art represents an interesting identification tool. Despite the fact that fundamentally it belonged to the Afro-Brazilian cultural set, many art characteristics (martial art, sport, dance, music) are universal and easily acceptable for other cultures. The possibility of developing a proper fighting style, a revolt, an Afro-Brazilian touch and a mystic ritual are those characteristics that make *capoeira* interesting for the differentiation of every individual. In the times of global culture development this could be considered as an important factor of identification. As *capoeira* is part of the urban cultural environment, it is important to explain some of the outcomes about life in *favelas* and about their urbanisation types. This explanation will help us understand the reestablishment of today's role of *capoeira* in Salvadorian poor quarters.

Favela can be defined as a city quarter with poor infrastructure (traffic, electricity, water, utilities, public transport, schools, hospitals...) where poor or lower middle class people live. In any case, despite the uncomplicated definition of *favela*, this term should in Brazil not be perceived as being uniform. For example even in Salvador I can differentiate between several types of *favela*: *favela* on the coastline, inland *favela*, *favela* near rich quarters, *favela* at touristic destinations, downtown *favela* and suburban *favela*. Differences are expressed through urban, economic and socio-organisational particularities. For example *favela* Garcia

in old city centre, close to the touristic destination is much different from the *favela* at Cazajeiras in the suburbs of Salvador in following characteristics:

- police control in Garcia is much more frequent and precise than in Cazajeiras;
- many people in Garcia reside in old bourgeois 19th century houses;
- in Cazajeiras they mostly reside in typical brick made houses or in old apartment blocks that are not under surveillance as are the so called *condominhos* in rich parts of Salvador;
- drug traffic is not organised in Garcia and is run by "small", mostly unarmed dealers who buy drugs from dealers living in bigger suburban *favelas*;
- in Cazajeiras drug traffic is organized and controlled by bigger armed mob organisations;
- random tourists can safely walk through Garcia during the day, when on the other hand tourist adventurers in Cazajeiras may find themselves in unpleasant situations and get robbed;
- bus thieves in Garcia are prevented by regular police raids of public buses, where everyone has to leave the bus to be examined, women are checked on the bus;
- armed attacks on public buses are frequent in Cazajeiras, above all during the night;
- residents of Garcia are mostly employed in tourism, service, restaurants or are trades people, while many Cazajeiras residents are unemployed or employed in the industry;
- the possibility of an education in Garcia is much bigger than in Cazajeiras, due to lower transportation costs to colleges and high schools.

In a similar way I could present the differences between all *favela* types, however, it is worth mentioning that the differences are even greater if we compare big city *favelas*, small town *favelas*, tourist town *favelas*, industrial or rural town *favelas*, Southwest Brazil *favelas* and Northeast *favelas*. The biggest and even most transparent are the differences between Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Salvador *favelas*. The first are completely isolated and controlled by criminal organisations that run drug and weapon traffic. Police controls only entrances to *favelas* and prevents traffic outside of *favela*. São Paulo *favelas* are widely extended so territory control is difficult. Neither the police nor criminal organisations can control these big city quarters. Violence and street conflicts are part of everyday life, while the police try to maintain a minimum of control. Fighting against crime is mostly performed by local private organisations. Salvadorian *favelas* are different, because Salvadorian police⁷⁵ is in general

⁷⁵ Here we speak about *Policia Militar*, whose function is to maintain public order and to control street crime. There is a department of *Policia Civil* to fight organised crime. Police also has storm troops *Bombeiros* and a special squad *Tropa do elite*.

more brutal than the police in Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo. Salvadorian *favelas* are easily accessible and have better infrastructure than other *favelas*. The police therefore try to deal with crime as best as they can. A frequent phenomenon in Salvador is execution troops or *esquadrilhos de morte*.

Differences between *favelas*, regardless if they concern control, urbanisation, local society structure, resident's structure, employment, capital distribution or location, significantly influence the development of other social institutions within local community. *Capoeira* relations within the institution are also constituted and re-established differently in different *favela* types. Despite different environmental influences, some aspects of *capoeira's* social role are universal. In Brazil or elsewhere around the globe *capoeira* is considered as a relaxing activity that helps to cope with frustration, it is the means of identification, sociability and physical or mental activity.

Bahia vs. others

There are some universal aspects about the origin and meaning of *capoeira* to be noted between ideologically different Bahian *capoeira* schools. *Capoeiristas* claim that Bahia is *capoeira's* cradle and its *raiz* (origin). All masters that were included in my survey argued that in Bahia, more than anywhere else in Brazil, traditional rules of *capoeira*, as established and written by *Mestre* Bimba and *Mestre* Pastinha, are respected and followed. Masters refer to rules and knowledge of both, Bimba and Pastinha, yet they are convinced that these are as old as *capoeira*, and were only written and elaborated by two famous masters according to the needs of their time, after centuries of oral tradition. Regarding such claims it is reasonable to ask whether oral tradition is a satisfactory reference for analysis, or if the rules have to be coded in a ritual structure for analysis of the institution and its development? If a unique ritual and unique *capoeira* history exist, why are there such differences between groups in performance of the ritual and interpretations of *capoeira's* origin and development? Since rules were not written, the ritual has to maintain the structure of the institution. The institution of *capoeira* has been studied only since the end of the 19th century and many studies have been done by the scholars being involved in *capoeira* institution, defending the history, style and rules promoted by masters of certain *capoeira* group. Such approaches resulted in many interpretations of *capoeira* institution role and development.

The main subject of analysis in my case is the *roda* ritual through which relationships and links are re-established, hierarchy preserved and tradition re-created. Through play in *roda* clan relationships between *capoeiristas* are re-established, namely with their attitude in the game, behaviour when they enter the *roda* and the way they perform the ritual, identifications with a certain group or line is indicated. Since blood relations does not play a significant role in *capoeira*, the appurtenance and loyalty to a certain group is important for the individual's identification and preservation of the differences between groups. A *capoeirista* constructs his identity through the master's identity. Masters that have been students of the same master are more closely linked between them than with other masters even if they belong to the same group. If students from the same master found their own groups, they stay connected and in good relationships with the central group and between themselves. They have common *capoeira* ancestors and a basic ritual and play style. For example *Mestre Alabama* and *Mestre Laurence* were both formed as masters by *Mestre Nó*, the founder of *Capoeira Angola Palmares*. As I have learned from conversations with both masters, *Mestre Nó* was appearing on same events as João Grande and João Pequeno - *Mestre's* Pastinha students - and some others from Pastinha's clan like Cobrinha Verde, Bom Cabrito, Didi Cabeludo, *Mestre Valdemar* etc. In 1970s each Sunday they organised *roda* at *Centro Esportivo de Capoeira Angola* (Oliveira Cruz, 2006, p. 149). They were sharing experiences and defending the same tradition of *capoeira* and some masters mentioned that those are *capoeira* descendants of great *capoeiristas* from the end of 19th century such as *Mestre Besouro Cordão de Oro*. Since *Mestre Alabama* and *Mestre Laurence* both have same *raiz*, it would be expected that the styles and ritual rules in both schools are at least very similar if not the same. However, I have noticed several differences in style, learning process and *roda* rules between schools of both masters. When for example *Mestre Laurence* emphasizes *capoeira's* folklore features, *Mestre Alabama* accents pragmatic -martial art - functions of *capoeira*. The former would speak a lot about *capoeira's* history and social function, when the latter would do so only on special occasions and for few chosen trustful. Yet both have similar beliefs regarding *capoeira's* role, development and have even common knowledge of play and ritual rules. As they say, both of them are teaching effective *capoeira* even if they have developed their own particular style and teaching methods in accordance with the group philosophy they belong. In both groups, *Nação Capoeira* and *Capoeira Angola Palmares*, there are also other masters with different *capoeira* ancestors having a slight different play styles, beliefs and knowledge about play and ritual rules. They follow the established rules and philosophy of the group they belong to,

regardless that they were "raised" in different clans. What I have noticed to be the same in both groups is the assortment of some *capoeira* songs such as the one emphasizing *Besouro Mangaga's* powers:

Quem e você que acaba de chegar? (Who are you, coming?)

Mais eu sou Besouro Preto Ninguém pode me matar .(but I am *Besouro Preto*, nobody can kill me; author's translation)

Thus even if all today's masters in Salvador somehow come from either *Mestre Pastinha* or *Mestre Bimba* lineage, the differences in play style, beliefs, teaching techniques and even knowledge about play and ritual rules among groups and schools are notable. Also Salvadorian *capoeiristas* quote that despite different styles and identifications every group has Bahian *raiz*, since the first two group founders were from Salvador. Differences might be the consequence of elaborated hierarchy within specific group and marketing challenges. Different groups are slightly modifying styles and modes of identification. Today's identification of *capoeira* group is expressed through logotypes and different *abadas* (*capoeira* uniform) that are used to denote different groups, while at the end of 19th century, as Liberac (2004) writes, flags were used as the differentiation tool between Salvadorian *capoeira* groups.

Capoeira as an urban leisure activity

Even if I have already introduced some theories about the emergence and the development of *capoeira*, I also suggest that its development is connected with leisure activities in urban environment and street rivalry. In early slave economy based on agricultural economy and uniform expropriation of the slaves, identifications and group divisions were prevented by colonizing forces. Therefore the characteristic of *capoeira* had to be developed later in history or there existed some other differentiation and identification techniques already on the *senzalas*. Even if *capoeiristas* had to act together against the colonizer, there must have existed differences between them if *capoeira* was developed as the art of the *malandragem* and many thousands of styles. This can be said with regards to the fact that slaves were members of different ethnicities. In *capoeira* it can therefore be argued that there exists a horizontal and a vertical *malandragem*. If the vertical *malandragem* has allowed slaves to

survive and trick the colonizer, the horizontal one has allowed the different groups' unions, differentiations and identifications. Lévi-Strauss cites Malinowski (1962a, p. 105) that the function of totemism is to maintain stability and social order, and if I propose that some aspects of *capoeira* are similar in function to totemism I can claim that more or less uniformed rituals in *capoeira* were developed to unite different cultural groups in new institutions that could bring stability and social order to slaves. However, the most important function of the ritual in this case is not to preserve social order, but to preserve the culture of different social groups. Lévi-Strauss (1962a, p. 114) writes about Durkheim's group theory, explaining that groups have the need to denote the belonging and differences between them. The enslaved individuals belonged to different cultural groups and I can suppose that one of their goals was the preservation of specific cultural and individual differences within the same institution. Today's ritual, ideological and other differences between groups cannot be purely ascribed to external adapting processes of social, political and economic changes through history, but as well to internal unions, identifications and differentiations between *capoeiristas* from different ethnic groups. Merging and differentiations were probably in progress already on the *senzalas*, however, marking and merging in groups was really enabled when *capoeira* emerged in the urban environment, where I argue that today's *capoeira* was developed.

PART TWO

Chapter 2: Violence and Aggressive Behaviour

"The function or ultimate cause of aggression is to acquire or defend resources that are important in conferring reproductive or survival benefit." (Campbell, 2005, p. 630).

"O problema filosófico central, que responde pela agressividade humana, é o conflito dos contrários. (The main philosophical problem that responds to human aggression is the conflict of oppositions; author's translation)" (Gaiarsa, 1993, p. 19).

The above citations indicate the possible origin and function of human aggression, yet it would be a rather difficult task to pass an unequivocal, simple, and all-embracing definition of aggression. There are many definitions that correspond to the philosophical, sociological, psychological and anthropological theories. We must also add all psychiatric, religious and even lay theories. Geen (1998, p. 1) argues that there is too much literature in the field of human aggression for a consistent and functional overview. Yet he is convinced that there is a ready line on which the united theory of human aggression could be founded. The Dictionary of Slovene Language (2005) define aggression as assaulting, violent behaviour, an unprovoked attack, political aggression, or attack of one country on some other country. Similarly describes aggression The English Dictionary (2003) as attack, violent hostility or encroachment or unprovoked violation by one country of the territory of another. Yet such definitions are very general and exclude many important factors. Hacker (1985, p. 35) thinks that dictionary definitions stem in behaviouristic views on aggression that are result of experimental observations and exclude at least lay, everyday views on aggression. Hacker continues that from the humanities' point of view, aggression could not be described as a universal behaviour model.

Evolutionist psychology understands aggression as a way to achieve a certain goal; Darwin has already described it as one of the evolutionary solutions for the competition for goods. Geen (1998, p. 1) claims that the term aggression is not a scientific one but rather describes many different functional behaviours with the common intention to harm, to cause damage, pain or suffering to another person. Hacker (1985, p. 36) writes about intentional and

unintentional aggression, where the latter is further divided into pushed aggression, personal-instrumental and instrumental aggression. The last one is the result of planned action of the group to achieve certain goals, benefits or social recognition using aggression. Gaiarsa (1993, p. 19) perceives the fundamental problem for appearance of aggressive tensions in the opposition of interests. In his discussion he looks at the oppositions between different economic classes, the sexes, between different ages, races and cultural groups of modern urban environment. *Conflito dos contrários* (conflicts of oppositions) for him are the consequence of globalisation and economic or political inequality (ibid.). With his theory, which is closer to evolutionist theory, only that he is more concerned with cultural factors of the human society, he explains an extensive set of reasons for aggressive tensions of the modern man. However, aggression is not an exclusive attribute of human society and is not always the result of conflicts between different interests. Aggressive tensions, regardless if they are a resource gathering technique or consequence of conflicts between individuals or groups, are to be found amongst humans and animals. Lorenz (1963, pp. 55-57) agrees that aggression can be understood as the evolutionary adaptation for a species' survival and instinct functioning, as understood by Freud. He questions if aggression is still an effective survival technique with humans that have invented weapons for mass destruction. He sees the danger of aggression in its instinctive characteristic. Hacker (1985, pp. 77-79) claims that aggression should not be seen as an instinct or drive but rather as a motivation. In the brain we do not have a centre or module that would control the appearance of aggression, but other brain centres or modules are activated in the case of aggressive tensions. Aggression is not hormonally motivated; its appearance is dependent on the individual's symbolic notions about information from the environment. Therefore aggressive tensions, similar to sexual tensions, could be ascribed to factors of arousal and the appetite for aggression. Hacker argues that aggression is a repeatable action-reaction mode of the human body's behaviour, which is motivated when aroused. Expressing aggressive tensions is in many cases connected with the cause of physical, psychological or material damage. Hacker (1985, p.36) describes aggression as a certain behaviour of a living being, whose aim is to cause damage to other living being who opposes such behaviour.

In what follows I will address aggression expressed in a form that can cause mental, physical or material damage, i.e. violence.

2.1.1 Differences between aggression and violence

Perceived distinctions between aggressive and violent play in *capoeira* have brought me to believe that aggression (instinctive human characteristic) and violence cannot be equalled. Therefore I will try to define and explain both concepts and differences between them. There is a certain inconsistency in the use of terms. Therefore, in lay and also in scientific discourse many times similar occurrences are addressed as both, aggression or violence. Geen (1998, p. 1) perceives violence carried out from purposes of coercion, punishment and profit, as a variety of aggression, similar to angry retaliation and self-defence. He uses Baron & Richardson's definition of aggression as a reference⁷⁶. In the context of differentiation between both phenomena we have to ask ourselves if the differentiation is solely terminological or if there exist important comprehensive differences between aggression and violence. We might also be interested to find out if aggressive behaviour is inevitably an element of violence and if any form of aggression behaviour is necessarily violent.

Violence for example appears in family conflicts, in some business conflicts, in fights between youngster's gangs, between sport fans and members of different sub-cultural groups. In some cases violence is even socially acceptable, an indispensable part of the media and political discourse. Violence is also an essential factor in film industry; therefore violent content is a part of everyday media reality. There are also some sport disciplines with a high level of violence transmitted on television, such as ultimate fight, box, hockey, rugby, American football, wrestling, soccer... The application of violence is a legitimate method for the police and military troops and is present even in medicine (treatment of patients where rules are strictly followed, for example in psychiatric hospitals). As we can see, violence appears in various forms and many different areas or institutions of human social life. Mukherjee (2010, pp. 103-104) uses Strenski's division based on Durkheimian pragmatic view on violence, and divides it into **institutional violence** and **institutionalised violence**. The first one refers to state institutions and can be expressed as physical violence or violence of regulations, laws, prohibitions and commands. On the other hand, the most typical representation of institutionalised violence is war, where the violent act has been institutionalised through enforcement of combat rules and laws. In the context of Strenski's division of violence, aggressive behaviour is not necessarily present in violent acts of social

⁷⁶ Aggression is any form of behaviour directed toward the goal of harming another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment (Baron & Richardson, 1994, p. 5).

institutions. In medical institutions violence is latent and performed skilfully. Intimidation⁷⁷ is used to force patients to follow the given institutional rules. Behaviour such as aggression is not needed to perform these forms of violence. Some therapists in Juliano Moréira Hospital also argued that intimidation is the most recurrent violent form performed on patients. One of them explained:

Patients are witness to violence every day. They have to eat, wash, sleep and wake up when they are told to. If they express their emotions they might suffer consequences. Not obeying is punished with isolation, medication, electric shock or other repressive methods. Even if in reality these methods are used very rarely, there is a present fear between patients regarding consequences of electric shock (fear is based on perceptions constructed through history of method abuse).

According to Foucault (1975), latent intimidation based on conceptions about consequences of punishment was developed in the 18th century with the introduction of imprisonment and asylums for the "mentally disturbed", and as a consequence of the modified method of the ruling class' demonstration of power. In the middle ages punishment, torture and executions were publicly performed to demonstrate sovereign's power and to evoke fear between masses, when people with mental problems were stigmatised as demonic and expelled from society. Probability of riots, crime and disobedience was diminished through public punishments. Yet through the introduction of imprisonment punishment, torture and executions became the institutional domain and therefore concealed from the public. In this case the effect of fear is different from the one caused by public demonstrations of horror. Since nobody except people who were imprisoned really knows what goes on behind the prison walls, the public believes that the consequences of punishment are constructed through stories and testimonials. Violence in the public sphere is therefore transmitted behind the institutional walls and deprived of transparent aggressive slaughter and torture. The institutionalisation of medicine on the other hand represents for Foucault (2009, pp. 54-58) the politicizing of the discipline and increased control over medical care and medicalization. Thus, there exists an increased possibility of violence in medical institutions. Foucault further writes: "*18th century debates, institutions, aphorisms and nosologies have limited medicine knowledge into defined space.*" (Foucault, 2009, p. 59).

⁷⁷ Intimidation in this context can be understood in two ways; firstly as fear induced by the media, where films, the news and documentaries construct ideas about the happenings in psychiatric hospitals. Amongst the general public an image about institutions and consequences of breaking institutional rules are created. Secondly, the patients in hospitals perceive that emotional outbreaks are controlled with injections or even with electro-shocks.

I can note that aggressive behaviour is not necessary a stipulation for violence. If so, can we propose the same for *vice versa*? The answer might be found in some sport activities, art and even daily human relationships. For example children can behave aggressively demanding certain actions or objects from the parents, yet that does not mean that they will use violence. Sportsmen will execute their task using aggression, but they will not perform violent acts; such practices are typical for individual sport arts. Even dance can be aggressive, yet not violent. In many cases, though, the general and even the professional public does not differentiate between aggression and violence, therefore aggression is mostly interpreted as violence and sanctioned. In the case when common citizens⁷⁸ often react in an aggressive way, they are stigmatised as violent. An aggressive individual, perceived as violent, becomes the subject of the correctional or psychiatric bio-medical system. An excessively aggressive individual is in many cases diagnosed as mentally disturbed and therefore obliged to treat his illness in accordance to the prevalent medical doctrine.

Even if distinctions between aggression and violence are not consistent, in the context of my research such distinction is needed. I can suppose that aggression refers to the individual's internal aspirations and reactions, while violence is related to the individuals and social groups' behaviours and their modes of expressing aggressive tensions.

2.1.2 Origins of aggression and violence

In what follows I analyse both phenomena and attempt to elucidate reasons for human violence and aggressive tensions. The appearance of both phenomena can be ascribed to many social, political, economic and environmental factors. In addition to external factors the individual's personality and characteristics also influence aggressive tensions and the occurrence of violence. Here we must ask ourselves why human beings are inclined toward aggressive behaviour. Freud (1953, pp. 217-221) argues that libido is the basic energy of human's psycho-sexual development.

We have defined the concept of libido as a quantitatively variable force, which could serve as a measure of processes and transformations occurring in the field of sexual excitation. We are distinguishing between libidinal and other forms of psychological energy. (*ibid.*)

⁷⁸ The members of society who are not allowed to express aggression or perform violence, due to some special social function.

A child wishes to fulfil his sexual aspirations and in this case the libido is the main drive of satisfaction. However, due to the libido drive, the child may react aggressively in unpleasant situations or in the state of an excessively aroused libido. Aggression is described by Freud as the main characteristic and consequence of the aroused libido. For boys in puberty, the arousal of libido energy is in process, which can often be expressed aggressively. Girls suppress and restrain their aroused libido. Cervone and Pervin (2008, p. 73) argue that in accordance with Freud's later theories about libido and aggression, both phenomena are basic drives and intrinsic parts of human nature. Individuals function by following the satisfactory principles and aim towards a favourable satisfaction of their drives. Society limits sexual and aggressive tendencies, therefore its role is to effectively restrict these biological aspirations. Perko (2006, p. 116) summarizes Klein and describes aggression as aspiration to possess the mother's internal contents and as the tendency to control or demolish the object that does not belong to the individual (ibid.). Contrary to psychological explanations of violence and aggression that describe aggressive motivations as the consequence of internal personal characteristics, inherent aspirations and psycho-sexual development of the individual in sociology (beside individualistically oriented theories) theories of social influence have emerged in the last decades of the 20th century. According to Levold and Wedekeken (1989, p. 63) they are followed by criticism of individual guilt in violent act theories. They bring forward social conditions and social structures. For example family violence is in accordance with such theories simply a reaction on given social conditions; abused children and violent parents are only victims of living conditions that deprived them of happy and pacifist relationships. In such cases violence against children is the expression of the parents' incapacity and weakness.

Some sociological theories explain social violence and aggression as the consequence of social conflicts, defined by Blalock (1989, p. 7) as deliberate exchange of negative sanctions or punishments between two or more groups, individuals, corporations or quasi-groups. Reasons for conflict are depicted with the common model of conflict processes (Blalock, 1989, pp. 107-135), which in simplified form contains the following variable groups:

1. goals, sources and dependencies;
2. rules, restrictions, exhaustion and vulnerability;
3. trust, forgiveness and sensibility;
4. motivations, limitations and actual punishment behaviour.

In accordance to the given model, the conflict can be provoked between X and Y when for example X is unable to fulfil his goals due to Y's actions, or Y feels deprived of resources due to X's activities or if, for example, X is dependent on Y. Conflicts can start also by differences between X and Y's rules, restrictions and the exhaustion of Y by X or *vice versa*. The probability of conflict appearance is also influenced by the vulnerability of X or Y, the trust between them, the capability to forgive and their sensibility. Of great importance are also certain group motivations and actual beliefs regarding punishment behaviour of X and Y. The model can be upgraded with ideological orientations and convictions of X and Y, which are more important factors regarding conflicts between groups than between individuals.

If I focus on the individual as the basic cell of violence and the subject of aggressive tensions, in accordance to Freud's theory of psycho-sexual development (Freud, 1953, 1977), I can suppose that sexual as well as aggressive aspirations are inherent to human beings and stem in the individual's libido. Responding methods and contentment of libidinal tensions may be among others consequence of adaptations on environmental challenges during the evolutionary processes. A new-born has to acquire the means for physical and psychological survival and we can presume that an aggressive reaction is one of the primitive tactics to satisfy needs or preserve a living being's life. If such tensions are expressed in violent form depends on many other factors such as socialisation, social norms, sex, personal characteristics, education, environmental influences, the capability to cope with stress, living conditions etc. Goleman (2006, pp. 114-115) on the other hand argues that empathy is the main restraint of human cruelty. If we suppress empathy we are able to treat other human being as an object, which facilitates cruelty. If compassion is excluded, human beings can be placed into one of the groups of the **dark triad** as a narcissist, Machiavellist or psychopath. Geen (1998, p. 4) refers to Berkowitz and writes about reactions on violence or other kinds of danger and states that the immediate first reaction to a condition of negative affect is fight or flight. Which one will prevail depends on: a) the person's genetic endowment, b) prior conditioning and learning, and c) recognition of aspects of the situation that either facilitate or inhibit aggression (ibid.). In this context aggression can be understood as a defensive tactic or survival tool. This kind of tactic is not used only in the period of childhood, but also in later stages of an individual's life. Navaro (2008, pp. 41-42) states that fighting is one of the tactics to confront danger and is instinctive to all living beings. Navaro further argues that three defensive reactions: freeze, fight and flight, are controlled by the liminal brain sphere,

discovered in 1952 by Paul MacLean, who called it the **mammal brain**. However we may not ascribe the three defensive reactions exclusively to mammals.

2.1.3 Aggression as a consequence of the learning process

Whether aggression is genetically conditioned or not (Hacker, 1985, pp. 78-79) is not of great importance for my thesis. I am more interested in reasons for some people reacting aggressively when others do not. Regardless that *capoeiristas* in schools I have studied came from different social and cultural backgrounds, they have all conformed to school rules and beliefs about violence and aggression. The modes of application of aggression and violence were learned through educational processes and socialisation in certain *capoeira* group. Therefore, they should not be understood only in terms of psycho-sexual development of an individual. Hacker (1985, pp. 78-79) criticizes psychoanalytic theories of inherent drives and instinctive acts by human and proposes that the higher developed organisms react in accordance with their learned patterns, which are much more complex than instinctive reactions. Geen (1998, pp. 4-5) argues that:

every human act, also an aggressive one, has consequences. These consequences - rewarding or punishing outcomes of aggression-constitute the basis for the social learning process. Aggression, which is rewarded, produces an increased expectancy that such behaviour will be useful in the future under similar conditions.

Thus human beings would repeat certain behaviour patterns in specific situations if it was beneficial. Hacker's deliberation is similar to Bateson's learning process theory. Bateson (1972, p. 293) analyses following stages of learning:

Zero learning – an organism's responses to the environment that do not change according to the principle of right-wrong.

Learning I - change of organism's responses to the environment with corrections for wrong decisions and reactions from a given and known set of alternatives.

Learning II - change in the *learning I* process. Correctional changes of a set of alternatives from which decisions and reactions are made.

Learning III - change in the *learning II* process. Correctional changes of the system of sets from which decisions and reactions are made.

Learning IV - change in *learning III*. However, Bateson states that no adult living on earth is capable of this type of learning.

Regarding the levels of the organisms' learning process, I can categorize the appearance of aggression based on previous positive experiences in *learning I*. However, aggressive or violent behaviour as a mode to resolve specific life situations is rarely socially accepted even if it is beneficial. And yet most people would react aggressively to certain stressors regardless of the consequences of such behaviour. I presume that most humans are capable of the *learning II* process and therefore are able to change their set of reactions. So why do we still act aggressive and violent? I have been present many times when *capoeiristas* from schools where violence was disapproved and even aggressive play was undesired, played violent in some public *rodas*. If the play in *roda* became more dynamic or even aggressive some - sometimes even those that were mostly very calm and reserved during the trainings - started to play very aggressive, sometimes violent. They were sanctioned later by their master, yet during the play they forgot about what they were learned in the school. Thus can aggression be socially learned or does it root in more primitive functions of the human brain than cognition? I will not enter this topic but will only suggest that aggression and violence are not identical and inevitably connected phenomena.

2.1.4 Some different opinions about violence and aggression

Violence in *capoeira* today is perceived as part of some *capoeira* group's philosophy and tactic, yet as my interlocutors mentioned, it can only be performed by those who have individual aspirations to act violent. Some quoted that many youngsters are being manipulated by older members of the group and only act violent because they are told so. If masters are provoking violence they awake the worst aspects of *capoeirista's* personality. Such violent *capoeiristas* can turn into experienced and smart ones if they pass to another group. Masters quote that every person can be good or bad, so the teacher should awake in *capoeirista ou lado bom* (the good part). Such dualistic views of personality are very common within *capoeira*. They are similar to some oriental perceptions of human nature following the principle of yin and yang. Yoga master Aurobindo (1990, pp. 242-243) for example writes about the duality of the human nature. According to him the first part is earthly, instinctive and driven by desires and impulses. The second part is self-conscious, reasonable, ethical, esthetical, intelligently sensible and dynamical and is capable to find, understand, use and modify the principles of his acting.

However violence in Salvador is part of day to day reality and some of my interlocutors state that is mostly performed by those having urgent needs for money or material goods. Some *capoeira* schools are using violence to humiliate other groups on public *rodas* in order to get more students consequently earning more money. However all *capoeiristas* agree that none of the groups is promoting street violence, assaults or other forms of crime. Thus violence in *capoeira* can not be seen only as result of economic factors such as described by Loureiro and Carvalho (2007, p. 2). Authors write that mostly people from lower social classes find themselves frequently in situations where they have to decide whether to employ violent acts or not, in order to acquire urgent material sources for survival. The decision is dependent on the ratio between the expected payment and the benefits from the work or from criminal acts in relation to the potential punishment and the potential salary on the work market.

A lot of Salvadorian *capoeiristas* come from lower social classes but I haven't been told or noticed that they would assault or rob on the streets. On the contrary they are trained to protect themselves against street violence and in the community they live are being perceived as sportsmen. *Capoeira* instructors are respected members of communities and have to be moral avoiding any form of crime and violence. However *capoeiristas* state that poverty in Brazil and economic differences are frustrating for many, so some choose to act violently just to assure economic goods. Some of my interlocutors have argued about political reasons for violence urging in injustice, corruption etc. They would like to leave Brazil, believing that in USA and Europe political corruption doesn't exist; therefore outside Brazil there is a chance to succeed for those who know how to work (*pra quem sabe trabalhar*). Graf and Ottomeyer (1989, pp. 18-21) suggest that modern democratisation and capitalisation lead toward unbalanced distribution of capital, fears of impotence caused by alienation of work (Marxist concept) and identity crisis. These factors can lead to the processes of disintegration. The authors perceive connections between disintegration (anomy, apathy) and group or individual inclinations toward violence. Also Rodrigues (2006, p. 243) in regards to high levels of violence in the modern world, especially in Africa and Latin America, argues that violence and feelings of unsafeness are consequences of rapid democratic processes in some countries. I was frequently told that most of violent acts are performed by youngsters providing money for *fin da semana*, (weekend); therefore also young *capoeiristas* are being trained to perceive potential danger and avoid it on the streets when going out on the weekends. Statistics also show that in Salvador mostly young men - between 15 and 25 years old - are involved in

violent acts (Oliveira et al., 2000). I have been told many times that *pai da família não rouba* (fathers don't rob.). Therefore, although Fröschl and Löw (1995, pp. 37-38) ascribe potential reasons of male violence to the compensation of social weaknesses, I would not disregard also the generational differences. They write that men who are not capable of supporting the family are subject to alcoholism; men who are unable to get a job or to be promoted and men who do not manage to advance in the social hierarchy are more likely to release their frustration in violent form. Yet they claim that social situations have to push them into a corner and leave them powerless in order for them to react violently.

Violent reactions are in many cases ways of coping with unknown danger from the environment. Geen (1998, pp. 2-3) calls stressors from the environment such as frustration, insult, interpersonal attacks, noise, heat and pollution, **instigators or eliciting conditions of aggression**. However, he continues that authors like Capaldi (1991) and Berkowitz & Heimer (1989) ascribe the appearance of aggression (in our case violence) to physical pain and to depressed mood states. Many scholars' research starting in the 1960s has shown that aggression can be an internal intuitive-cognitive reaction to frustrations, insults or any other environmental factors that pose a threat to the well-being of the person or the group. Such conditions can evoke aggressive aspirations, yet I cannot claim that they are always expressed in the form of violent behaviour.

2.1.5 Violence in mythologies

In addition to the already mentioned explanations and reasons for aggressive human tensions and violent behaviour, I will emphasize also the mythological explanations of violence in different cultures and religions. In some mythologies and religions, cosmogonies still do not comprise violence or at least are not explicitly expressed. Yet in the explanations concerning human society and the development and establishment of divine hierarchies, almost all mythologies and religions describe the appearance of violence and aggression. In Christian cosmogony the world and the universe are created without a violent act, through divine interference. When the first humans were created and expelled from paradise, violence was mentioned for the first time when Cain murdered his brother Abel⁷⁹ (Castellan, 1968). Greek cosmogony does not imply violence either, however already after the first procreation

⁷⁹ Cain and Abel are Adam and Eve's sons. The parents were expelled from paradise after eating from the tree of knowledge.

Cronos⁸⁰ ate his children in the fear that one of them might kill him and take over the dominion over the universe (Pinsent, 1983). In Maori cosmogony there is a tendency toward violent acts because children of *Papa* and *Rangi*⁸¹ consider murdering their parents in order to separate the mother-earth from the father-sky. They were stopped by *Tane-Mahuta*⁸², who proposed to simply separate father from mother to gain the appropriate space for their habitat. He proposed the sky should be supported by trees, which will prevent the unification of the earth and the sky. Violence appears when the youngest brother *Tu-Mata-Uenga*⁸³ employs hostile acts to assure food and enough intimate living space. He introduces hostility, killing and wars (Pomare, 1987). Cosmogony of the Boschongo people from Bantu group understands the creation of the world and the sky as the work of the creator god *Bumba*. He created the sky, the stars, the moon and living beings by vomiting. First he created the animals out of which other living beings evolved. He also created three sons, one of which (the thunder) was sent to the sky, causing too much damage on earth. Since that time he is still shooting thunderbolts down on earth, angry with his father.

In accordance with the myth we can perceive thunderstorms, fire and inundations as violent expressions of god's aggression, or in our case modes to release frustrating tensions, caused by banishment and loss of home and relatives. Legends and myths regarding shaman initiations, though, in different societies represent the thunderbolt as a healing media with other supernatural powers. Kalweit (1987, pp. 47-48) considers the Lightning shamans as the strongest shamans who have to surpass death. Navaho people perform healing ceremonies on people who survive lightning strikes. Healers claim that divinity of sky, rain and thunderbolt is angry with such individuals. After the healing is over some of the patients are trained and initiated as shamans.

Thus in many mythologies we can trace the employment of violence by spirits and gods in revenging acts. Čolović (2000, pp. 12-19) argues that revenge and cruelty are two of the basic characteristics of pagan gods. In many situations they are merciless, nervous and huffish, which is the case also for the Slavic gods *Dabog* and *Vsevid*. However, mythic characteristics can be de-sacralised and transmitted to popular heroes, as in the case of Hyduck warriors and

⁸⁰ Cronos is the son of Uran in Gea, creators of the universe.

⁸¹ Papa – father-sky and Rangi – mother-earth were developed through time from the eternal emptiness Po, yet before they were separated, they represented an amorphic, heavy, and suffocating form that was repressing their children.

⁸² Son of Papa and Rangi, god of forests and birds.

⁸³ Son of Papa and Rangi, god of man, wars and martial arts.

heroes. In popular songs they are depicted as fearless fighters against any enemies, yet at the same time they are perceived as violent men, cruel towards their wives and relatives. They can be compared with the notion of *malandro*, where the man is on one side a respected warrior against repression and on the other a dangerous and violent man of the streets. Such *capoeira* warrior was also *Besouro Mangaga*.

In some mythologies there are also hero ancestors and gods that sacrifice their life to protect other people. They are the subjects of the deepest love and respect, but at the same time they also represent a potential source of danger. Their victim represents an object through which the evil force of death has not been vacated, but is rather stuck in their bodies. The protector is more vital; a strongest power is needed for his annihilation and he represents more danger for those who do not fulfil his expectations (ibid.). Violence and fear are not only a means of managing relationships between individuals and groups, but also a means of establishing and controlling relationships between men and deities, between deities themselves and between dead ancestors and the living members of a particular society.

Despite the fact that aggression and violence are present in mythologies, I could not comprehend why both phenomena are such important attributes in relationships between the gods and between gods and humans. It is clear that aggression followed by violence is related to negative emotions of deities or humans. Offences, shortage of intimate space, not respecting the rules, disobedience, etc. evoke negative feelings in deities and men, which are released with the employment of violence. I can take into consideration the *Netsilik* Eskimo people's stories about the development of earthly life, the Nepalese *Magar* people's stories or the stories of aboriginal Australian people. Kalweit (1987, pp. 8-10) argues that *Netsilik* differentiate between various periods of human societies' development. First there was the golden age where people and animals lived in harmony. Both were able to transform from either animal form into human form or *vice versa*. They could fly and live on earth or in heaven. Animals were considered to be loyal friends and in these primordial times together with humans and spirits formed One Cosmos. Living beings were able to communicate with gods and travel through time and dimensions. Universal knowledge was accessible to anyone. Australian Aborigines (Kalweit, pp. 8-10) are familiar with the notion of different ages and claim that there was a time when it was possible to live out of time and space, to transform and incorporate supernatural powers. An ancient cosmic catastrophe has destroyed the harmony and unity of humankind. Death appears the soul and body became divided notions.

The *Magar* people divide (Kalweit, pp. 8-10) the existence of the universe into the pre-ancient golden age and dark age of the present time. In the first one there were no illnesses, aging or evil characteristics. Subsequently, there were four evolutionary stages of rituals and sacrifices in the first stage, and conflict beliefs and contradictory ideas that led to the development of enthusiasm and illnesses in second stage. The third stage introduced bloodthirsty rules, greed and suffering. The fourth stage represents the iron age of present day, where death, danger, wars, suffering and material lust control humanity. In the last stage the first shaman *Puran Tsan* appears and recognises the evil spirits and sorcerers who cause misery and sickness.

In *capoeira* it is believed that aggression was harmful for the *capoeirista* trying to flee from *senzala*, yet he had to be fully violent in the moment of attack. He had to disable the opponent assuring the possibility to escape. Mythologies in *capoeira* exist in narrations of first *senzala capoeiristas* of *Zumbi*, and of *Besóuro Mangaga*. Those narratives are explaining different stages in development of *capoeira*, explaining its attitudes toward violence and aggression. As I have been frequently told first *capoeiristas* were violent but not aggressive. *Zumbi* was both aggressive and violent in his fights to save the *quilombo*. The *capoeiristas* from the era of *Besóuro Mangaga* were violent but smart applying *malandragem* in order not to be discovered and persecuted by the police.

2.1.6 Urban violence: the difference between aggression and violence

I suppose that violence in urban spaces is highly connected with the establishment of interpersonal and familiar relationships and with relationships between different opinions, ethnic groups and social classes. The establishment of social relationships in Salvador is influenced by historic and current economic and racial inequalities in the population. My interlocutors find the main triggers of violent behaviour in family discrepancies, personality deviations, conflicts between neighbours and living conditions in *favelas* through which the resident is exposed to noise, pollution, dangerous illnesses (for example dengue fever), does not have complete intimacy and spends most of the time on the street or in hot humid places. To understand better the possible reasons for violence in Salvador and to explain the differences in beliefs about aggression and violence within *capoeira*, I present differences between aggression and violence presuming that two notions are not identical and conditioned.

2.2 To be Violent or Aggressive

"Aggression is behaviour that results in harm or destruction or defeat of others " (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2007, p. 30).

"Violence is the expression of hostility and rage with the intent to injure or damage people or property through physical force" (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2007, p. 982).

Marcus (2007, p. 10) does not equate aggression and violence, but puts both notions on the same continuum of intensity. Both are supposed to cause damage to the other, only that aggression can be equalled with a slap and violence with street fights, where weapons are also used (ibid.). I can not agree with this claim even if Marcus refers to interpersonal aggression and violence. In previous chapter I have already pointed out several forms of aggression and violence, demonstrating that aggression and violence are connected but not necessarily conditioned phenomena. Hacker (1985, p. 31) writes that all violence is aggressive, but not all aggression is expressed through violence. He is convinced that violence is only the most entropic, regressive form of aggression. Thus both notions could easily be found in Marcus's continuum of intensity. I presume that aggression is not inevitably present in all violent acts, but agree that aggressive tensions are not necessarily expressed as violence. Furthermore I suppose that the terms aggression and violence are not synonyms or expressions that would depict different intensities of harm caused to another person⁸⁴. Both terms are frequently misused, misunderstood and inconsistently explained. Both notions are often mistaken or the same phenomenon is expressed by both. For example the statement 'state X performs aggression toward state Y' is not completely true in the context of a war between two countries. State X has maybe violently intruded on the territory of state Y, whereby soldiers of X were aggressively killing soldiers of Y. They performed violence where anger, fear and hate were present. These emotions have motivated aggressive behaviour that has evolved into violence. In the case that state X has won Y's army with bombing and rocketing, whereby the people performing violence were not emotionally aroused and even less aggressive, we cannot speak about aggression against the other state, we can speak about violence.

⁸⁴ I have already argued that a sportsman is not necessarily supposed to be violent and his aggression is not aimed to harm others - only in the case of martial arts. And even in these, like in other sports, the main aim of aggression is to win or achieve a good result.

Oliveira et al. (2000, pp. 13-16) relate violence with the dominant class's repression. Due to economic changes, unequal distribution of capital and paranoid sensations of being threatened, the ruling classes implemented violent methods to control and dominate. They claim that regionally oriented capitalism has centralised the dynamic developmental sources in Brazil, which consequently left a poor distribution of capital. The majority of the population does not have access to capital - therefore people have to fight for it, or protest against established socio-economic situations - which provokes institutional violence in the ruling classes. On the other hand they define aggression as a way of expressing frustration and as the marginal behaviour of the excluded population. According to them, aggression is the consequence of poverty, the struggle for capital and the transformed personality of the Bahian population, due to modernisation and industrialisation that have substituted the previous latifundia system (ibid.). Abramovay et al. (1999, p. 57) understands aggression as a specific form of behaviour and outcome of individuals' personality characteristics and their socialisation. Aggression can be expressed with an individual's reactions and his functioning. Violence for them is a set of social situations that change through time and space, from one historical period to another. It is a physical intervention of an individual or the group in the integrity of another individual or group, yet sometimes it is also auto-directed. They refer above all to crime, suicide and police interventions.

Contrary to the above cited works, evolutionary psychologists do not use the term violence, but write about different forms of aggressive behaviour. They differentiate for example between aggressive behaviour that is planned and deliberate and not driven by emotions and the one that is emotionally charged. Campbell (2005, p. 629) describes two types of aggression: **proactive or predatory aggression** and **reactive, defensive, hostile or affective aggression**. The first type has an extrinsic reward as a goal with harm inflicted merely as a tool to that end. Such acts are planned, not responsive to threat, and are characterized by an absence of anger and arousal. The second type is the response to antecedent conditions such as goal blocking or provocations and can also be the response to environmental irritants and life situations. Responses are primarily interpersonal and hostile in nature, anger is emphasized as an emotional precursor or concomitant. Geen (1998, p. 2) differentiates between **instrumental aggression** and **affective aggression**. The first type may involve strong emotions but is motivated primarily by concerns other than the harm-doing itself. For the second type harming the victim is the main motive of the aggressor. In what follows I will include proactive and instrumental aggression into the domain of violence, while reactive or

affective aggression will be treated as aggression and/or violence. My differentiation between aggression and violence is not identical to Hacker's, Geen's or any other evolutionary division. My differentiation considers also numerous socio-cultural factors that influence the appearance of aggression and violence as well as some lay definitions of both notions in Salvador.

General and capoeiristic perceptions of aggression and violence in Salvador

Differences in perceptions of aggression and violence are even more heterogeneous and inconsistent than scientific definitions of both phenomena. In discussions with patients, therapists, *capoeiristas* and people from my neighbourhood it became clear that both notions are perceived as connected but not equal. Most of them argued that an aggressive person is not necessarily violent and *vice versa*. *Capoeiristas* for example frequently speak about *capoeira violenta* (violent *capoeira*), *violência dentro da capoeira* (violence in *capoeira*) and about *jogo agressivo* (aggressive play). The first term refers to history of *capoeira* when institution was violent representing revolt against slavery and marginalisation. Some masters were also using term *capoeira violenta* describing *capoeira* style practiced by some groups from São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Other two expressions are used to describe different types of play. Most *capoeiristas* would differentiate between *violência* (violence) and *agressão* (aggression). One of them described occurrences at *capoeira* events as follows:

Ontem fui na roda. Puxa, jogo era tao agressivo, mas não desenvolveu em violência. Eu nao gosto esa violência dentro da capoeira (Yesterday I participated in *roda*. The play was aggressive, yet it didn't evolve into violence. I really dislike violence in *capoeira*; author's translation).

Even if the upper statement indicates that there is a perceived difference between aggression and violence within *capoeira*, it does not provide a good explanation what that difference is. To gain more information about perceived differences between both aggression and violence I had to use the technique of indirect questioning about violence and aggression during in-depth interviews. For example: What about aggression, what does it mean for you? What do you think about violence in *capoeira*? How would you describe aggressive play? How would you describe violent play?

One of the masters commented aggression and violence as following:

I can say that there is always a certain level of aggression present in any martial art. The question is how you are able to conceal it. That is why the notion of *malandragem* developed in *capoeira*. A good and skilled *capoeira* player would never disclose his real intentions, he would mask his emotions, and he would accumulate the aroused aggression and use it in his favour in appropriate moment. His attack would come from nowhere, by surprise, like the cat he will let himself push into the corner and then use all his power and smoothness to defeat his opponent. Such attack is violent in the real life situation, and will cause damage to the other, but during the practice and in the *rodas* we endeavour ourselves to avoid any kind of violence. That is why every master would emphasize that *capoeira* is *o jogo* (play) and not *a luta* (fight). In my *rodas* I permit aggressive play that will coerce the players to face and control their aggression, but I will stop the play as soon as I notice that the play might be turned into a fight. That is why I always want to be present on *rodas* performed in my academy even if I already have trained instructors, which carries out the lessons. However they are still not skilled enough in *malandragem* to perceive possible danger of violence before the damage is already done.

Many younger *capoeiristas* would equal aggression and violence, but some would speak about aggression referring to dynamic play with more physical contact and employment of strength. According to them it is useful to practice this kind of play, as it gives you a notion of how to react in real situations of danger on the streets. In such situations you have to be ready to defend yours or somebody else's life. Some *capoeiristas* would use the term violence in the context of "dirty play"⁸⁵ and employment of weapons within *capoeira*. Many would argue that *capoeira* was violent in the past, when the economic and socio-political situation pushed *capoeiristas* into violence. Santos Silva (2002, p. 147) writes that in the 19th century many *capoeiristas* were involved in street violence as mercenaries of political parties. Violence represented a means of economic survival for the marginalized and excluded part of the Brazilian population. The abolition of slavery brought freedom for Afro-Brazilians, however, they have continued to be marginalized, unable to get a job or participate in capital distribution. My interlocutors claim that today's role of *capoeira* is different, which is why all *capoeira* practitioners have to help change the art's reputation. Many disapprove of violence and clearly differentiate between aggressive play and violent behaviour. They use the term violence to depict a violent player (*capoeirista violento*) or a violent group (*grupo violento*). Also the last phrase is sometimes used when they refer to *capoeira* in Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo. *Capoeira* in these two cities is believed to be more violent in order to compete or to devaluate Salvadorian *capoeira*. In general *grupos violentos* employ violence like fights in *rodas da rua* or even at *capoeira* events to achieve economic or promotional success. *Capoeiristas* agree that not only Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo are familiar with violent

⁸⁵ Insidious play where one of the players decides to attack and harm the other out of jealousy, offence or fear.

capoeira. In Salvador there exist schools and masters with aggressive tendencies, while in Rio de Janeiro aggressive play and employment of violence are part of the philosophy for entire groups. Violence in context of *capoeira* is expressed outwardly with the employment of physical power, yet I have previously argued that there also exist latent forms of violence, forms that do not contain aggression, but are still harmful.

Latent and explicit forms of aggression and violence

Latent forms of violence are frequently used in some social institutions, for example psychiatric hospitals. Therapists in Juliano Moréira Hospital demanded that patients respect the rules and that insubordination can have painful consequences. Therefore, they eat, sleep or take showers as directed and in many cases they are not allowed to express emotions in the way they would like to. Their emotional reaction is mostly perceived as a deviation or pathology, and is sanctioned as such. The state control and supervision, which are through modern technology implementation increasingly similar to the Foucaultian panopticum, are also latent forms of violence. However, violence in social institutions is not always latent, which is obvious in the cases of war or military and police interventions. Other forms of transparent violence are also fights, murders, rape and other criminal acts. Notwithstanding if violence is transparent or latent, any form of violence causes harm to victims. Violence may be the domain of the individual, the group or the institution, present in all segments of social life.

Aggressive behaviour may be latent or transparent. An individual with aroused aggressive tensions may express his feelings about a situation in an extroverted and honest way, or the aggression is depressed, channelled or introverted. The way to express aggressive aspirations depends on the individual's personal characteristics, education, cultural factors, socio-political-economic situation, social status, gender, age and other factors. Geen (1998, p. 7) has reviewed the three variables as sex, personality and socialisation within a norm-setting system. With individuals who introvert their aggressive aspirations, such tensions might become symptoms and might be expressed in the form of illness, but I will argue about this issue in the chapter on depression. At this point I only argue that aggressive behaviour, especially latent aggressive behaviour, does not necessarily cause harm to the others.

Violence and gender

If we consider only violence, it is useful to analyse the potential differences between men and women. Regarding my observations in *favela* and inside the institution of *capoeira*, I can argue that violence is more frequent in men, more particularly in male youngsters. I have noted that men mostly became violent in conflicts on the streets or in the family. Such violence, which cannot be described as institutional violence is as a rule connected with aggressive behaviour. Geen's opinion is also that physical aggression can more frequently be connected with men than with women (Geen, 1998, p. 8). Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) argue that gender differences in expressions of aggression are consequences of inherent physical differences between men and women. Geen & Donnerstein (1983, pp. 24-26) cite White, who criticizes this view, because he is convinced that differences in expression of aggression are conditioned by differences in social practices. For example I have noticed that women playing in *Mestre* Alabama's school were in many cases playing more aggressive than the men, which might be the consequence of master Alabama teaching methodology. Women were motivated to apply kicks on men with full power when men were trained to avoid the kicks. Men and women also played against each other a lot when in some other school men would mostly play with men and women against women. Where women played against other women it was notable that the play was softer than when they were playing against men.

Differences can be explained also in the context of different views on expressing aggression. Frodi, Macaulay and Thome (1977, pp. 634-660) argue that women more than men consider violent expressions of aggression as inappropriate. It is more common that women control aggressive tendencies as they are more influenced by sensations of guilt and anxiety connected with violence. Campbell (2005, p. 639) writes about gender differences in the intensity of aggression, as a consequence of polygonal procreation processes. Since woman cannot procreate with several men at the same time, the employment of violence to win the partner represents unnecessary lost energy. Man on the other hand can acquire an additional female, employing violence in natural competition. Campbell (2005, p. 639) further argues that gender differences in violence can best be understood in terms of differences in parental investment. For example the death of the mother has more serious consequences for the survival of the offspring than the death of the father. This may be why women favour the avoidance of direct physical violence except in circumstances when failure to aggress posed

even greater costs. Campbell (2005, p. 632) ascribes violence between partners to conflicts of interests between partners arising from attempts by one partner to be more invested than the other. Mild polygamy also means that a given foetus might be the only one that a male shares with particular female. Campbell (2005, p. 632) continues that monogamy is currently the most common form of marriage (except in some Muslim and Hindu cultures). However, monogamy has positive and negative consequences for both partners. Since negative costs of monogamy are different for a man and a woman, it may be one of the reasons for conflicts of interest. As soon as one of the partners wishes to decrease the negative costs of monogamy, this person is acting against the other's interests. Study conducted by Fincham (2003) suggests, as Campbell (2005, p. 633) writes, that specific foci of conflict involve perceived inequality in the division of labour, infidelity, problematic drinking and drug use by one partner, and especially for wives, the perception of the husband spending their income foolishly.

Of great importance is also the difference in self-interpreting of aggression between men and women. Men are more likely to understand violent expression of aggression as instrumental behaviour with the aim to control people, while women perceive violently expressed aggression as a result of emotionally uncontrolled behaviour (Campbell, 1993, 2005; Campbell and Muncer 1987). Thus, while men characteristically see aggression as useful and satisfying, women tend to react to it with guilt and repression (ibid.).

Archer and Parker (1994) claim that perception of aggression is a social construct, conditioned by social processes through which differences between male and female role are established. Harris (1993, pp. 199-211) writes that reactions by men and women are different in regards to same stress factors. When women are more frequently irritated by insolent, unkind behaviour and verbal assault, men get angry when physically attacked by other man (ibid.). In many public *capoeira rodas* I witnessed aggressive play and violence, sometimes resulting in real fight between two players. It is true that such behaviour occurred more times between men, however I witnessed several women playing violent.

Paul, Foss and Galloway (1993, pp. 401-420) have concluded that women are more likely to be angry with unfaithful partners and the woman he was cheating on her with than the men. They verbally attack the partner and the rival in the case of infidelity. In Boca do Rio I witnessed a female neighbour verbally and physically attacking her husband when she was

under the influence of alcohol, accusing him of infidelity and asking him to leave her house. Despite physical superiority the husband did not respond violently, since her drinking and her behaviour did not represent a conflict situation for him. Yet this example may only be an exception, considering that my interlocutors said that mostly drunk men act violently in family conflicts. It is even more usual that men are almost exclusive performers of street violence. My observations have shown that street violence in Salvador was prevalently if not even exclusively dominated by the young male population. Youngsters are involved in fights at private parties and open air concerts, some of them are members of street gangs executing armed assaults at beaches, buses and streets. They seek to provide financial resources to afford fashion products or beer in local bars. In that case theft is a mode of identifying oneself as a successful member of the consumer society.

Violence, initiation into a man's world

My observations have made me think about the connection between violence and the beliefs about a man's role in society. Boys in Boca do Rio raised only by mothers, without male authority present in any aspect of socialisation or stage of personal development, were frequently involved in different forms of violence. Mostly they were under influence of alcohol or other psychotropic drugs. Yet there are many young *capoeiristas* in Boca do Rio raised only by females that would have nothing to do with the crime, on contrary they are excellent students and loyal *capoeira* practitioners. Thus the absence of initiation rituals into a man's world and the absence of guidance from a male parent regarding good male behaviour⁸⁶ may influence youngsters' perceptions about manhood but not necessarily in malicious way. In this case the youngster himself shapes his identity according to available information provided from the environment.

In small scale societies initiation is strictly determined with rituals; the youngster's identity is established within social norms and beliefs about manhood and womanhood, which are unequivocal in most similar societies. Reynolds and Tanner (1995, pp. 134-136) describe boys' and girls' initiation by the North Rhodesian Bemba people. During the girls' initiation matrimonial rules and habits learned in puberty are confirmed. Because of emotional arousal during the *Chisungu* ritual, girls remember better the main rules and men's expectations

⁸⁶ Here good male qualities are understood as in accordance with norms, rules and acting of men in a certain society.

regarding matrimonial life. Thus, the ritual emphasizes the most important behaviour rules and represents the final exam and acceptance into womanhood or manhood. Boys receive tribal and religious values, knowledge of the economy and are taught sexual techniques observed by older men during the initiation ritual. Just like for girls, this ritual represents the final exam where acquired knowledge is confirmed and tested. Through the ritual of initiation boys become fully valued members of men's society and sexually mature individuals.

For the Tanzanian people *Zaramo* the initiation lasts a few months and during that time, boys learn the basic rules of sexual behaviour in matrimonial relationships, changes in relationships toward their mothers and social expectations regarding their future relationships with potential wives. During puberty boys are supposed to become socially, emotionally and sexually mature. Initiation in these terms is not a social or biological transition, but rather a preparation where fundamental male qualities are emphasized. The ritual is meant to cleanse the boys and raise their social reputation and self-value. According to Reynolds and Tanner (1995, p. 135) initiation is of great importance for youngsters' personality development. Swantz (1970) (in Reynolds and Tanner, 1995, p. 135) noted many cases of emotional disturbances with the members of the *Zigua* people who did not participate in the initiation rituals or the ritual was performed in their late adolescence. Frankel (1986) describes the initiation of the Huli tribe from the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, where boys have to live in a man's house for six months before they can be initiated. During this period they are instructed about men's business and are prepared for the initiation by their mentors. Women prepare girls separately from boys. This way roles and jobs are passed from generation to generation. Evans-Pritchard (1976) writes about social relationships within the Azande society from Sudan, and ascertains that youngsters have to predominantly learn about rules regarding the causality of events. Some occurrences are believed to be exclusively the consequences of sorcery and witchcraft. Initiation therefore is a tool of the comprehension of interpersonal relationships in the context of witchcraft. Boys also learn some techniques and social expectations regarding the prevention of and protection from witchcraft and sorcery.

In our modern consumer society initiation is not as unequivocal and normative as it is in small-scale societies. In places where monotheistic religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism does not have a major influence on youngsters' education, they would have to learn about values, norms and behaviour rules from adults or from the mass media. Because of frequent divorces and single parent upbringing, youngsters grow up often with their mothers. In a basic family cell there is an absence of the male role model, which is above

all disadvantageous for boys. Since youngsters are exposed to mass media in modern societies, they seek virtual idols and role models if they lack living role models and teachers. Lashlie (2005, pp. 17-34) is convinced that boys especially cannot be raised only by mothers, that fathers set boundaries and teach boys about how to be a good man⁸⁷. They initiate boys into men's society. For girls they represent the way of how their future partner should be alike. Without a male educator, boys often express their manliness through deviant actions and habits like alcoholism, fighting, car racing and arrogant breaking of things (ibid.). The search for an adequate role model and the formation of perception of manliness is not an easy task for youngsters. However, boys will become men only through the initiation, regardless if it is socially and ritually determined or if youngsters have to learn and establish their own rules and patterns of initiation. Male initiation in a postmodern consumer society is also less determined as it was before the neo-liberal revolution in the 1980s. Men's social role was also clearly determined in industrial developed countries, at least more than it is today. As my interlocutors claim, education was stricter and unambiguous in Brazil during the period of military dictatorship (between 1964 and 1985). Men were raised in accordance to "military principles" where a slap has an educational function and the father is the one who teaches the son about discipline and responsibility. It is mostly true that men were also taught how to use violence but primarily for defence purposes or as a way to reach goals and rarely as an educational technique. As Yonocu (2008, pp. 50-72) claims, with the appearance of neo-liberalism work was completely alienated from human creativity, which is presently demonstrated only through consumption. Individual violence has reached new dimensions and is mostly without direction, harmful and banal and therefore increasingly stigmatised and attempted to be erased from human's behavioural pattern. Today male and female roles are blended and initiation processes have lost their ritual meanings. In the magical period of human history, as Ilić (1988, str. 41) defines the period at the end of Palaeolithic, human production attitude toward nature has been established through the revolution of hunting. Production - a creative character of men's consciousness was formulated. Societies established magical rituals for performing healing, harmonisation, initiation and other functions of social control. Rivers (1924, p. 4) describes magical rituals as: *"...a group of processes in which man uses rites which depend for their efficacy on his own power, or on powers believed to be inherent in or the attributes of, certain objects and processes which are used in these rites."*

⁸⁷ Lashlie describes good male qualities on pages 215 - 217.

In post-modern societies where man is alienated from ritual and social activities, the magical is the only the domain of the esoteric and social differentiation.

In *capoeira* initiation is performed through ritual of *batizado*, where young *capoeiristas* have to challenge experienced masters or instructors in *roda*. Their ability to play effective but not disrespectful indicates their maturity. I have been told that masters are playing with each *capoeirista* according to what he or she deserves. One of them explained:

Eu tenho que mostrar quem é quem. Se aluno entra jogar duro e sem respeito, vai apanhar. Se usa *malandragem*, indicando que poderia entrar dando *rastera* ou golpe, porein não executando os movimentos, eu descho ele jogar. Assim eles aprendem, assim se tornam nos *capoeiristas* responsables. (I have to show, who the boss is. If student enters to play hard, he will get what he is searching for. If he would use *malandragem* indicating that he could use *rastera* or kick, yet not executing the moves, I let him play. That is how they learn, that is how they are becoming responsible *capoeiristas*.)

Yet even if students are baptized on *batizado* only the first time they participate in it, they will have to change the girdle level on *batizado*. They will have to prove themselves again and again. Each time they will be confronted with more difficult tasks and they will have to play more aggressive, sometimes even more violent, as this is somehow expected from the masters. Even if they speak that the student has to show respect, somehow they expect that a good young player will lose control and start playing violently. In such case the master can show his supremacy, overpowering the youngster. That is how the youngster learns that the maturing process is still not finished and that he will have to train and learn more.

Definition of aggression and violence

Aggression is inherent to all human beings and I will presume that it represents individual, physical and psychological reactions to mostly but not exclusively negative emotions, irritations, fear, humiliation, provocation or environmental factors such as: pollution, noise, lack of intimacy, heath, etc. When aggressive aspirations are aroused, an individual's metabolic and cognitive functions, functions of the nerve-system and other bodily functions are accelerated. In many cases the individual's behaviour also changes. Aggression can be introverted or extraverted and expressed through various ways, which are not necessarily harmful to other individuals or groups. One of the possible forms of expressing aggression is violence.

Violence is a form of individual, group or institution actions causing physical, psychological or material harm to other individuals, groups or institutions. Similarly, violence can also be introverted or extraverted. Violence does not necessarily denote aggressive behaviour and can be affected or systematic (planned). Thus violence can be divided into individual, group, institutional and institutionalised (violence regulated with conventions and rules) violence that can appear in latent or transparent forms.

Differences in appearance and frequency of aggression and violence between men and women can be perceived.

Chapter 3: Violence and Aggressive Behaviour in Salvador

During my field work in Salvador I was several times involved in events with a violent outcome. Some of my interlocutors witnessed or were victims of violence and I perceived that murder and violence are a daily topic of discussion. NZ Herald (2010) published Reuter's article that compares Brazil with a war zone. In the year 2005 there were 55.000 people killed in Brazil, which is more than in three years of the Iraqi war. Marcelo Durante, coordinator of the department for public relations by the Ministry of jurisdiction states that the situation has improved in the last few years due to public initiative for the removal of weapons from the streets of Brazil (NZ Herald, 2010). Amnesty International Reports on Violence in Brazil (2003) compares a yearly grade of murders in Brazil with war in Palestine and Israel between 2000 and 2002. Lourero and Carvalho (2007, p. 6) argue that Brazil's yearly degree of murder per 100.000 people was 22.21 between 2001 and 2003, which represents 38.785 people killed per year. The highest number of violent deaths was registered during 2003 in Espírito Santo (57.10 violent deaths per 100.000 people), and the lowest in Santa Catarina (4.9 violent deaths per 100.000 population). According to these data Bahia ranks somewhere in the middle with 19 violent deaths per 100.000 people. However, Salvador has a higher rate of violent deaths than the rest of Bahia. Waiselfisz (2008, p. 47) states that in 2006 Salvador with 1176 violent deaths or a statistical grade of 41.8 violent deaths per 100.000 population was in fourth place among all Brazilian cities. Such data indicates that violence is part of the daily reality in urban places around Brazil.

For me coming from other social reality it was first difficult to accept that I will have to pass several months or even more than a year in such violent and dangerous environment. Not that I would be completely unfamiliar with killing, namely I was serving the Slovenian army when there was still a war in our neighbouring countries, but for the first time I was on the front line. During the night I could hear the gun shootings in *favelas*. Sometimes when I was leaving Juliano Moréira Hospital in the evening, I could even see the fire of gun shootings. Also for more than a week we had a corpse in the road dyke that was left there intentionally by the *esquadrilhos de morte*. When the flash decays from the bones the bullet gets lost in the mud of the dyke, so for the forensics it is rather a difficult task to ascertain who and with what

gun the person was killed. Those involved in the crime are considered as *sujera* (dirt, garbage) by the police and by the other members of the community, so they deserve to die. Consequently who ever kills the criminal and hurls him into the dyke actually did a favour to the society. *Ele limpou sujera da rua* (He cleaned the dirt from the street.). When me my partner and two of Italian friend got attacked on the beach by three guys armed with broken bottle I started to consider buying a gun and to kill the attacker on the next occasion. Yet with the time, after you get integrated into the local society, you start to feel safe. The community is concerned about local safety. They take care about each other and persecute the violent intruders themselves.

Despite such constant presence of violent deaths and other criminal or violent acts (armed assaults, family violence, street violence, police violence), violence is stigmatised and disapproved within local societies of each neighbourhood. Aggressive behaviour is on the one other hand interpreted as ambiguous amongst the Salvadorian population, my interlocutors described it as a necessary characteristic of all sportsmen (in our case *capoeiristas*), while on the other hand it is frequently equalled with violence. One of *capoeiristas* said:

As vezes jogo tem que ser um pouco mais agressivo. Isso mostra a vantagem do capoeirista (Sometimes play has to be more aggressive. It shows the good will of *capoeira* player).

My neighbour described as following the man living in the same street:

Ele é homem agressivo. Sempre gritando, usando palavras feias. Eu estou segura que bate na mulher (He is an aggressive man. He is always screaming, using bad words. I am sure that he is beating his wife).

Violence and aggression are sometimes understood as unacceptable behaviour but in the context of sports activities frequently as different attributes of human reactions and behaviour. As I have argued, Salvadorian society does not accept violence despite the frequent occurrence of it. Violent people are described as *sujera*, especially if the individual is violent because of drug abuse. However, I witnessed many family conflicts with violent outcomes. Such incidents are known to neighbours due to the construction deficiencies of most houses in *favela*, and easily evolve into a drama for the whole neighbourhood. Houses in *favela* are built close to each other and on top of one another; they are constructed from narrow bricks without insulation and mostly lack glass windows. Family conflicts are therefore visible to all neighbours who would in the case of a conflict unite on the street trying to solve the problem.

If the man is violent, male neighbours try to calm down the situation; if the woman is violent (not a common situation), other women from the neighbourhood help solve the situation. In the days following the quarrel neighbours continue to discuss the situation, criticizing the violent person, but if no one was harmed violent individuals are not stigmatised or excluded from their society. I witnessed a serious family conflict twice and during the first one that occurred in the middle of the night the whole street was awake trying to solve the conflict. In the second conflict the son threatened his mother and she was desperately seeking for help. Neighbours and relatives got involved in the conflict. Regardless of the mother's fear of her son's reaction, she decided not to throw him out of her house, claiming that he does not have enough money to rent an apartment. At the same time she accused him of stealing money from her and abusing drugs. The women comforted her and one of the relatives went to talk to her son. I accompanied her to hear a story about violence. The son claimed that he was not threatened by his mother, but admitted that he used bad words like *puta* (whore), *maloca* (crazy), *idiota* (idiot), *pronta para hospitál* (ready for mental hospital) during the verbal conflict. He was convinced that his mother had a blurred perception of reality, caused by antidepressants and sedatives she had been taking for several years. He complained that living with her is unsupportable as she is crazy and always under the influence of drugs. He also claimed that he would like to move out of the house, however, at the moment he did not have a regular income. The mother and the son both cried during the incident.

Violence in *favela* is not only the domain of private sphere; it appears in various forms such as fights, assaults, gang conflicts, murders, etc. in public areas as well. According to Olivera et al. (2000) men between the age of 14 and 25 are the most violent. Violent men or criminals like to say: "*Aquí na Bahia se more, aquí se mata*" (Here in Bahia you die, here in Bahia you kill). Such violent individuals or groups are stigmatized and excluded from common daily social events. In many cases members of the local society deal with them and the 22 year old neighbour Jão reported to me about a similar occurrence. He described how he and his friends were harshly beating a youngster who robbed two of the neighbours. They caught him in front of the local food store, where he was threatening a man with a knife after he had already robbed the store the day before. The thief, about 20 years old, was almost beaten to death. Afterwards the men who knew where he lived dragged him home and beat him again in front of his mother, while she received an explanation by one of the men why her son is being beaten. Such incidents represented a big shame for the thieves' family and shame was the hardest punishment for violent boys. Jão told me that shaming a family is the worst thing an

Afro-Brazilian can do and that he was in a similar situation after he tried to steal sandals in a store. He got caught by the security guy (they are by default trained in a martial art), who immediately wanted to beat him. Jão managed to negotiate, therefore the incident finished without a fight. He claimed that the sandals were not stolen yet, but the security man insisted that he should be picked up by his father. When he arrived he also tried to beat Jão, but later managed to escape and when he returned home, his father already calmed down. Jão was so ashamed that he decided not to steal ever again, yet he claims that some or even most violent people and criminals do not care or think about shame and the consequences of robbing. Such youngsters would rob and jeopardize other peoples' lives until they were killed by other thieves, drug dealers or members of the *esquadrão de morte*.

Most violent people and thieves live in *favelas*, however this does not mean that violence is not present also amongst members of upper social classes. The difference lies in the reasons for violence and the forms of its expression. Meanwhile members of upper social classes perform violence through the repressive apparatus (Security companies, Police) or join racist gangs, while the poor act violently at public parties, they rob and assault, and become violent in family conflicts, where emotional drives arouse aggression expressed through violence.

3.1 *Favela*: conflict of interests

I have studied aggressive behaviour and violence in Salvador in the residents of Boca do Rio, the patients of Juliano Moréira psychiatric hospital and the *capoeiristas* from different *capoeira* groups and schools. In this subchapter I argue about the reasons for violence in Salvadorian *favelas*. I have proposed that aggression is the inherent behavioural characteristic of most living beings. Its occurrence in humans may be explained in many ways. As mentioned in Freud's psychodynamic theory of aggression, it is one of the basic drives of human psychosexual development. Hacker describes it as a motivated learned form of human behaviour. Some sociologists claim that aggression is the consequence of conflicts of interests. As Geen (1998, p.11) argues, social psychologists have tried to explain behaviour in terms of situational demands, regardless of the individual's personality, and to relegate individual differences in behaviour to a secondary explanatory status. Arguments to support this theory that aggression is not influenced by personality are based on the contention that aggressive behaviour is unstable across time and conditions. Supporters of evolutionary theories understand aggression as an urgent adaptation for the psychophysical survival of the

individual and the way to provide necessary survival and resources for procreation. Some theological theories ascribe aggression expressed as violence to human weaknesses and evil. According to Russell (1988, p. 273) global evil is expressed in the form of genocide, terrorism and preparations for the nuclear war. At an individual level it is manifested in cruelty and senselessness that can be interpreted as cowardly unintelligible violence in the form of murder, family violence, etc. Larrimore (2001, p. 237) refers to Malthus and understands human aggression and occurrence of violence as a response to the excessive growth of population. He is convinced that human population grows geometrically, whereas alimentary resources grow asymmetrically. According to Malthus the human race needs wars, starvation and illnesses until it learns to control the population growth with the so called "moral restriction".

Independent of scientific theories, there are many differences in expressions of aggression and occurrence of violence in different societies based on national, cultural, gender, age and social class differences. Geen (1998, p. 15) writes that the appearance of aggression is strongly influenced by social and cultural factors. Specific provocation that evokes aggressive aspirations and violent destructive responses in one society or culture may elicit a more controlled reaction in another, which follows different norms for aggressive behaviour.

In the preamble of this chapter I have abridged some already written conclusions about aggression and violence and added some new ones to better explain the appearance of both phenomena in Salvadorian *favelas*.

Only after a few weeks of living in Boca do Rio I realised that the notion of "intimacy" has a completely different meaning to the one back home. I experienced that life in *favela* can be unsupportable for someone who does not agree with the local life-style. During the week, the noise starts as early as 6 o'clock in the morning and stops around 11 o'clock in the evening. On weekends when most *favela* inhabitants have fun on the street with beer and *churrasco* (barbecue), the noise stops only around midnight or one in the morning. I found that the people who worked and did not hang out in the streets all day drinking and listening to loud music⁸⁸ had a desire for privacy and peace after work and especially during the night. Due to the proximity of the neighbours, typical *favela* construction and overpopulation, such wishes are mostly unrealizable. I was surprised that no one complained about the situation and the

⁸⁸In Salvador mostly *samba axé*, *pagode* and *farró* are being listened to.

constant noise. I used to be the only who would ask neighbours to stop hitting the walls and to reduce the volume. However, very soon I was told that the tolerance for noise is mostly the consequence of shame or fear. In many cases people would rather postpone or even abandon intervention out of the fear of causing conflicts with neighbours. Some believe that complaining is inappropriate, as it can offend the neighbour that you will have to meet every day on the street. Complaining can also be dangerous if the person you are complaining about is violent, a drug abuser, member of a gang or drug and guns dealer. Therefore, people rather patiently conceal than bluntly express their feelings, giving the impression that everybody is tolerant and happy with the given situation. Yet every man has a toleration limit and when it is exceeded the reaction is many times uncontrolled. Emotionally loaded reactions can arouse aggressive tensions that are, at least by men, frequently expressed as violence.

After a month and a half of living in *favela* I have noticed that there were a few neighbours who were unhappy with the living conditions and were willing to leave Boca do Rio. One of them complained in general about life in the city and wanted to return to the countryside where he grew up. During the next few months I observed reactions of unhappy neighbours and had profound conversations about their feelings, wishes and methods to cope with their current life situation. We have to consider that most *favela* inhabitants do not have an alternative to living where they are, due to economic reasons. Therefore, they have to reconcile themselves with conditions and life-style in *favela*, which is mostly a difficult and even unfeasible task. In what follows I look at some statements of the unadjusted people and write about my observations regarding their life-style. I present and analyse their coping methods and the ways they react to specific environmental stimuli.

I propose that coping and emotional reactions to internal and external stimuli are important factors in the appearance of violence. This is true for affected and for instrumental violence. Berkowitz (1998, p. 52) argues about *Strain Theory of Crime Causation*, proposing that violence and other antisocial deviancies are consequences of extremely unpleasant social experiences, mainly frustrations. Frustration is mostly connected with economic failure. Consumer societies teach their citizens to seek economic success, yet largely because of its satisfaction system, the society also effectively prevents segments of the population from achieving this goal. Although this analysis has been criticized and is incomplete as a general account of all crime, it is useful in understanding some types of antisocial actions. Berkowitz (1968) argues about the catharsis theory, which describes aggression as the reduction of

arousal. He is convinced that frustration may increase aggressive aspirations and emphasizes that through aggressive behaviour increased arousal caused by frustration can be unleashed. Reduction or catharsis is in progress, although arousal will not vanish completely. Hacker (1985, p. 138) writes that Doob, Miller and Dollard see aggression as the result of and the response to failures, in early childhood as well as in later life stages. Each discontinuity or disturbance of the goal oriented activity represents frustration that is followed by a type of reaction. Danger, menaces, failures, lack of basic goods, personal assaults, and personal conflicts between the expected and achieved social role, unfulfilled expectations and promises represent frustration that motivates aggressive aspirations and reactions. Amsel, (1992, pp. 37-38) presents Brown and Farber theory of aggressive behaviour where frustration is defined as the consequence of conflictual and relational tendencies of obstruction and un-recompensation. Amsel (1992, pp. 38-44), categorised as a neo-behaviourist, designates such frustrations as primary frustrations. Expected frustrations, unlearned and unconditioned, are secondary frustrations and contrary to the primary ones. Secondary frustration appears when a negative result, obstacle or lack of gratification can be expected. The Brown and Farber theory does not include a concept of emotions being mediatory variable and this may be the reason it had no relevant influence on experimental behavioural research. This research has, according to Amsel, proved that primary frustration in animals is connected with food as a reward. Less food provokes more frustration. Experimental research was common in the 1950's and has enforced the concept of *frustration effect* (FE). It represents the manner of behaviour conditioned by the so-called *frustrated non reward*. FE in the case of unrewarded first action was described by different scientists as unsocial behaviour and a consequence of unrealised expectations as well as increased motivation to fulfil the goal. This challenged Dollard's, Doob's, Miller's, Mower's and Sears's theory that frustration is inevitably released through aggression.

Favela inhabitants are exposed to the same living conditions and most of them have to face frustrations, so I can ask myself which are the internal and external factors that arouse aggression and why only some people express it through violence. Different people react to frustration differently. As we have already learned frustration may arouse motivation. The answer to this kind of arousal cannot be violence. Even if most *favela* inhabitants are not satisfied with the living conditions in *favelas*, only a few lose control and act violently. Most of them openly express aggression but not in the form of violence or anger. I have listed the following ways of expressing aggressive tensions: listening to loud, energetic music, drinking

and screaming on the streets, fast and energetic dances, sport activities (mostly martial arts), playing football on the beach, loud verbal conflicts and exaggerated continuous talking. But than again I had to re-ask myself why would such expressions be the result of aggressive tensions? Are they not just the manners to divert and relax? The discrepancy about what people speak and what I observed was more than obvious regarding these questions. When I asked the neighbours why the music has to be so loud and why everyone dances and prepares barbecue on the street on the weekends, they told me that this is the Brazilian way to have fun. They like to dance and listen to the music, they like to invite others to the party and they like to hang on the street interacting with other neighbours till the late evening. They also like to drink beer and *caipirinha* (sugar cane brandy cocktail). They like to converse a lot and if the music is loud also the conversation is loud. Yet the same people complained when for example the party was not organised by themselves but by someone that they did not like, with the comments like:

Of course they have to party! What else would they do, they are without the job and the best solution is to get drunk everyday. In such manner they can at least forget about the misery. It is better to *curtir* (have fun) than *sufre* (suffer). But the problem is I have to work tomorrow and with such noise it is impossible to relax, so at the end I am the one being stressed and nervous. It makes me angry so I will have to drink and party more on the weekend ha, ha.

As I have noticed on several occasions people in Salvador get angry fast but they will also calm fast enough. They would go from the state of sadness to the state of anger ending laughing, drinking and dancing. The best example of such mood transition was during the football world championship. Brazilian football team lost the game in semi-final and the whole town got literally quiet - it was rather a strange experience once you get used to the constant noise -, and you could feel how the sadness was transformed in disappointment, than the anger, and after a few minutes, when the noise slowly came back the general tension was gone. I went on the street listening to the comments. The one very simple and frequent but almost the same as I am used to from back home was: "Ah it does not matter! We will get drunk either way, this time out of sadness maybe next time out of joy!"

At this occasion everyone got really drunk but in spite of obvious frustration - Brazilians are indeed fanatics regarding football - and anger toward their team that disappointed them, in our quarter I haven't noticed any street violence or vandalism.

3.1.1 Violence in regards to age

I have noticed that Salvadorian youngsters are frequently involved in some form of street violence. They get involved in physical fights at open air parties, especially during the festival week when parties with live music are held all around the city. Famous Brazilian musicians perform on slowly moving trucks during the festival week. However, to listen to the music in a secure zone, you have to buy a rather expensive ticket. These *blocos* (blocks) are accessible only to people with a good regular income, while the others have to satisfy themselves with drinking and dancing outside the secured areas. These events are always crowded and due to the amount of consumed alcohol and probably also because of past, present and expected frustrations, violent conflicts between participants even with deadly outcomes are not an exception.

As I have mentioned, young men are also recurrently involved in armed assaults and robberies. They are members of street gangs, expressing anger and acting violently against other individuals or gangs. Marcus (2007, p. 64) presents Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones model of violence and claims that the process of becoming violent has several stages. Anger and aggression are products of a multi graded process by which negative effects are generated in the anger-aggression syndrome:

A fear syndrome is evoked at the same time (occasionally even suppressing anger), and the eventual expression of the syndrome is finally influenced by higher order cognitive processes such as: interpretations, social rules, anticipated costs and benefits, all of which alter the eventual behavioural expression (Marcus, 2007, p. 64).

Marcus (2007, p. 65) writes about Spielberger research from 1999, where he measured control of angry feelings with different age groups and concluded that youngsters evidence more trait anger and have greater difficulty controlling angry feelings (Marcus, 2007, p. 65). Many times during my research I have been told by older people that youngsters in *favela* are not concerned about their future as the older people are, therefore by *defaultu* they are in conflict with social rules and not too concerned with the negative consequences of violence and criminal acts. They seek beneficial outcomes for such behaviour. If I agree with Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones, I can infer that due to such youngsters' indifference related with consequences of violence, the latter is more frequent by youngsters than it is by mature

people. Marcus (2007, p. 8) considers adolescence as the "risk-taking behaviour" period. Some scholars' research has shown that the youngsters in USA in the age group between 12 and 19 years have the highest rates of victimisation by violent crime of any age group (Snyder, 2004; Snyder and Sickmund, 1999).

Yet also older population acts violently. For example in Salvador violence among mature and elderly men is mostly performed within the family. As my interlocutors stated, violence is mostly related to alcohol and drugs for example cocaine or *crack*⁸⁹ abuse. Scientists from the fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology, psychopharmacology and others dealing with aggression and violence have done several researches regarding the influence of psychotropic substances on aggression and violence. Taylor and Hulsizer (in Russel, 1998, pp. 141-144) emphasize the lack of research related with influence of psychotropic drugs on violence occurrence. Meloy (1987, p. 40), Miller & Gold (1994, p. 1070) and Elinwood (1971, p. 1170) claim that psychoactive drugs like amphetamine, cocaine and crack influence the appearance of aggression and consecutively violence. Hatsukami and Fischman (1996, p. 1585) argue that violence connected to drugs is mostly a consequence of the drug distribution system and is strongly economically motivated. They claim that violence being directly stimulated by cocaine and crack is rare. Also Berkowitz (1993, p. 278) writes that the growth of violent behaviour is unrelated to drug abuse (*ibid.*). Even if drugs do not necessarily directly cause violence, public use and dealing are disturbing for those not using drugs. Drugs are also being distributed by criminal groups whose methods of controlling the market are often violent. Thus drug use and distribution are additional stress factors for people in Salvador who are frequently exposed to stress and frustrations⁹⁰. Therefore it is not surprising that violent behaviour is common in this city.

3.1.2 Violent people are stigmatized

As I have learned, fights between youngsters are tolerated to some degree. My interlocutors stated that physical conflicts between youngsters are understandable if they get into fights

⁸⁹ A by-product of cocaine production that is cheaper than cocaine and suitable for mass consumption amongst the poor population. However, already short term abuse of crack might be fatal.

⁹⁰ Life conditions in Salvador are inconvenient in *favelas* as well as in rich quarters. *Favela* inhabitants are exposed to daily humiliations at home, work or on the street. Many times they cannot fulfil their dreams and have to live in misery. Upper social classes are exposed to the fear of being assaulted or robbed and they have to cope with stress at work. They have high goals and would to live in peace, yet their wishes stay many times unfulfilled.

over girls; however, exaggerated jealousy is disapproved. To be sure, everyone condemns family violence. Some of my interlocutors have claimed that considering living circumstances, they are not surprised that once in a while a *loco* (crazy man) kills the whole family. However, they do not support such acts and behaviour. I did not witness any serious family fights, but I learned about them from discussions with patients at the Juliano Moréira Hospital. They were victims of brutal physical violence or rape, performed by close family members or partners. Some are fighting back, others escaped from violent environment. However, despite everyone's individual coping methods for trauma caused by violence, they all needed to seek medical help.

In hospital as well as on the street some of my interlocutors consider organised crime as the most serious form of violence. Some witnessed such violence themselves, others gained information about the topic from the mass media. Many of my interlocutors related violence and aggression to the lack of intimacy and inappropriate interpersonal relationships. As they say *favelas* are overpopulated due to the growing number of immigrants from the country to the city as well as from other smaller cities. To lower the living costs the whole family including grandparents would leave in one small house (ca. 60 sqm.). In many cases the families do not have enough money to provide proper education for their children, so they stay unemployed or are working for minimum wage. Some of unemployed youngsters decide to get involved in crime. They sale drugs or assault other people to provide material resources. As my interlocutors claim, such youngsters are mostly under influence of drug or alcohol and would spend all provided money for their addiction. So even if my interlocutors agree that living conditions may potentially influence the appearance of violence and drug or alcohol abuse, such behaviour is not tolerated. As one man commented:

I can understand that living is hard but the drugs will not bring salvation. Also I live in the same conditions but do not abuse that shit. We have to prevent violence on every corner and fight against drug abuse

Malthus (in Larrimore, 2001, p. 239) sees the only solution to prevent human violence in moral family planning that is based on economic independency and self-sufficiency. Such moral responsibility would diminish the risk of assaults, theft and gang joining.

3.1.3 Gangs

The first gangs in Brazil were mentioned already in the 17th century, when the urban population started to grow rapidly. According to Rego (1968, p. 293), on the 24th of October 1626 the first Police squad whose members were called *quadrilheiros* was formed in Rio de Janeiro. In the year 1725 governor Luís Vahia Monteiro was believed to oppose criminal acts and therefore executed many street violent people and miscreants. Rego (1968, pp. 294-295) continues that in 1808 revolutionary changes in the police force's structure and leadership occurred. Paulo Fernandes Viana proposed the formation of *Guarda Real de Polícia* (Royal Police Guard), which was certified with the ordinance adopted on 13th May 1809. Major Miguel Nunes Vidigal became the commandant of the King's Guard and the worst enemy of *capoeiristas*. He and his troops appeared frequently and unexpected on *rodas de samba* and *terroros de candomblé*, where they persecuted *capoeiristas*. Despite the temptations of the Portuguese royal forces to exclude *capoeira* from Brazilian urban life, the institution became even stronger with the declaration of independence on 7 September 1822. After the war with Paraguay the integration period followed, when *capoeiristas* persecuted those defending the change of political system and foundation of the Republic. As Rego (1968, pp. 308-309) states, the members of noble families were joining *capoeira* in gangs and proclaimed themselves chiefs. *Capoeira* developed into a political institution and the means of Afro-Brazilian identification in the middle of the 19th century. Gangs represented the instrument of political, cultural and personal identification; through the years their purpose and the structure of their members have changed.

The gangs of today are also the agents of identification and belonging. Youngsters often search for their idols within different groups. In the violent environment of Brazilian cities, idols are many times gang members that are in Salvador called *Gangues*, *Galeiras*, *Chegados* and *Rapaiziadas*. Abramovay et al. (1999, p. 99) argue that gathering within gangs is the consequence of seeking security within a group, seeking friends and approval. Regarding violence, the most interesting groups to investigate are called *Gangues*, as they are similar in structure and act to the ones described in English as *Gangs*. Hazlehurst & Hazlehurst, (1998, p. 6) cite Huff quoting that these groups are different to other youngsters' groups in the frequency of illegal activities, in hierarchy and leadership and in techniques applied to compromise the safety and property of other members of society. Hazlehurst & Hazlehurst

(1998, pp. 1-7) state that most members of gangs are between 15 and 17 years old and that *ganging* is an adolescence phenomenon in all cultures. Most of the Salvadorian gang members are *favela* residents. However, an important part of the gang members come from elite quarters and upper social classes. Hazlehurst & Hazlehurst (1998, p. 1) argue that the main reasons for a raised quantity of gangs after the second world war are post-war urban devastation, homelessness and lack of family security. However, they write that police investigations in wealthier states have shown that mostly youngsters without goals, but enough money and leisure time would join gangs. As gangs are mostly connected with illegal activities like drugs and weapons dealing, vandalism, robberies and street fighting, the frequency of urban violence has become higher with the higher number of youngsters in gangs. Gay & Marquart (1993), McDonald (1995), Felson (1994) and Hacker (1985) also argue about the influence of ganging on violence. Hacker (1985, p. 143) considers gang violence as a sub-cultural violence; some groups even promote violence, which is perceived as the expected form of behaviour. He also emphasizes that the group reduces the individual's responsibility due to anonymity. Group members are therefore more inclined towards violence.

My interlocutors are convinced that violence between youngsters in Salvador is in many cases connected with drugs and weapon dealing. Gangs are believed to be soldiers paid by mob leaders. They collect money for their bosses or assassinate their rivals. They also believe that gangs are not the main actors in drug and weapon traffic, only "cheap labour force" in the hands of mob organisations. Klein (1995), Sullivan & Silverstein (1995) and Felson (1994) also share the opinion that youngsters' groups are not organised enough for serious drug dealing. Due to lack of discipline, ineffective organisational structure and an inclination towards violence, youngsters' gangs are rarely developed into organised criminal groups. They mostly represent an adequate environment for violent individuals. Berkowitz (in Rusell 1998, p. 67) writes that the possibility for individuals to be punished is smaller within the group than it would be if they would act violently as individuals.

As I have mentioned, youngsters' gangs in Salvador are considered as "cheap labour force" or mob solders, therefore many youngsters join the gangs because of "easy money". As I have been told by my informants that have been members of the gang or organised crime groups, mob leaders would pay youngsters for drug or weapon transport, enforcement or even executions. Easily earned money allows youngsters to realize some of their wishes, for

example wearing nice clothes and shoes, having enough money to pay for drinks and charm girls or just to be *cool* in front of their peers. In many cases youngsters would thus avoid molestations from older guys and they would be respected amongst other youngsters in their society or city quarter. They would be considered as *cara perigoso* (dangerous man) and *cidadão considerado* (acknowledged citizen).

Gangs as a means of coping with frustrations

Yonucu (2008, pp. 53-54) argues that liberalisation in developing countries started in the 1980s when neo-liberalism was introduced in developed states. Such liberalisation, motivated by institutions such as IMF, OECD and the World Bank, caused the growth of consumerism. Through it, work lost its role in the identification process of individuals. Society members are not perceived as producers but rather as consumers. Brand is more important than the product itself. For example, my interlocutors often said that for them it is important which brand of sport shoes they were wearing. The most respected brand is Nike; however, it is expensive and only few can afford it. Many times I heard the commentaries that youngsters are willing to assault you because of the Nike tennis shoes. They are ashamed not to be able to afford it, so they take it from the one that has.

I have argued that frustrations, which motivate aggression, are mostly the consequence of defeat, unfulfilled wishes, humiliation and other obstacles on the path to a set goal or fulfilment of a wish. I have also proposed that economic inefficiency and inability to afford desired goods causes frustration. Even if we argued that frustration might provoke aggression which can be expressed as violence, not all potentially frustrated inhabitants of Salvadorian *favelas* are aggressive and violent. Berkowitz (1998, pp. 58-59) questions Dollar's (1939) and Lewis' (1993) assumptions that aggressive behaviour stems from different kinds of frustrations. Berkowitz (1998, pp. 58-59) writes that scholars (such as Devine, Sheley & Smith 1988; Williams, 1984; Williams & Flewelling, 1988; Howell & Pugliesi, 1988; Goetting, 1989) have claimed that according to research indicating a strong correlation between economic conditions and violence arousal economic deprivation also causes frustrations. However, Berkowitz (1998, pp. 58-59) argues that economic deficiency is not necessarily a kind of frustration which would fit Dollar's definition of frustrations; it does not always represent unfulfilled aspiration. Of course people get frustrated due to economic

deficiency if it prevents desired comfort, but not only because they do not have the same goods as others. According to this theory everyone who dreams about economic success and does not succeed, would become violent.

Yet Jão, a member of the gang, said that he joined the gang because consuming, possessing material goods and having a lot of money was important for him. If he could not have earned money working it was better for him to be part of a gang. In this way he could at least hope that his economic situation would improve. He said that he was even ready to kill. He was not thinking about possible consequences of his violent behaviour. However, when he was actually sent to kill a drug dealer who owed money to his boss, he changed his mind. He left the gang and started searching for a job. When I concluded my fieldwork he was still unemployed, working occasionally; however, he did not join the gang again.

3.1.4 Middle class problems

Victims of gang assaults and robberies are in many cases members of the middle class. *Favelas* in Salvador are located in the vicinity of posh quarters and due to lower living costs also those from lower middle class still live together in the same city quarters with the deprived population. The Salvadorian middle class is not to be equalled with the Central European one as it differs in at least three aspects: in the amount of monthly income, in the life-style and the location of the habitus. Members of the Salvadorian lower middle class earned around 800 *reais* in 2007, which is about 320 Euro. With this income they cannot afford apartments in better, more posh and safer parts of the city. However, they have enough money to buy mobile phones, more expensive clothes, have well furnished flats and some even buy second-hand cars. They live in "better" parts of *favelas*, closer to the coast but in the vicinity of the unemployed who live in almost complete⁹¹ or complete poverty. Some of *capoeira* masters could also be considered members of the lower middle class (*clase media baixa*). *Contramestre* Nelson, with whom I was living for almost six months, rents a ground floor in a one storied house in Boca do Rio. The house is surrounded by two and a half meter high wall 'decorated' with broken Coca-cola bottles. As Nelson commented, such 'decoration' provides a protection against climbing over the wall. Robbers tend to enter the

⁹¹ Relative poverty in that case means poverty according to the economic standard of a given society. In some countries families without television or car are considered poor. In Salvador those who cannot afford a hot meal every day or cannot pay the living costs are considered poor.

house during the night so the *favela* residents are trying to protect their houses with walls or high iron lattices. Scheper-Hughes (1992, p. 87) writes that these kinds of walls also provide a closed world separated from the *rua* (the street). Even if the wall does not completely protect the people from a potential intruder, it offers a certain degree of privacy in overpopulated *favela*. For *Contramestre* Nelson such privacy was important as he worked all day. When he returned home he just wanted to eat and rest in front of the television. He would have a beer and play a guitar. *Contramestre* Nelson is a typical member of Salvadorian lower middle class working hard to maintain his social status. In Scheper-Hughes' words he belongs to the social class that "*feels itself squeezed by both a predatory wealthy class from above and a desperate and parasitical mass of poor people from below*" (1992, p. 83). He gave private lessons of *capoeira* to some upper middle class residents of *condominho* (with fence and electric wire which secured a block of flats) in Pituba. Twice a week he gave one and a half hour lessons in the evening. He received 200 *reais* per person - usually having two or three students taking the lesson. He also worked in the air-condition construction and maintenance company where he earned around 800 *reais* per month. He charged me 200 *reais* per month to stay in his house, which in total would bring him a monthly income of 1.400 to 1.600 *reais*. He paid 500 *reais* for rent, 80 *reais* for electricity and water, around 100 *reais* for mobile phone, 200 *reais* for food, 150 *reais* for transportation, around 100 *reais* for other things and the rest he was trying to save. Whenever he went to the bank he was always very attentive that nobody followed him. He said that the members of the lower middle class are the main targets of thieves and robbers. My interlocutors said that attackers are mostly between 16 and 23 years old. They wait for their victims in front of their house or the courtyard door, they attack public buses; in better organised city quarters they are on the lookout for people exiting banks or going shopping. They wait a few meters away from the *condominho* entrance, in front of the banks, shopping centres and even in front of some better houses in *favela*. One day the attacker forced my neighbour when he was leaving the house to give him the money, phone and credit cards at gun point. In the context of this occurrence the other neighbour explained that in some cases the attacker forces the victim to withdraw the money from the cash machine. One of my colleagues was robbed on public bus at the final stop in Cazajeiros when he was going home from the training. Even being a very good trained *capoeirista*, he was not trying to stop the attackers. As he explained two attackers entered the bus, one aimed at the driver and the other collected the goods. At the end they have also emptied the bus' money box. As Oliveira et al. (2000, pp. 55-56) writes such attacks mostly end up without casualties, yet in some

cases people get killed because the attacker is too afraid. One of the patients in Juliano Morera hospital said:

I worked as a cashier in a public bus, which is very stressful job. I was most afraid by the end of the week when youngsters would attack the buses. My co-worker was killed by a thief who thought he recognised him. My co-worker was attacked twice in one month and when he cried out: Oh no, not again!, the attacker turned around thinking he was referring to him and shot him down.

Police tries to control gun possession in buses but only when buses enter commercial and tourist parts of the city.

The attacked say that the attackers are young men. Some think that youngsters attack out of the need for a better life-style, which is reserved only for the rich. Machado & Levenstein (in Oliveira et al., 2000, pp. 55-56) argue that, according to the statistical database of SETEPS (1998/99⁹²) half of the attacks are performed on weekends when youngsters need the money for drinking and parties. Friday is also known as *Dia de Nossa Senhora da Providência*, because it is the last day to provide the money needed for the weekend.

As bus assaults are mostly performed in suburban parts of the city where most of the lower middle class lives, they are the most frequent victims of attacks. As they cannot afford a car, which is in Brazil at least two times more expensive than for example in Europe, they are forced to use public transport. I can suppose that the Brazilian middle class, especially the lower middle class are the ones most assaulted by robbers. This assumption is important for further analyses that will follow in the next chapter.

⁹² Sindicato das Empresas de Transporte de Salvador 1998/1999. Relatórios sobre assaltos de ônibus. (Transportation Companies trade union of Salvador 1998/1999. Bus attacks report.)

Chapter 4: Coping with Violence and Aggressive Behaviour in Salvador

"Violence can be defeated only if it has channels to discharge or better to say, when it has something to deal with." (Girard, 1972, p. 12)

With a population of almost three million people and 41.81 homicides per 100.000 people Salvador is the ninth most violent city in Brazil (Waiselfisz, 2008, p. 47). Yet homicides are only the most cruel and statistically best documented forms of violence. Other forms such as: family violence, theft, rape, street fights and armed assaults, night killings for punishment performed by *esquadrilhos de morte*, police violence and many other forms are according to the American agency for human rights (2007), globally more frequent than murders, but not as well documented and in many cases unsanctioned forms of violence. In the last few years the Brazilian government has done a huge step in fighting family violence as president Lula has confirmed the law about family violence on 7th of August 2006, which triples the punishment for domestic violence. However, the control is still too weak. In some federal states of Brazil the centres helping victims of domestic violence have been founded (DEAM - *delegacias da mulher*). Therefore, the announcements of domestic violence are now more frequent. The statistical increase of domestic violence might be a consequence of increased readiness to announce and improve confidence in the state. In Rio de Janeiro there have been 5169 announcements in 2001, while in 2005, 8049 cases were registered (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, 2006). According to my interlocutors, many cases are unregistered, because firstly, neighbours do nothing to interfere in the personal life of others - violent acts are mostly performed at home; secondly, thefts and assaults are seldom denounced to the police as there is a small chance that the police would find the attacker; and thirdly, people are afraid to announce criminal acts due to possible vengeance of attackers and even out of fear from the police. Many have claimed that they are afraid to call the police as the outcome is unknown and potentially dangerous for the attacker.

The police: friend or enemy?

Salvadorian *favela* residents are many times in a dilemma whether to call the police or not when it comes to cases of domestic or other violence. When the police are on duty, they often act unreasonably and violently before they start questioning the victims on what happened. If a thief or dealer becomes too violent, the locals generally resolve the problem, or in some cases the subject is eliminated by the so-called *grupos de extermínio*⁹³.

I found myself in a situation when neighbours convinced me not to call the police, because the situation could get worse. My suggestion to call the police was more frightening for them than the whole performance of the family conflict with shouting, banging doors and breaking windows that woke up the entire neighbourhood at 1 o'clock in the morning. I waited in the street with other neighbours while two of the family's best friends interfered in the conflict. They took the drunken man who had caused the conflict home, while female neighbours calmed down the aggressive and violent lady. She was so irritated by her partner's drunkenness that she started to throw plates and other things in her apartment. She even managed to break the window, all the while cursing and threatening the partner.

There was another violent case when we did not call the police. It happened when a couple that lived in the house next to mine started to fight. The fighting started around three o'clock in the morning, when a neighbour returned home after drinking at the local bar. Evidently she has been drinking and started to argue with her partner. After an hour of cursing and threatening, for example: "*Voçé filho da puta!; Voçé homen de nada!; Vou te matár!; Vou te jogar fora da porta!; Sai da minha casa! (You son of a bitch!; You are unworthy!; I am gonna kill you!; I am gonna kick you through the door!; Get out of my house!)*", the fighting came to an end. During the conflict I screamed several times through the window for them to stop fighting at this hour; other neighbours also tried the same; however, we were unsuccessful. At 4 o'clock in the morning I saw a man smoking at the front door of the apartment and asked him if they managed to sort out the problems. He smiled and commented that each time she drinks too much they have the same scene when she comes home. Later, neighbours told me that she has low alcohol tolerance and after few beers she becomes crazy⁹⁴. First she starts to argue with all the men in the bar and then her partner. Everyone in the neighbourhood is

⁹³ Such groups where policemen, soldiers, head-hunters and even drug dealers come together to execute others are called *esquadrão de morte*, *esqadrilhos de morte* or *justiçeiros*.

⁹⁴ I have used the term to describe the statements like: "*Fica loca; Fica bruxa velha*. (She becomes crazy; She becomes a witch.)."

already used to her outbreaks and they ignore them. Nobody considers calling the police or even intervening in the conflict.

Even if these two cases I have witnessed describe violent women, there are more violent men in Salvador than women. In the first of above described conflicts the man was whether to drunk or the friends managed to remove him from the violent girlfriend in good time before he could react on her behaviour with physical violence. In the second case the man was used to his woman's behaviour not taking it seriously. The neighbours explained that he works all day and usually comes back home late in the evening. Before going home he has a beer in the local bar and if they ask him about how it was back home last night - knowing that his lady was behaving in aggressive manner after spending the evening in the bar - he just smiles and usually responds that she needs such *locura* (craziness) once in a while. However I was told that this man is an unusual example for most of the man would have beaten her bad in such case, especially if they would be drunk as well.

Also according to statistical data (Pesquisa de Senado Federal, 2007) in Bahia men are those acting violent in domestic conflicts. The research shows that 15 women out of 100 are subjects to domestic violence. Violent partners are in 50% of cases under the influence of alcohol. Most interlocutors mentioned only alcohol as the potential stimulator of domestic behaviour, however, my neighbour who suspected his son to be involved in the drug usage, feared that he would turn violent because of the drugs. Also other neighbour mentioned that those taking drugs can get irritated and violent. Sometimes this is the normal behaviour of those using cocaine or crack. In one of our debates he told me:

I took cocaine when I had to beat somebody down for not paying his dept. My boss always gave me a gram or two, saying: "That will get you more focused for the job that has to be done." When I look back at that time I am not sure about if I was the demon or the drugs made me such.

Yet some scholars claim that psychoactive drugs, including alcohol, do not have significant influence on aggressive or violent behaviour (Berkowitz, 1994; Hatsukami & Fischman, 1996; Mayfield in Gottheil et al., 1983, pp. 139-149). Some of them write that with many violent subjects there were traces of psycho-active drugs in their urine; however, it is rather difficult to jump to conclusions about the effects of such drugs. Hacker (1985, pp. 140-141) writes about the fear of social sanctions and the reward for certain behaviour that influences

the development of aggressive aspirations, the release of tension and aggression. People who were rewarded in the past for aggressive behaviour would more easily become aggressive and even violent. Cultural norms and rules, beliefs regarding aggression/violence and fear of sanctions are also factors that influence the decision to react violently or not.

My interlocutors argued that in Salvador the violent is difficult to be punished as people don't announce the violence and also those being announced are liberated after interrogation because existing prisons are crowded. Those performing violence are mostly drunk or under influence of *crack* and when they sober up and being beaten by police, they are free to go. Amongst patients of Juliano Moréira Hospital who were included into my example, three women described how they became victims of domestic violence. One was beaten several times by her father, when she tried to protect her mother who was subject to violence when her father was drunk. Two were victimized by their partners. One was beaten so badly that she ended up in the hospital in intensive care. However, none of them denounced domestic violence to the police. Police intervened only with the last one who had to be brought to hospital. The man was arrested, yet after 48 hours the police had to let him go as the patient did not want to press charges against him. She mentioned that her husband was later beaten by her father and brothers and that from then on he has not appeared again in the neighbourhood where she lives. She lives in fear of coincidentally meeting him on the street even if she has not heard from him for almost two years.

Domestic violence is not the only example of violence, which is not denounced. As I have mentioned the *favela* residents do not denounce thieves or youngsters' violence. They claim the police are inefficacious in preventing the first type of violence, while the other type is not fit to denounce since in many cases it is perceived as a normal way to resolve conflicts mostly between male youngsters.

4.1 Religious institutions

Afirmando ter a solução dos problemas existenciais do ser humano, religião oferece um contexto em que o indivíduo sente-se protegido (psicologicamente ou materialmente), conseguindo projetar seus conflitos mal resolvidos para uma ordem simbólica (criando uma situação de dependência); torna-se, portanto, o refúgio ideal de muitas pessoas. (By claiming to know the solution for humanity's existential problems religion offers the context in which a human being feels safe (psychologically and materially). Since it succeeds to project

unresolved conflicts into a symbolic order of god's will (creating a situation of dependence), it represents an ideal refuge for many individuals (Sales de Alcântara, 2010).

Evil, it is often said, possesses a problem for theism, the view that there is an omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good being, **God**, for short. This problem is usually called the **problem of evil** (Howard-Snyder, 1996, p. xi).

Religious institutions play a very important role in the life of an average Salvador citizen. Everyone I spoke with believes in God or at least some higher power controlling our life. Most of my interlocutors are Christians, one proclaimed himself a Spiritualist and the parents of one were candombleists. Most Salvadorian religious institutions have a Christian basis, but not all are Roman-Catholic. Where Afro-Brazilian population prevails - like in Bahia - *terreiros de candomblé* are present, yet they do not have as important social role in Salvador like Christian and para-Christian institutions⁹⁵ do. Regarding the obvious domination of Christianity in the Brazilian and Salvadorian religious system, and in the context of connections between religion and violence, we have to ask ourselves, how does Christianity, which believes in omnipotence, omniscience and the omni-affection of God perceive evil, violence, illnesses, catastrophes, etc. Since Plato, who according to Reichberg (1998, pp. 6-7) introduced a new discourse in the field of religion, philosophers have tried to explain the possibility of the existence of an omnipotent being, using logical arguments, despite the reality that leads us to conclude that there is no such thing as an omnipotent, omni-affective or omniscience being. According to Reichberg (1998, pp. 6-7), Aristotle was the first to indicate the possibility of the existence of an omnipotent and omnipresent being, called *First Mover*, who is insensible towards others and its thought is above all other thoughts. Yet scholars claim that Aristotle never wanted to compare the highest metaphysical principle of *First Move* with the perception of God, whereas for Ancient Greeks the word God did not represent the idea of ultimate perfection. In accordance to such thought, I cannot construct Aristotle's postulation of *First Mover*, as the theological affirmation of existence and nature of God. I can understand it as a metaphysical statement of the original universal principle. Aristotle believed in superhuman agents existing under first and second universal drive, yet philosophy, according to him, is not a competent science to explain their existence and actions. Aristotle was not concerned with philosophical explanations and argumentations of the existence of

⁹⁵ For example *Igreja de nossa senhora de Bonfim* that is a mixture of African religions and Christianity.

celestial beings. According to him, the traditional mythological explanations are sufficient to explain the existence of gods.

The parallel existence of an omnipotent and all-loving being on the one side and evil, violence, illnesses and catastrophes on the other side is difficult to explain. Mackie (in Howard-Snyder, 1996, pp. xiii-xiv) aimed to explain the paradox of both principles, using logical argumentation:

1. God is omnipotent.
2. God is completely good.
3. However, evil exists.

To solve the paradox trio of assertions, we have to apply quasi-logical rules that will connect goodness, evil and omnipotence. His solution is the following:

B. God is omnipotent and completely good.

Z. Evil exists.

If we wish both assertions to be true, we have to apply the first moral affirmation:

MT1. Good always eliminates evil.

And the proposition:

L. There are no limits for omnipotence.

Since everything cannot be simultaneously true we have to apply the second moral claim:

MP2. A completely good being can eliminate evil if it is capable to do so and if it has a good reason to do it.

And since there is no moral reason to allow evil we need a second proposition:

J. There is a morally acceptable reason why God allows evil that could be hindered. That is why he allows evil, and evil exists.

So we may claim that affirmations B and Z and proposition J could be simultaneously true. B and Z are compatible statements even if we have no knowledge of the morally acceptable reasons why God should allow evil.

The evidence mentioned here about the simultaneous existence of evil and an omnipotent and completely good creator can help us understand the relationship of Christianity towards aggression and violence, which is mostly related to Satan. Reichberg (1998, pp. 8-10) writes that Christianity has managed to explain the existence of deities and other inhuman forces respected by pagans, in context of angels, demons and humans that deserved immortality, through St. Augustine's philosophical debates. These creatures are supposed to be like

humans; however, God exists regardless of their existence. God can exist without the existence of the world, yet these creatures cannot. If God is omnipotent, all loving and omniscient, and if faith is according to St. Thomas Aquinas in *Sacra Doctrina* the only way to reach godly knowledge that allows us to discuss God (Reichberg, 1998, pp. 8-10), I can conclude that evil cannot be the domain of the divine, but has to belong to some other principle, the principle of earth alienated from God. On the contrary, Afro-Brazilian religions understand the existence of evil in the context of the divine, since deities have positive and negative qualities. *Candomblé* practitioners I have spoken to say, that religions like *umbundá* recognise good and bad spirits, the latter known as *Pretos Velhos* (Blac Olds) who are capable of bringing misfortune with or without the influence of humans who are trained to communicate with them. However, in *umbundá* *Pretos Velhos* are described as the spirits of the African ancestors. As I was instructed they are spirits of humility, wisdom and patience, therefore very respected among practitioners of *umbundá*. Having human characteristics they can also get angry and bring misfortune to those who deserve it. In such context violence and evil acting are not necessarily malevolent actions, but can be interpreted as manners of protection and emancipation. Practitioners of such religions probably have less difficulty with accepting the existence of evil and violence in human societies. Those I have spoke to believe that there must be a balance between good and bad, between right or wrong, and that we can not interpret the spirits' actions from such dualistic perception. Disasters, misfortunes, diseases, wars, murders and other forms of violence are consequences of harmful acts of spirits or people that manipulate these spirits using special techniques, yet sometimes they may be resulted without human or spiritual interfering when the divine power giving us a lesson. For *candomblé* practitioners as they say, violence and evil may be interpreted as a consequence of disrespect towards deities that demand sacrifices and worship. A rooster is mostly sacrificed in the *candomblé* ceremony, its meat is used to prepare meals for divinities. *Filho dos santos* (young *candomblé* possession priest) I have spoke to mentioned, that each deity prefers a specific way of preparing a rooster, the supplement ingredients are also of great importance while preparing the food. During important festivities bigger animals like goats or buffalo are sacrificed. In such cases their blood is supposed to compensate the deities' lust to perform violence on humans. Girard (1972, pp. 38-42) argues that violence is like an epidemic disease or infection. When it appears, it can be easily disseminated through the whole organism or society. In many societies blood can also be a symbol of violence and if blood is spilled outside of ritual activities, such acts might represent the spreading of violence, which can easily envelop the whole society. Because of the fear of infection all

forms of violence might cause, cities without elaborated legal systems have introduced or developed the ritual of sacrifice (Girard, 1972, pp. 38-42). Catharsis is reached through spilled blood of an innocent victim, thus preventing uncontrolled violence and evil. Sacrifice can prevent infection. Moreover, monotheistic religions like Judaism are familiar with rituals of sacrifice. In the Old Testament (Holy Bible, 1981, Numeri, pp. 164-166), the ritual of sacrifice and its appurtenant taboos are specified. Christianity has upgraded the ritual of sacrifice into a unique act of sacrificing the Son of God, which was supposed to hinder evil once and for all.

As we have already learned, Christianity distinguishes between powers of evil and a loving and omnipotent good. Universe is divided into the Kingdom of darkness and the Lord's kingdom. Russell (1988, pp. 43-47) argues that the New Testament uses similar patterns as Judaism and Islam, that it has introduced the image of Satan, the prince of darkness, the leader of demons. Satan is supposed to stem from the Judaist concepts of *mal'ak* (Lord's shadow) and *Mazdaist* (the principle of evil). In the New Testament Satan was declared as the leader of evil spirits and demons, he is perceived as God's opponent. Satan is known as the fallen Angel accused of provoking the original sin. Since then he has been trying to take control over earthly life, therefore Jesus was sent by God to prevent Satan's domination. His sacrifice should deliver human sins and reconcile humanity with God once again (ibid.). Yet we have to solve the paradox situation where God is willing to sacrifice his own son just to prevent the infection of evil. Also, violence may be located under the domain of evil and if we take under consideration Girard's (1972, p. 22) claim that sacrifice has a function of hindering violence within a certain society, God was ready to sacrifice his own son out of love towards humanity or because he wanted to introduce order and peace on earth. According to Girard (1972, pp. 22-38) an innocent victim is supposed to demonstrate readiness to solve the conflict. In this context victimizing his own son God might be ready, from perspective of humanity, to forgive the original sin and to accept those people following Jesus' path and philosophy, promoting good and fighting against evil, into the Lord's kingdom.

Thus, an average Christian connects all evil with earthly life and Satan, and sees in the image of Jesus Christ the Saviour the path into the Lord's kingdom. The clear task of the believer is to win the internal dark side, to condemn evil and fight against it. In this context I can understand the endeavours of religious institutions and its members in fighting criminal and violence.

Some of my interlocutors described how their life and perception of the world has changed since they joined Christian religious groups. One of them was a member of a street gang, now he is a pacifist and disapproves violence. He described me the moment when he got aware of the divine presence:

After I have successfully completed several enforcements I was sent to kill the drug dealer that was selling on our territory. I was decided to complete the job, yet when I was pointing the gun to his forehead some force prevented the action. Later that day the pit-bull dog appeared in front of me starting to push me backwards. Suddenly I realised that I was standing in the middle of the avenue almost being hit by a car. At that day it became clear to me that some higher power wanted me to change.

I also met a candy vendor on the public bus who confessed that he was a bus attacker before he met Jesus. He showed me his scars caused by gunshots and claimed that he learned the Lord's will in the hospital. Yet such cases are rare and religion can help only those who are ready to change their way of thinking and acting. The struggle of religious institutions against violence is mostly unsuccessful and we can ask ourselves if violence is an external force or if it is a part of the human perception of the world and its subjective reality. As Girard (1972, p. 39) claims, violence is human's inherent function. Since the latter projects his violence into the external world, he perceives phenomena as storms, earthquakes, catastrophes and even stress as violent. Girard concludes that the Holy Bible and religion are the heart and hidden soul of violence.

The next aspect of violence connected with religious institutions is how such institutions perform violence to establish social order, social rules and social control. Bromley and Melton (2002, pp. 1-3) write that religious goals and benefits are reached through religious violence. It can be performed against individuals like inquisitional persecutions of heretics or toward other religious institutions (*ibid.*). In societies where the legal system is not elaborated, religion has become the most important institution of social control and order, yet in many cases religion itself has acted violently to fight evil and establish order. As such we might consider catharsis sacrifices of innocent victims, violent spreading of religion and establishing of social order. The latter is typical for Catholicism in the period from the 13th century till the end of the Second World War, and for Islamic extremists in the last decades of the 20th centuries when they started to promote religion as the main drive for terrorist acts. However, all violence provokes violence and Gerard (1972, pp. 39-42) writes:

It seems that there is a time when humans can fight violence and time when they cannot, However, violence always wins...more we struggle to fighting it, more material it has to resurrect. Obstacles performed by humans, violence always transforms into weapons of action. Violence is like fire, swallowing everything trying to bring it under control.

He claims that religious individuals have little or no knowledge about the reasons for violence, therefore when it appears they apply all possible measures to stop it from spreading, just like in the practice of contagious disease epidemics. Only when they become aware of the reasons for violence they can step by step eliminate their ineffective measures to prevent it (Gerard, 1972, pp. 39-42).

Religious institutions also apply all possible measures to fight evil and establish social order. The Catholic Church for example went through the inquisition and witch hunt in the 14th century to control power relationships and establish social order. The battle against heretics started with the execution of Templars. This act represented the elimination of the worst rival of the highest authority personified in the pope himself. Wright (2002, pp. 105-106) claims that a charismatic religious leader is the representative of God, therefore polarisation between him and other social institutions can lead to violence. Dawson (2003, p. 88) claims that violence can grasp all members of certain religious institutions, because believers or *followers* identify themselves with the image of the leader. Every threat or attack on their leader means a threat or attack on them as well (*ibid.*). On the other hand a charismatic leader can convince humans of the existence of good; Jesus, for example, in whom most of the Salvadorian population still believes, still represents a charismatic leader, even though he has been dead for 2000 years. If we consider Durkheim's definition of religion (Durkheim in Aldridge 2007, p. 31):

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite in one single moral community called a Church, and all these who adhere to them,

and if they follow the path of Jesus, I can presume that religious institutions in Brazil are trying to fight violence. Firstly, Brazil is one of the most Christian countries in the world, therefore members of various Christian groups believe in Jesus Christ's messages and in the existence of a good and all-loving God. Secondly, religious institutions in South America are more liberal than in Europe, sometimes even revolutionary. Charismatic priests have in many

cases empowered emancipation and in Brazil the religious organisations were the ones educating rural and illiterate population about sexual protection, about respect in the family, and they motivate women to denounce domestic violence. Thirdly, religious institutions in Brazil offer help to victims of violence and are willing to help those who reject the path of violence. Fourthly, a part of Christian institutions supports abortion if it helps diminish poverty and consequently also violence. Thus, religious institutions are changing and adapting in order to meet their basic function: prevent uncontrolled universal evil (violence) in society. Aldridge (2007, p. 31) stresses that religious institutions are changing according to changes in society. The appearance of new Christianity-based religions and *new age* religions in the 60's of the last century showed that religions may be the consequence of social events and evolution through which new religious institutions appear. They have to evolve, as the society does, to maintain their primary function of re-establishing social order.

I can also consider that the main differences between Brazilian and European religious institutions are the following: the historical difference, the development of Brazil in the last 500 years; the mixture of several different cultural sets and the development of specific political-economic systems (slavery, dictatorships, military systems, neo-liberalism, democracy) have influenced the development of religious institutions. Therefore, they are less conservative than the European ones, the rituals are more popular and relaxed and in many cases connected with Brazilian music. Services or gatherings are in similar to group therapies, many new religions, mostly in Bahia, have also incorporated African deities into their celestial set of Saints.

From my experience in fieldwork, I can argue that the main role of religious institutions in fighting against violence is their capability of offering their followers the feeling of appurtenance to a group, in many cases perceived as a family, or in Durkheimian view, as community. Members of the group feel safe and accepted within the group. One of my interlocutors described this relationship as:

Quando tenho problemas graves, eu falo sobre iso na igreja, falo com amigas da igreja. Elas me escutam, elas me oferecem ajuda se eu preçizo. Não sei o que eu falaria se não frequentasse a igreja. (When I have serious problems, I can always speak about them in church. I also speak to friends from the church community; they listen to me offering me help if I need it. I do not know what I would do, if I was not a member of the church.) (author's translation).

Despite the fact that religious institutions offer shelter and support, they also educate about outcomes of violence and crime. Since sessions are in many cases more like social evenings accompanied with music, also many youngsters frequent the church. It helps them to avoid violence. One of my interlocutors said the following about the relationship of the church towards violence:

Na igreja nós falamos sobre violência. Cada um representa suas experiências em relação de violência, depois se abre um tipo de concurso. No final todo mundo sabe que não vale pena meter-se com crime e violência. (We discuss about violence in the church. Everyone talks about their experience with violence and then we start debate. At the end it is clear to everyone that it makes no sense to be involved in crime and violence.) (Author's translation).

I can conclude this subchapter by claiming that religious institutions in Brazil play an important role in fighting violence. Their part is as preventive as it is curative. The main methods create the feeling of belonging and security. They also create positive energy and promote teachings of Jesus Christ, they educate about negative effects of crime and violence.

4.2 *Capoeira*

Capoeira cannot be considered as a religious institution. However, due to its historical connection with *candomblé* some ritual characteristics have been established and preserved, which are similar to religious ones. We must also consider the fact that most of *capoeira* practitioners are religious, regardless if they are Christians, spiritualist or *candomblé* practitioners. Even if Girard (1972, p. 26) claims that in modern societies with elaborated juridical systems religious institutions do not have important social functions, we can say that in Brazil, the religious institutions influence *capoeira's* position towards violence. On the other hand, as we have learned, *capoeira* was always connected with violence throughout history. For centuries the art represented the way to establish social hierarchy, means of emancipation and social approval of unprivileged social groups.

Capoeira simultaneously represents the means of integration, emancipation and also separation and polarization. *Capoeira* and its practitioners are still perceived in society in two ways. On one side *capoeira* is considered as a healthy activity that preserves mental and

physical health, on the other side it is believed to be occult, marginal and connected to violence. Mostly it is seen as dangerous by Euro-Brazilians, yet also by many Afro-Brazilians. *Capoeira* for them is a means of emancipation and at the same time one of the drives to maintain the conflicts between Afro-Brazilians and the rest of Brazilian society. Due to their revolts, violent approach and marginalisation, *capoeiristas* are believed to provoke conflicts and violence and even false hope of emancipation for the unprivileged population.

The hero as a violent character

Capoeiristas are in many cases perceived as heroes, but with some negative characteristics, though. Today this perception has been constructed using four *capoeira* icons: *Rei Zumbi*, *Besouro Preto Mangagá*, *Mestre Pastinha* and *Mestre Bimba*. The oral tradition of the first two turned them into a myth⁹⁶, even if their stories are not completely in accordance with the stereotypes of mythological characters. Girard for example points out four stereotypes that are supposed to be included in myth:

1. veracity of violent act;
2. veracity of crisis;
3. the victim is not chosen according to the actual crime, but rather according to the symbol that connects the victim with the established social crisis;
4. the point of the process is to transfer responsibility for the crisis to the victim and release the crisis with the victim's elimination or exclusion (Girard in Segal, 1998, p. 286).

When Girard says that a hero is at the same time also the inducer of crime or at least symbolizes the crime that has brought misfortune to a specific group, I cannot claim the same for *Rei Zumbi* or *Besouro*, who might be perceived as symbols for constant conflict situation between Afro-Brazilians and economic-political forces. Their sacrifice does not solve the conflict yet it personifies the situation of the whole Afro-Brazilian population at that time. In the case of *Rei Zumbi*, the hero is related with *quilombo Palmares* and its last battle against the Portuguese coloniser. The crises might represent the opposition between slaves and

⁹⁶ Despite the fact that I use Girard's concept of myth, which I found the most relevant for my analysis, some other aspects are interesting to mention in our concept. Marxist critical theories claim that myth in modern society does not represent a closed rigid system of the collective perception of the world, but rather particular, individual and variable views, formulated and expressed through myth (Ilić, 1988, p. 20). This aspect of the myth will help us understand individual perceptions of *capoeiristas* about characteristics and social roles of *quasi* mythological characters in *capoeira*'s history.

owners of the capital, thus rebellions, flights of the slaves from *senzalas* and the establishment of *quilombos* in the 17th century, when the Dutch attacked the Portuguese in North Brazil. This conflict gave the opportunity of liberation to some, yet it has also aggravated the situation of those unable to escape. Surely some rights were taken away from them and the supervision on *senzalas* became stricter. Therefore, the character of *Rei Zumbi* on one hand represents the hero and on the other hand he incorporates the qualities that Gerard (in Segal, 1998, p. 295) calls *moral monstrosity*. *Rei Zumbi's* superhuman capacities applied in the fights against Portuguese made him a hero and symbol of emancipation. However, same activities and his ideology increased the repression against the Afro-Brazilian population. *Rei Zumbi* did not die when *Palmares* was destroyed; he was captured one year later. As admonition to the other revolts his head was put on a pole and exposed in public. With his death and demolition of *quilombo Palmares*, the social crisis is released, therefore the hero, as Girard (in Segal, 1998, pp. 301-303) argues, admits the role of the victim through which the crisis that provoked the social conflict is released. The second myth within the *capoeira* institution represents the story of *Besóuro Preto Mangagá* that lived at the end of the 19th century, at the time of *capoeira's* prohibition and complete exclusion of Afro-Brazilians from the Brazilian society. Even if *capoeiristas* wanted integration and social recognition, they still used violence to achieve their goals. *Besóuro Preto Mangagá* corresponds to the criteria of a mythological hero and also the victim. He has superhuman capabilities, is able to transform, however he is an alien, he is in conflict with the social codex, therefore his behaviour is fatal. As such he meets Girard's (in Segal, 1998, pp. 291-292) criteria of heroes. *Besóuro Preto Mangagá* represents the whole Afro-Brazilian population that in this period appeared as a liberated social subject. However, it was alien to Brazilian society. Such subject thus existed at the margins of society not entirely incapable of surviving. In many cases he applies violence to survive and therefore threatens the social stability. Thus the whole Afro-Brazilian population is a victim personified in the character of *Besóuro Preto Mangagá*. The prosecutor or torturer that according to Girard (in Segal, 1998, pp. 298-300) points the finger at the person responsible for the social crisis and sentences the victim, in this case represents the dominant class of Brazilian society. Considering the actual social circumstances in Brazil at the end of the 19th century, the Afro-Brazilian population did not agree with the means applied by those trying to achieve emancipation. Thus the victim becomes the prosecutor and *Besóuro Preto Mangagá* represents a hero only for those who agreed to violent methods for solving the social conflict. *Besóuro Preto Mangagá*, who was believed to be able to transform into a beetle and disappear, fought against 20 adversaries at the same time. The one with the

corpo fechado (protected body) dies as a victim of conspiracy. His death symbolises the victory of the dominant class and the absurdity of violent resistance toward the ruling class and the crisis situation. Despite the fact that he represents the hero, he might be perceived as well as a naive rebel. Since the institution of *capoeira* as well as the Afro-Brazilian population was trying to get rid of the stigma of being marginal and violent, *Besóuro Preto Mangagá* might be seen as a hero and as a victim for the dissolving of the crisis situation through sacrifice. I have analysed both mythological heroes using Girard's understanding of myth, to explain the role of the mythological hero in fighting against violence. There are also other theories such as Jung's analytical psychology (1964, pp. 18-103). According to him human brains have historical memory, therefore the psyche contains many traces of the human's historical development. The unconsciousness (collective unconsciousness) affects the consciousness and influences our beliefs. *Rei Zumbi* and *Besóuro Preto Mangagá* are archetypes of heroism, fearlessness and fighting for emancipation. Henderson (1964, p. 107) also stresses that a certain symbolism perceived in his patient's dreams is connected with symbolism of archaic human societies. The connection exists because our unconscious brain is capable of creating symbols...

...that once found expression in the beliefs and rituals of the primitive. And that capacity still plays a role of vital psychological importance. In more ways than we realize, we are dependent on the messages that are carried by such symbols, and both our attitudes and behaviour are profoundly influenced by them (Henderson, 1964, p. 107).

Even if today's *capoeiristas* do not emphasize negative features of *Zumbi* and *Besóuro* and violence that they have to perform to survive, both characters denote violence on a symbolic level. Through them the application of violence is legitimised. However, in today's context the violence is not applied to resolve social conflicts.

For today's perception of *capoeira* and its relationship towards violence the characters of *Mestre Pastinha* and *Mestre Bimba* who are perceived as founders of modern *capoeira* are of great importance. Despite the fact that they are described as fearless and invincible fighters, *capoeiristas* emphasize that both rejected violence and introduced order and discipline into *capoeira*. One of the practitioners stressed:

Capoeira has to teach about our history, our stems and has to offer to the practitioner the insight into the Afro-Brazilian history. Those promoting violence act against teachings of *Mestre Bimba* and *Mestre Pastinha*.

The second one commented on the violence in *capoeira*:

I have started to practice *capoeira* because I believe in positive aspects of the art. Of course it was violent in a certain time, but *Mestre Bimba* has made a good introspection into the art, has employed clear rules and institutionalised it as a sport.

Both masters are believed to be the heroes of their time and are slowly taking over the role of mythological heroes. However, more time will have to pass for their stories to transform into the myth as the stories of *Zumbi* and *Besouro* have. Of course it is possible that neither will become a mythological hero, because their history is documented, which hinders the invention of the story that corresponds to the mythological hero criteria. According to Henderson (1964, p. 110) such heroes are supposed to be born as a result of a miracle, are able to demonstrate their supernatural capabilities already in childhood, their forces are supposed to reach the peak with dramatic fastness, they are believed to be fighting the evil, yet their death is the consequence of conspiracy and sacrifice (ibid.). However, both masters represent a human hero character, archetype of masculinity and *malandro*. Their symbolic struggle against evil represents their efforts to institutionalize *capoeira* and change its social role. Both masters play an important role in the creation of *capoeira* rules and in the ritualization of the institution. Masters introduce the incubational ritual into *capoeira* called *batizado* and define how mature a *capoeirista* should behave. I have already argued about the importance of initiation before, yet I would also like to add Jung's theory about the role of initiation in human societies. Henderson (1964, pp. 128-136) interprets Jung and argues that through initiation the parental archetype gets damaged and can only be recovered with the process of assimilation into society. Furthermore, for a *capoeira* practitioner the ritual of *batizado* represents the passage from his adolescence into the mature period of *capoeira* and at the same time presents his acceptance into *capoeira* society. The group offers shelter and belonging, yet the individual has to conform to the rules of a certain group. If the principle of the group is to hinder violence, the individual will under normal conditions act in accordance with the norms of the group or otherwise will be in danger of being excluded from the group. In the case when norms are not trespassed in extreme ways and in cases of effective violence, the master will punish the practitioner with suspension or with degradation of his level in the

capoeira hierarchical frame. Sometimes he might only castigate the individual with more aggressive play in the *roda*, where he demonstrates *quem é Mestre aqui* (who is master here). Yet the masters do not admit that with employment of more aggressive play they want to demonstrate their supremacy. According to them they just reflect the play of the practitioners. If the student wants to play aggressive, they will let him do so. However also the student has to be prepared for more aggressive respond. I have witnessed several such plays and also experienced few. On one occasion I felt prepared enough to play *jogo duro* (rough play) with the master. He was playing with me for a while giving me the impression that I can apply a kick or *rastera*. I got more and more enthusiastic and changed my playing technique from defensive one to offensive one. I also forgot about maintaining *corpo fechado*, and suddenly, like coming from nowhere, the strong *cabeçada* met my stomach throwing me completely out of balance, which made me fly out of *roda* hitting the shelf positioned by the wall of the academy. Master smiled waggishly and invited me into the play again. I have learned my lesson and continued to play with respect using smartness instead of aggression.

Protection techniques

In the context of violence in *capoeira* we have to mention also the existence of several techniques of protection against violence that are applied in *capoeira*. Some *capoeiristas* protect themselves against harmful acts of adversaries or those who might gain some benefits by applying violence. My interlocutors argued that *capoeira* should always represent creative play between two players in the *roda* which represents real-life. It is not supposed to be a violent act, but rather a learning process of how to cope with conflicts in real-life situations. Despite the fact that violence appears in *capoeira*, parallel with it the development of several protection techniques against harmful effects were developed. Due to the changed structure of the organisation and different social meanings of *capoeira*, rituals and techniques of protection are losing their importance. Yet some masters still use techniques of space cleansing, body and spirit protection. Since *capoeira* is perceived as a sport today, metaphysics and the magical techniques of protection are disappearing.

***Capoeira* as real-life learning**

The institution of *capoeira* is in at least two aspects interrelated with social life, as are for example, religious institutions. Firstly, the *capoeira* group offers to practitioners a safe shelter as an extended family and secondly within the group the discussions about harmfulness of crime and violence take place. Additionally, hierarchic relationships are empowered in the *capoeira* group, where master represents the father. There is also an important aspect to be mentioned when pointing out the importance of *capoeira* as martial art, in regards to aggression control. Some *capoeiristas* argue that through *capoeira* training they learn how to control aggression and how to apply it reasonably in the cases of critical situations when he is exposed to violence. Through good control of aggression the vicious circle of violence is interrupted. Many times at *capoeira* classes I participated in the debates on violence and aggression where masters told the anecdote connected with violent behaviour on the street, which ended up with the moral lesson or instructions how to deal with provocations on the street. Such debates took place mostly at the last training before the weekend or before bigger public festivities. One of the masters for example ended his lesson with the following words:

Evita alco quando vai sair na essa fim da semana. Se vai entrar no conflicto por favor pensa dois vezes se vale pena bater o sair pra casa. Você sabe que hoje muitos andam com armas é são prontos de usár-las. (Avoid alcohol when you go out this weekend. If you find yourself in a conflict situation please think twice if it is worth to hit the other rather than just go home. As you know, these days many youngsters carry guns and are ready to use them.) (author's translation).

The other master claimed that he teaches effective *capoeira* that has to adapt to actual situation and circumstances. He commented on his teaching and his beliefs about violence:

Eu não ensino coisas que não servem. Claro que a capoeira não pode ser violenta, mais tem que ser efectiva. Se algem vai te atacar na rua vai ter que proteger-se. Você so vai se proteger com uma capoeira moderna usando la como arma, como defeza pesoal. (I do not instruct useless things. Of course I agree that *capoeira* is not supposed to be violent, however, it has to be effective. If somebody attacks you on the street you have to protect yourself and you are only able to manage this using modern *capoeira* as a weapon, as a self-defence technique.) (author's translation).

Despite beliefs amongst the *capoeira* public and amongst the general public that *capoeira* is a culture, sport, educational institution, dance, folklore, etc. in its foundations *capoeira* is a

martial art, the art where power, strength and expertise are demonstrated, therefore it is also a means of heroic identification. As such it can serve to avoid violence, despite the fact that violence is inherent in the art of *capoeira* and its institution. *Capoeira* practitioners can learn to control aggression, to avoid violence and to defend the principle of play in the *roda* of *capoeira*, but when they have to protect their life or somebody else's life, gain honour or social recognition, they will apply violence to achieve their goal.

Those being asked if they are ready to use violent *capoeira* in the case if they or their friends would be attacked, agreed to do so. However, I have never witnessed such event. Despite several stories how this or that *capoeirista* has won the street fight or saved himself from assaulters using *capoeira*, I have never heard *capoeiristas* I knew claiming that they used *capoeira* to protect themselves on the streets. One was robbed on the bus and when I asked him why he didn't apply his knowledge, he answered: "*Ele tinha arma! (He had a gun!)*".

Thus even if *capoeira* is still perceived as violent martial art I can not say that in the case of danger *capoeirista* would apply the art as the first choice of his protection. More aggressive and violent plays can be seen in *rodas*, meanwhile *capoeiristas* would choose more pacifist and safe solutions in the real life dangerous situation. According to my observations and experiences they are respected as good fighters and are better not to be touched - at least in their neighbourhood where everybody knows them. One of my neighbours commented as following finding out that I am *capoeira* instructor:

Então você é instructor de capoeira. Você sabe como lutar não é? Vou chamar você se algem vai me ameaçar. Os capoeiristas são bem respeitados aqui em Salvador. Se fala que a arte é a arma mais perigosa, porém não sei se serve contra a bala. (So you are *capoeira* instructor. You have to know how to fight, don't you? I will call you if somebody will threaten me. *Capoeiristas* are respected in Salvador. They say that *capoeira* is a dangerous weapon, but I am not sure if it serves against the bullet.) (author's translation)

PART THREE

Chapter 5: Depressive Disorders

In the following chapter I will analyse how Afro-Brazilian population in Salvador copes with problems of depression. As I have argued that there is a connection between *capoeira*, aggression, violence and depression, I analyse depression in the context of *capoeira*. Here I will look at *capoeira* as a technique to cope with depressive disorders and as a relaxation technique enabling the release of frustrations; not only as a leisure activity, but as mode of communication and means of social arguing. To explain the connections between *capoeira*, depression and dealing with frustrations, I have to define the depressive disorders and point out their pathological effects. Ehrenberg (2010, pp. 42-43) describes problems of depression as the illness of modernity, yet we can speculate that the psychological stage comparable to today's definition of depression already existed at the beginnings of the development of human societies. In bio-medical diagnostic, depression is seen as the successor of neurasthenia and it has been distinguished from melancholia only after the Second World War, yet both denominations refer to similar psychological and physical conditions. In the 40's of last century, depression was known only as a symptom of other mental problems, but already in the 70's of the last century, psychiatrists have reported that depression is most often diagnosed as a psychological problem of the western world (Ehrenberg, 2010, p. 3).

Depression became more talked about after developments in medicalization, diagnostic improvements and modern changes in social life. DSM IV (1994)⁹⁷ estimates that 5% to 9% of men and 10% to 25% of women in the world suffer from one of the forms of depressive disorders. Lambert and Davis (2002, pp. 22- 23) emphasize that the most widespread form of depression is MDD (major depressive disorder), which was perceived in more than half of the patients dealing with depressive disorders. Authors agree that depression is twice more frequent in young active women than it is by men from the same group, but they presume that men often do not seek doctors' help in the case of a depressive episode. Wilhelm (2006, p. 3) cites Murray and Lopez, claiming that depression is supposed to become the second most present medical problem of the modern human before 2020, right after ischemia heart diseases. As some scholars claim, its frequent appearance might also be connected with globalisation and the concept of individualisation that become the features of a global lifestyle

⁹⁷ American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

in most countries' urban societies (Ehrenberg, 2010; Keyes and Goodman, 2006; Kleinman, 1986). Burton (in Wall Street Journal, 2003) writes about some 70 million people globally suffering from depressive disorders in 2003, out of which 30 million are in the USA alone. Burton does not allege the relation between the number of men and women diagnosed with depressive disorders. Despite statistical difference in the appearance of depressive disorders between men and women, Wilhelm (2006, pp. 6-10) argues that with some types of depression there was no significant difference in frequency of appearance noted between men and women. They are supposed to be more significant in some non-melancholic types of depressive disorders. Wilhelm also claims that many people do not seek medical help, which is common especially for men, as they prefer to avoid any stigmatisation connected with depressive disorders. Ehrenberg (2010) and Wilhelm (2006) write that it is a rather difficult task to diagnose depressive disorder as psychiatrists are not united in their perceptions of what are supposed to be the symptoms of depression. According to DSM IV (1994) and ICD 10 (1992)⁹⁸ the symptoms of depression are the following: dejection, low appetite, loss of body weight, changes in memory and psycho-motoric capabilities, low life energy, the sense of guilt and inferiority, lowered self-esteem and self-trust, difficulties with thinking, concentration, attention and diminished capability to take decisions, often thoughts about suicide or a self-damaging, pessimistic view of the future. Yet Wilhelm (2006, p. 13) claims that suicide and depression might be connected, but not causative concepts. People with depressive episodes might or might have suicidal tendencies. They are believed to be more frequent between women – the ratio is between 1:1.3 and 1:3 - yet the men who commit suicide's ratio is 1:4. Lambert and Davis (2002, p. 24) argue that 13% to 30% patients diagnosed with MDD commit suicide.

5.1 Some theories of origins of the depression

Evolutionary theories of the origins of depression

Evolutionary theories investigating connections between genes and human psycho-social development describe psychopathologies, where depression is included as an extreme variation of normal adapted mechanism of evolution. They agree that depression is a complex illness with some genealogical predisposition, yet the individual's psycho-social development

⁹⁸ WHO Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders

and environmental factors have a greater influence on the possibility of its appearance and development (Brüne, 2008, p. 90). However, Brüne stresses that research in psychopathologies whose result are both manuals DSM IV and ICD 10, was performed mostly in Europe and the USA, therefore they do not take in consideration cultural and social differences between various perceptions of psychopathologies.

Our culture-chauvinistic perspective suggests that the way we conceptualize psychopathology is the only scientifically justified one, and that culture bound syndromes are to be dealt with as exotic exceptions to the system (Brüne, 2008, p. 90).

Theories emphasizing the influence of genes on the development of depressive disorders appeared at the end of the 20th century, when neurobiologists managed to identify several genes responsible for some psychopathologies. Burton (in Wall Street Journal, 2003) for example claims that the scientists of Myriad Genetics Inc. Institute in Salt Lake City, discovered the gene DEP 1, which is supposed to have a significant influence in the development of depressive disorders, because this gene takes part in the regulation of the secretion of serotonin and norepinephrine that are important transmitters of electric messages in the brain. However, the connection between the gene and the disease is not a simple one, since not all individuals with DEP 1 develop a depressive disorder and *vice versa*.

At the end of the 20th century the genetic theory became the prevalent theory in scientific discourse in the field of brain research, therefore the paradigmatic switch regarding reasons of psychopathologies happened. These were ascribed to dysfunction, presence or lack of certain genes, but already in the first decade of the 21st century the new paradigmatic switch followed with the introduction of the concept of menom⁹⁹ within cognitive theories. Consequently, even the evolutionary theories started to emphasize the influence of cultural factors on the development of psychopathologies (Aunger, 2002; Blackmore, 1999; Kuper, 2000). Barta (2006, pp. 55-63) applies the menom theory on brain structure and introduces the term "outside brain", which denotes neuron connections of interpersonal relationships in human society. According to him the most comprehensive net of such relationships is represented in the grammatically-syntactic structure of the language. Huberman (1996, pp. 250-254) uses another term for "outside brain", calling it the *social mind* and claims that with

⁹⁹ Menom is a layer that is supposed to cover the genom and is changing under the influence of the individual's actions and reactions to the environment. Because it is in direct correlation with the genome, it might cause the changes of the genetic scheme of the individual. In the menom the phenotype - which is structurally unstable and so subject to changes - is being written.

some other species societies like the bee colony, so-called *social mind* is capable of performing much more complex calculations than each individual bee's brain can. For him the best example of *social mind* in human societies represents the economic relationships that are developed and function without explicit interruption of individuals in their rules and mechanisms. Neuron connections of "outside brain" or *social mind* are believed to be developed with the cultural development of human societies and are supposed to allow faster and more effective tasks and problem solutions, shaping new forms of behaviour.

The notion of social mind shows that when large collections of agents capable of symbolic-processing interact with each other, new universal regularities in their overall behaviour appear. (Huberman, 1996, p. 256).

If new behaviour appears, is it also possible that such behaviour gets noted in the form of a neuron connection, which exists in every individual's brain? I will presume that the brain is not a *tabula rasa*, as a particular individual is already born in a society with a specific culture. Therefore, there is a cultural input that activates certain brain functions or scripts that appear in the consciousness. Crick and Koch (1998) argue that the human brain, in order to be conscious of a specific object, has to develop a symbolic interpretation and visual scenes on multiple levels and parts of brain. Therefore, there must be a neuron connection between consciousness and the visual centre in the brain, which receives information from the environment. Crick and Koch (1998) write that not only chemical substances are present in the formation of neuroma connections, as this would have fatal consequences in the formation of the genome in the case of memory dysfunctions. The proof for existence of other type of connections, not only chemicals, might be in the phenomena of the phantasmal limb, which is the case for people with amputated limbs. In the event of amputation the outside brain constructs the new synaptic connections, yet patients in many cases still feel the presence of the limb that might be explained with the existence of some inner deeply written information about the form of the human organism. Thus amputation is not written in the basic genetic scheme of the human species, but remains the reality of the outside brain. Yet I can easily presume that information about depressive conditions (if we perceive depression as an anomaly and a psychopathology) could not be written in a profound pattern of the inside brain, but would have to exist in the outside brain as a record of malfunction in the social performance of individual. However, I mentioned earlier that a responsible gene was discovered, which is involved in the development of depressive states, and if I presume that depression might be developed as evolutionary adaptation, it has to be noted in the human's

individual inside brain. Beach et al. (2007, pp. 21-31) refer to Lim and Young and emphasize the importance of genes in social behaviour shaping. They are responsible for the secretion of certain chemicals like oxytocin, which are believed to be involved in the formation of neuron-connections and functioning of the *social brain*. Consequently, it is supposed to control the social circle of recognition, motivation, approach and connecting, involving several parts of the brain such as: superior temporal sulcus, amygdale and prefrontal cortex. These parts of the brain become very active in social affairs, therefore their malfunction, regardless if caused by a lesion or by the lack of certain chemicals, disables normal social relationships (Lim and Young in Beach et al., 2007, pp. 21-31). Dysfunction of amygdale causes the inability to recognise intention and read facial mimicking. Beach et al. (2007, pp. 21-31) further claim, referring to Lim and Young, that the dysfunction of the *social brain* causes psychopathologies such as autism, schizophrenia, Williams's syndrome and socio-phobia, yet depressive patients also have difficulties with social communication and integration. Instead of the malfunction of the *social brain*, depression might also be seen as a means of coping with frustration and stress, therefore its appearance in medicine as an independent diagnosis might be the result of the medicalization of the normal state of sadness.

Psychodynamic theories of depressive disorders

Psychoanalytical and psychodynamic theories offer some explanations regarding depression, based on the presumption of pathological disturbances in psycho-sexual development of individuals. Increased stress and unreleased frustration in certain phases of development might cause the individual's inability to cope with them. Some scholars from the field of psychoanalytical psychology (Erikson, 1959; Musek, 1982, 1985; Praper, 1999; Perko, 2006) argue that many psychopathologies have stems in incorrect formation of the self-image¹⁰⁰. Praper (1999, p. 350) refers to Erikson and describes eight stages of psycho-social development of the individual and states that successful coping with problems and fulfilling tasks at each stage allows the individual to advance to a higher stage. In each developmental period a new, upgraded personal organisation is developed, which overlays the former lower stages. Successful coping with problems and difficulties enables the individual to develop into a mature personality. On the other hand, the inability to cope with problems leads to deficiencies in personality development and consequently to psychological problems or

¹⁰⁰ Definition of the concept of self-image is not an easy one. As Perko (2006, p. 102) argues we might equal the concept with the notions of: the self, self-acceptance, self-actualisation, self-esteem, self-representation.

wrong coping with¹⁰¹ stressful situations. Praper (1999, pp. 30-155) stresses that there are several psychoanalytical theories (theory of objective relationships, ego-psychology, self-psychology, neo-psychoanalysis and some psychodynamic theories), but their bases are the fundamental presumption that a child's developmental course is correlated with several developmental lines, where the child transforms the passing-over of critical points or periods of development, where new developmental phases are established and formed. For an individual to develop normally, traumatic events should not coincide with critical points of the developmental lines or at least they are not supposed to be intensive, because such situations might cause specific traumas of the developmental phase with serious pathogen influences.

From this point of view, we might understand depressive disorders as a consequence of intense traumatic events in critical points of an individual's development or as a result of incorrect, immature coping with stress and traumatic events. Perko (2006, pp.110-112) describes critical traumatic events in Fairbairn's view as the relationship of an individual towards a specific object. In early childhood the relationship between the child and the mother is crucial and driven by two instincts: the positive and the negative libido. At this point Fairbairn's theory does not correspond to Freud's theory of libido and aggression. According to Freud (1953, pp. 217-218) the libido is inclined to fulfil the aspirations and reach pleasure, yet moral norms written in the superego obstruct its aim. Ego is part of the personality that according to the real information from the environment regulates between the instinctive drive of the id and the repression of the superego. Because the libido, as Freud (1953, pp. 222-230) argues, always searches for the object to fulfil its aspirations of love, in the case of the inability to identify the object, anomalies might appear. Freud argues about anxiety, inversion and incest in the cases of disturbed identification of loving an object or the inability to realise libidinal aspirations, as depressive disorders might also be understood. Jung (1985, p. 9) argues that external factors may not be the reason for the inability to realize the libido's aspirations for love. In the external world there are numerous objects, therefore the problems of its identification have to be the internal problem of the personality. External factors may only represent an obstacle.

¹⁰¹ In this context wrong coping means coping that might either provoke deviant ways of behaviour or lead to the development of psychopathologies.

Nie Irden reale Schwierigkeiten die Libido dermaßen dauernd zurück zwingen können daß daraus zum Beispiel eine Neurose entsteht. (Real external problems and obstacles can never obstruct the libido with such volume and for so long that it will lead to the development of neuroses, for example.) (Author's translation) (Jung, 1985, p. 9).

Fairbairn agrees that the libido always seeks the object of contentment. Children in their relationship towards the imperfect mother develop a libido and anti-libido aspirations, so that both the libido and the anti-libido evolve; the first one appears with aspirations of agitation and yearning, while the second one with aspirations of rejection, frustration, disgust and aggression (Perko, 2006, pp.110-112).

Winnicott's relation theory (Perko, 2006, pp. 113-115), which is also contemporary psychoanalytical theory, understands as one of the key mechanisms of healthy identity development the process of mirroring and formation of the Self. Winnicott (in Perko, 2006, pp. 113-115) argues about the false and the genuine Self, where the false one actually protects the genuine one against narcissist wounds, however there is a danger that intimacy might be lost. According to him, the genuine Self experiences its own essence as extremely personal and un-transferable. It represents the notion of self-trust and autonomy, which are independent from other objects. When frustrations exceed a certain level, the individual becomes unable to hold them within the experience of the genuine Self, therefore the false Self is established. It is consequently subordinate to aspirations of the object in given relationships. Winnicott equals both notions of the Self with personality and points out the play as the most important one in the process of Self differentiation. In early childhood he recognises two phases: *being* - in the first weeks of the children's development, when they need positive experiences in their relationship with their mother and positive emotional content of self- experience. At this stage the feminine elements of the Self are developed. The second phase is *doing* - the masculine elements of provoking the differentiation of the Self and the object.

Also Erikson (in Perko 2006, p. 107) says that the formation of identity and the integrity of personality carry the main roles in the process of personality formation. Some scholars either connect the notion of identity with the conception of self-image or they equal both (Mucchielli, 1992; Breakwell, 1992; Kobal, 2000).

Theories based on Freud's psycho-sexual developmental theory emphasize the importance of basic drives connected with the mother as an object, yet they perceive the father as an important subject who sets the barriers for the child and influences the formation of the superego. In spite of the fact that the father's role is rather important, not every child has the privilege of a father's presence. In accordance to these theories, these individuals who do not experience the father's education in critical points of their development are supposed to face more or less serious psychological problems. However, other scholars like Melanie Klein and followers of the latest ego-psychology and psychoanalytical developmental psychology do not agree with such assertions. Perko (2006, pp. 115-118) stresses the following fundamental suppositions of Klein:

- Psychological development is not dependent only on biologically given drives, but also on patterns that are formed with repetition in children's interaction with people from their surroundings.
- Furthermore, their psychological development is not dependent on the father's power and control, but also on heartiness, tenderness and favouring of his mother in the first months of their development.
- Behaviour's primary motivation is not sexual pleasure, but quality in interpersonal relationships.

Klein has researched the development of self-realization and self-imaging in the context of relationships and interactions with the mother. According to her the libido should be strongly connected with the comprehension drive. Curiosity is believed to be libido's derivative and suppresses early children's development root in castration-based fears that block aspirations to seek pleasure and knowledge.

Praper (1999, pp. 30-150) also stresses late ego-psychology theories referring to authors like Margaret Mahler, Edith Jacobson and Rene Spitz. For example, Spitz believes that a mother's care in the first months of a child's development is of most importance in the child's psychosocial development. His research shows that some children's disturbances like sleeping, insomnia, auto-eroticism, loss of light, sickness etc. are consequences of long-term separation from the mother in the period of the so called eight-month fear period¹⁰², where children already perceive their mother as a whole object. The mother's absence or her inability to

¹⁰² Children begin to perceive their mother as a unique object, and not as a partial object, so the fear of losing that object appears when the process of separation is started (Praper, 1999; Perko, 2006).

establish genuine contact with the child may have harmful consequences in the formation of the child's self-image.

Due to the fact that in Salvador many people do not have fixed or appropriate residences or they have to work all day, the absence of the father or even the mother is a common occurrence. Moreover, many parents are addicted to alcohol, drugs or medications and therefore are not able to educate their children or at least establish a genuine contact with them in their early childhood. However, the majority of children in Salvador do not show signs of deviation. For example in the school where I was teaching, the children were normally participating in lessons and absorbing knowledge. Their behaviour was not unsocial or deviant.

Obviously, the self-image is formed over a longer period of the individual's development and the consequences of early childhood deficits might be reparable in the later stages development. Some authors (Claes, 1983; Kobal, 2000; Elium and Elium, 2000; Gurian, 2000) argue that self-image gets formed through four stages in the adolescent period, between the age of eleven and twelve: physical growth, cognitive development, changes in socialization and identity formation.

Psychoanalysts following Freud's theory of psycho-sexual development perform research in the individual history and development of personal characteristics in early childhood and adolescence period. They try to analyse and explain the events crucial for the development of certain psychological conditions of the individual. Other scholars in the field of psychoanalysis have developed the prospective psychoanalytical development theory. Stern, Piers and Haris (in Perko, 2006, pp. 124-129) analyse the structure of self-image, therefore they have to develop the methodology to measure the self-image, which is supposed to be developed throughout life. With age different aspects of self-image like corporal, social, academic, emotional, sexual, creative, etc. are emphasized. In accordance with the supposition of the continuous development of self-image, Stern (in Perko, 2006, p. 124) criticizes psychoanalysis for being retrospective and patho-morphic, not suitable to explain a normal individual's development. He also claims that, referring to clinical observations and empiric experiences, he may not make inferences about the existence of age-determined developmental phases. Children can not be determined only through positive or negative experiences with their mother, because such viewpoints completely exclude other social

factors. Self-image therefore has to be developed throughout the whole life, influenced by society and relationships with family, friends and colleagues in school or at the workplace, where individuals self-value themselves in the process of constant comparison with other members of society. The adolescence period, according to him, is not as critical as it is believed to be by many psychologists; furthermore, the identity crises and stress appear in later periods of life. I should search for reasons that lead to the crisis outside of an individual's personality, namely in poor family relationships and social conditions. The development of the self-image in adolescence is in most cases healthy and normal (Offer, 1969; Kobal, 2000; Offer and Sabshin, 1974).

Tam and Watkins (in Perko, 2006, pp. 129) argue that self-image of adult individuals is much more structured and hierarchically organized than youngsters' self-image. Their model differentiates general self-image with the individual and interpersonal one, where the individual self-image is further divided into the field of success and achievements, and the physical self-image. Interpersonal self-image is divided into a social and family one, yet all levels of self-image are recurrently influenced by self-valuation and behaviour in specific situations. As Perko (2006, pp. 131-139) argues, the key role in the formation of self-image is carried out by self-respect, as defined by Mali, Reasoner and Rosenberg (in Perko, 2006, p. 131), a positive or negative position of the individual towards himself. Self-respect is defined as self-perception of being worthy and capable. Some authors further divide self-respect into two components: perception of self-competency and perception of self-value. Some authors also argue that there exist components of self-liking and feelings of competency (Damon and Hart 1982; Tafarodi and Swann, 1995).

Psychoanalytical theories agree that personality development depends on interactions of the individual with the environment and himself. Regardless if I refer to critical relationship with the mother, the father's absence, social relationships, family relationships or critical developmental periods, all authors agree that disturbances in interactions cause anomalies in an individual's personality development. Therefore, psychoanalysis along with other theories is not in consensus regarding psychopathologies and the reasons for their appearance. However all theories, with the exception of gene theory, presume that interpersonal relationships have a crucial influence on the development of psychopathologies.

5.1.1 Relationships

Individuals establish and maintain relationships within their primary family, with partners, friends, neighbours, etc., which might be pathological, representing excessive stress for the individual. According to Kleinman (1986), relationships are in many cases an important factor in the development of depressive disorders; respectively they have harmful or beneficial influence on an individual's ability to cope with depression problems (ibid.). Individuals exposed to pathological relationships have psychological deficits that might cause the development of borderline personality, low self-respect, negative self-image, violent behaviour, depressive disorders, substance or relationship addiction and much more. For my research the connection between violence, depression and the development of personality¹⁰³, self-image and self-respect is of great importance. As most depressive individuals included in my field-work research claim that un-acceptance by important others (family, friends, superiors at workplace) is one of the main reasons for their bad state of health, I have to consider how social evaluation of individuals influences their self-valuation. I could presume that self-valuation is developed through the reflection of social evaluation; however that might lead to naive assertions that the individual's psychological development is completely dependent on the opinions of others and on social influences. Such situations would probably be fatal for many individuals who are not highly valued from other members of society. Thus, the formation of self-beliefs and learning cannot be completely conditioned by reflection. Bateson (1972, pp. 283-308) argues about learning modes of living beings and about learning levels. In one of the levels humans learn meta-communication¹⁰⁴. If on this level contradiction of messages on the field of meta-communication appear, this might cause the situation on the second or third level, which would in psychiatry be denoted as pathological. Bateson uses the term *double bind* to describe this situation, yet the explanation of its meaning is too extensive for my thesis. *Double bind* is explained with the analysis of schizophrenic disorders by individuals included in his research. In childhood his co-speakers were exposed to *double*

¹⁰³ I can understand the development of personality in the context of different theories. For Freud (in Engler, pp. 28-53) the construction of the id, ego and superego, which are in contradiction and established through individuals' psycho-sexual development, the personality is formed. Jung (in Engler, pp. 75-79) understands personality as a complex net of interactive systems inclined towards eventual harmony. Primary systems are: the ego, personal subconscious with complexes, and collective subconscious with archetypes. Personality is developed through four functions (sensation and intuition, thinking and feeling) and two behaviors (extraversion and introversion). Jung and Freud are not in consensus in their beliefs about ego and the functions of the subconscious, which is firstly a matrix and the foundation of consciousness, and secondly a storehouse of repressed content.

¹⁰⁴ This is communication through which I learn the contexts, in which the messages and signs appear. I may consider as such also the 'learning to learn' level.

bind situation in relationships with their parents. Regarding Bateson's considerations I could again suspect that the development of psychological pathologies - including depression - would be conditioned by interactions with others and with the environment. However I have mentioned that Bateson presents more levels of the learning process through which individuals are able to change their reactions within known sets, search for new reactions from several levels of interactions in similar situations or even change the content of known sets if none of the given solutions seems to function. Despite the fact that the individual's destiny is supposed to be in the hands of the others, the individual is able to influence the course of events. Yet Bateson (1972, pp. 292-294) emphasizes that most individuals are not capable of such profound introspection and self-learning, which would avoid social and environmental influences. Furthermore, individuals' ability to learn depends on the relationships with their parents.

If I wanted to conclude, now that I have already revealed different theories regarding the development of psychopathologies, the main reasons for psychopathologies by different individuals in different societies, I would find myself in a paradoxical situation. I can claim that patterns of individuals involved in the formation of self-image, self-esteem, and their coping with stressful situation are developed through individuals' psychosexual development and interactions with others. Interpersonal and social relationships, environmental influences, genes and evolutionary adaptations influence the development. Individuals have the opportunity for retrospection, learning and changing of patterns; however, their capability is determined by the above mentioned factors. Thus, individuals simultaneously have and do not have an influence in the fact whether depressive disorders will appear or not. I also have no way of knowing to what extent genes, personal relationships, culture, life-style or environmental influences are responsible for the development of psychopathologies. I presume that reasons for the development of depressive disorders are different for every individual and a specific combination of pathological factors causing psychopathology is unique for every individual. Instead of searching for the exact causes of psychopathologies it might be better to examine how individuals cope with depressive disorders when they appear. If I defend the supposition that every non-ideal combination of influential factors might cause psychopathology, I would have to claim that, for example, depressive episodes would appear very often for most individuals since everyday life is far from perfect. Frequent appearances of psychopathologies in this case would be fatal for many individuals. Namely, frequent appearances of depressive episodes might lead into chronic depressive disorders, which are

difficult to treat and cope with. However, scholars claim that depressive disorders are not untreatable and that serious depressive episodes do not appear as often as some would like to believe. Yet it is true that patients are not able to step out of the enchanted circle of disappointments if the society does not offer them support. When patients manage to cope with acute phases they need a positive self-valuation, regardless of what others think about them. When the depressive episode is finished, individuals regain self-respect and have more energy to cope with stress. Such improvements might be the consequence of chemo therapy, psychoanalytical therapy, change of surroundings or change of job, changes in individuals' learning processes, changes in life-style and activities, or just a question of time.

Some of my interlocutors pointed out the significant role of *capoeira* in the processes of self-re-evaluation, changes in life-style and changes in social relations. Those who started to practice *capoeira* out of the urge to change something in their life, emphasized how beneficial it was for them to join the specific *capoeira* group and how physical activity has improved their general health. One of them commented:

Capoeira for me is not only a martial art and a physical activity. Before I started to practice it, I was a shy, fat guy. I did not have many friends or better to say I did not have any. So I was reconsidering how to improve my unenviable life situation. Not that I was already depressed or something, but on the good way to become one of those indigent, self-pity persons. Surprisingly after deciding to start practicing *capoeira* the first positive result was that I started to communicate with other students. I have become a part of a group and an active member of social life. With the time I also lost some weight and my self-image changed. Although I still have a big and heavy body even after many years of practice, I am happy with that. I realised that *capoeira* gave me more than I expected. It was self-confidence, a corporal and spiritual agility and very good friends.

The case pointed out the importance of individual's interactions with environment and his self-perception. Individuals function within inter- and intra-personal relationships, and actions and reactions with the environment, therefore on a subconscious level they are subject to the learning processes using the system trial-error. In such context, according to Bateson (1972, p. 274), every adaptive change in the organism is dependent on the so called *feedback loops*, regardless if they are consequence of natural selection or individual incentive. "*In all cases then, there must be a process of trial and error and a mechanism of comparison.*" (Bateson, 1972, p. 274).

Competence, self-likening and the development of self-respect

Because individual's personality, whose development is conditioned with self-respect, is constructed and changed through the process of learning, I have to mention again two components of self-respect: feeling of competency and self-likening. Among both concepts there exists a strong correlation, as Tafarodi and Swann (in Perko, 2006, pp. 138-139) claim. Authors write that the individual's perception of success corresponds in great part with the valuation of others. Reasons for the correlation can be found in common standards, targets and priorities that define social existence. An individual's competent acts are therefore respected by society, out of esthetical reasons and for its instrumental value in social exchange and corporative behaviour. Expressing competency triggers approval in others and raises personal feelings of social value and self-likening, while self-likening also influences competency. Expressed self-likening promotes self-esteem and the fulfilment of goals. Individuals with a high self-likening are more relaxed and have higher self-esteem in a social environment. They feel accepted and beloved, which gives them an advantage in the fulfilment of goals and consequently develops the perception of being competent (Tafarodi and Swann in Perko, 2006, p. 139).

I have not noticed any lack of self-likening or self-esteem among *capoeiristas*. In some cases I even interpreted their self-esteem as arrogance and exaggerated self-praise. They used to talk about how they played in this or that *roda*, about how many and what acrobatic elements they managed to perform, to whom they applied *rastera*, etc. When we went out they were casually but nice dressed, they talked a lot and always had a few people around them listening to their stories. However when I got used to it, I realised that such behaviour makes part of *capoeirista's* identity, constructed through the process of integration into *capoeira* society. *Capoeirista* is an active member of the society, he is promoter of healthy life of Afro-Brazilian culture and also considered as dangerous fighter. Such representations influence the construction of individuals self-likening and self-esteem. One of interlocutors emphasized also other perspective of self-valuation:

For me it is important to practice *capoeira* every day. When I see a new move or a trick I have to learn it as soon as possible. I have to bring the performance to the level of perfection. I have to show to my self that I am capable to improve, because I want to be a master one day. I am already allowed to instruct and it feels great when my

master lets me to carry out the lesson. I know that students can not respect me the same way they do our master, after all I am still young, but if I play good I am self-confident and happy.

The development of self-respect is not entirely dependent on the opinion of others, but is also a result of subjective self-valuation that is not just a consequence of social interactions. Skalar (1985) argues about three important influences in the process of development of self-respect: family influences, social comparison influences, and influences of self-activation. Thus, the development of self-respect is performed between two extremes; namely the complete dependence on social influences and complete independency from the opinion of others, where self-activation forms the valuation of competency.

5.1.2 Depression, social or biological pathology

Since I research the notion of depression from an anthropological point of view, I have to ask myself how much the appearance of depressive disorders really depends on environmental, social and cultural factors, and how these factors influence coping with depression. While examining Juliano Moréira Hospital's statistic data I have calculated that in Salvador the percentage of diagnosed depression is not much different from earlier mentioned global average, even if the living conditions and social relationships are in many cases as poor and tense or even worse than conditions and relationships in other developing countries. Such conditions might be described as very stressful for individuals. However, their response will determine if they develop psychological problems or not. Horowitz and Wakefield (in Ehrenberg, 2010, pp. xxxiv-xxxv) allege three processes of causing stress in individuals:

1. Low social status
2. Loss of certain privileges and benefits
3. Incapacity to fulfil important goals.

The above mentioned factors may represent the reasons for stress, yet they do not explain why pathological states of mind appear. Authors criticize sociological and anthropological studies of depression, because they consider social factors and human responses to them even more misleading in the definition of depression, like the symptoms named in DSM IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). According to them, the clear division between biological and cultural factors, which are otherwise connected, should be undergone. In regards to depression diagnoses, real biological pathologies should be emphasized, furthermore strong theories about what is deviant and what is normal should be established

and finally, cultural specificities in expressions of depressive states should be determined. Only this way could scientist avoid the chaos and excessive amount of depression diagnoses. Ehrenberg (2010, pp. xxvi-xxx) argues that the increase in depression diagnoses could be ascribed to medicalization, to confusions in detection of what is a normal state of deep sadness and what a real pathology, furthermore also the incomprehension of cultural particularities of expressing depressive states, mixing of different anomalies like for example anxiety and depression, and finally the aspiration of modern man to transform peculiarities into the domain of the masses. Ehrenberg stresses that in the 19th century melancholy was the particularity of artists and queers. In the era of individualism all want to possess the privilege of being special. However, Ehrenberg does not define whether biological or cultural factors are better for using in explanations of reasons for depression.

I will not argue about the legitimacy of depression diagnosis or criticize cultural or biological approaches and studies of depression. The fact is that depression represents the suffering of modern man and grasps several negative states that the modern individual is exposed to (deep sadness, low self-esteem, low self-image...). Why such states of spirit and mind are diagnosed as depression in some individuals while in others they are considered as normal-life stress or even go unnoticed is a riddle, which will not be solved in my research. I will rather analyse different beliefs about depression and ways with which people express and cope with stress and depressive disorders. I will also argue about some cultural factors and social relationships that influence these perceptions. In the following sections I present a few theories from the field of depressive disorders and show how depression is perceived and coped with in Salvador.

5.1.3 Palaeolithic adaptation

In the following I would like to look at some evolutionary theories in the area of cognitive sciences such as: Fodorian Modules Theory, Massive Modularity Theory, Machiavellian Intelligence Theory and Mirror Neuron Theory. Even if theories explain possible human cognitive development, the appearance of mental disorders might be explained through them. These theories are significant for my research, offering explanations why depressive disorders occur only in certain individuals, even though they are all exposed to similar environmental influences and are coping with stress from interpersonal and social relationships. Robbins (2009) argues that Fodor's theory of brain modularity in mammals (*The Modularity of Mind*,

1983) has radically changed psychiatric and philosophical approaches in research of human brain cognitive functions. Dunbar and Barrett (2007, pp. 127-128) are convinced that even evolutionary theory was influenced by modular theories that describe human brain and its cognitive functions as a system of connections, which are the result of the revolution of separate species. Therefore, human social functions are stored and performed through the system of neuro-chemical distribution. Some of the paths and patterns are very similar to those of other primates representing strong archaic systems. If humans have similar cognitive patterns to other primates it is reasonable to presume that the cognitive patterns are even more alike between different human societies and cultures.

Universal cognitive processes: brain modularity

Jung describes common cognitive patterns with archetype subconscious content. He divides the human subconscious into the personal and the collective one. Regarding the personal subconscious he agrees with Freud that it represents the repository of forgotten and repressed content and is therefore different for each individual. The collective subconscious represents a deeper, inborn layer of the subconscious.

Ich habe den Ausdruck kollektiv gewählt, für dieses Unbewußte nicht individueller, sondern allgemeiner Natur ist, das heißt, es hat im Gegensatz zur Persönlichen Psyche Inhalte und Verhaltensweisen, welche überall und in allen Individuen **cum grano salis** die gleichen sind. (I have chosen to use the term collective as this type of subconscious does not have individual but rather common nature. Thus in contrast to personal psyche it contains the tenors and behavioural forms that are **cum grano salis** similar with all individuals in every society. (Author's translation) (Jung, 1984, p. 77).

Jung argues that the collective contents of the subconscious are similar for all humans and denotes such tenors as *Archetypes*. They are supposed to represent the spiritual base of the meta-personal nature. Jung (1984, pp. 78-82) describes with archetypes the appearance and development of myths, magical techniques and religions in human societies. Man is believed to find analogies with natural phenomena in these internal tenors. Religious explanations, images and descriptions of deities are similar in every religion. As Jung lacked today's technology to analyse brains structure¹⁰⁵ and functions, he had to limit his explanations of archetypes, denoting them as the collective subconscious. Similarly, Fodor (1983) ascribed

¹⁰⁵ Today the electroencephalograph (EEG) and magnetoencephalograph (MEG) are used in research of the human brain structure and functioning.

modularity only to primitive older brain systems responsible for functions of perception and functions of speech and language. Modular cognitive processes are believed to match most of Fodor's postulations of modular cognitive system as:

1. Domain specificity
2. Mandatory operation
3. Limited central accessibility
4. Fast processing
5. Informational encapsulation
6. 'Shallow' outputs
7. Fixed neural architecture
8. Characteristic and specific breakdown patterns
9. Characteristic ontogenetic pace and sequencing

Modular systems are supposed to be energetically rational and evolutionary determined. Thus the system that is informationally encapsulated and has limited central accessibility is fast, cheap and hardly controlled (Robbins, 2009). For sure, systems with mandatory functions have to be of this type; consequently such processes control systems that, according to behaviourists and neo-behaviourists, are part of the broader *stimulus-response* system. Beside senses and emotions cognitive processes¹⁰⁶ can also be included in this system. Robbins (2009) claims that cognitive processes are mandatory only if they are automated and therefore out of the control of consciousness.

Tomc (2000) does not completely agree with evolutionary pre-determination of cognition, but he places it into the context of cultural performance, which is believed to be learned, systematic, and represents the level of mediated response. However, Tomc (2000, p. 193) also applies the concept of the subconscious within the context of cultural performance. Through the process of habituation some conscious acts are transformed into subconscious ones. In this context I may understand the brain's adaptations to different internal and external stimulus, or in other words, the development of certain behaviours in regards to such stimulants. However, this theory does not exclude the process of evolution or even the existence of brain modularity. Robbins (2009) stresses that more recent research, for example

¹⁰⁶ Division of sense, emotional and cognitive processes in our research is the result of Tomc's (2000) analytical division of humans functioning into the automatic and the cultural. The latter is supposed to contain three forms of cultural experience: senses, emotions and cognitions (Tomc, 2000, p. 193).

the one by Carruthers (2006), has proved that the human brain is mostly modular and each module represents a specific cognitive adaptation, noted in the neuro-chemical system. However, Carruthers does not explain the modularity completely in accordance with Fodor (1983) who claims that only input systems are mostly modular. As he claims, output systems, systems of beliefs and cognitive systems are supposed to be part of the so called *central systems*, which do not meet modularity postulates. The theory of modularity of input systems was exposed to several critiques because scholars (such as Churchland, 1988; Arbib, 1987; Marslen-Wilson & Tyler, 1987; McCauley & Henrich, 2006, Prinz, 2006 and Robbins, 2009) claim that systems of perception and linguistic systems, also denoted as input systems, do not meet Fodor's postulates of modularity¹⁰⁷.

Massive modularity

Many critiques of Fodor's modularity system and other research in the field of brain modularity have led to the development of the *Massive Modularity Theory*. In accordance with this theory human brain is predominantly modular, meaning that areas of the brain that perform technically difficult functions like: fixation of beliefs, problems solution, planning, are also modularly structured. Carruthers (in Robbins, 2009) emphasizes that this modularity cannot be understood completely in the context of Fodor's theory.

That leaves us with the idea that modules might be isolable function-specific processing systems, all or almost all of which are domain specific (in the content [viz. roughly Fodorian] sense), whose operations aren't subject to the will, which are associated with specific neural structures (albeit sometimes spatially dispersed ones), and whose internal operations may be inaccessible to the remainder of cognition (Robbins, 2009).

Yet Carruthers (in O'Hear, 2003, p. 2) writes that scholars have not reached a consensus yet regarding brain modularity, since they do not agree on the definition of the module and on brain functions, which are believed to be controlled by modular systems (ibid). According to Robbins (2009) there are two prevalent opinions of modularity. The first is in accordance with Fodor's definition and explains modularity and modules as domain-specific innately-specified processing system, with their own proprietary transducers and delivering 'shallow' (non-

¹⁰⁷ As an example I present Prinz's argument in the experiment *phoneme restoration effect*, where in the statement: "*The state governors met with their respective legi*latures convening in the capital city.*" the letter marked with * was changed for the sound of coughing. The recognition of the correct letter was connected with the individual's beliefs and knowledge of linguistic context.

conceptual) outputs. The second opinion is promoted by those who disagree with the division of brain functions and the existence of a central brain system. As they write central modules are supposed to be capable of taking conceptual inputs (that is, to be capable of operating upon beliefs), as to generate conceptual outputs (issuing in beliefs or deserves, for example). But it can still be maintained that modules are innately-channelled processing systems, which are mandatory, fast, liable to specific patterns of breakdown, and follow distinctive patterns of growth in development (ibid.).

Mirror Neuron Theory

Before I stress the connection between modular theory and the appearance of depressive disorders, I will shortly present the *Mirror Neuron Theory*, which was developed in evolutionary psychology and is based on *Massive Modularity Theory* (Rizzolatti & Fogassi, 2007, pp. 180-183). With certain measures scientists have ascertained that some cognitive processes are connected with recognition of the action; that is a function of special neuron set F5, also known as the *mirror neurons*. Those are believed to function in accordance with modular principles, even if they supervise the conceptual processes. Each set of neurons represents a different module for performance and recognition of certain actions. Rizzolatti and Fogassi (2007, pp. 180-183) argue that *mirror neurons* control motoric reactions and relate them to the visual inputs. Those neurons are fast and energetically rational and believed to participate in processes of mind reading, learning of motoric reactions, imitations, etc. For example, individuals using such sets of neurons, observing the sequences of familiar motions, can recognize the aim of certain motoric actions. However Rizzolatti and Fogassi (2007, p. 184) stress that visual information is not sufficient to reach the complete understanding of intentions and aims of the observed action. Individuals have to have previous motoric experience of a similar action. Calvo-Merino (Calvo-Merino et al., 2005) performed an experiment in 2005 with *capoeira* practitioners and classical ballet dancers. In the first group F5 neurons were more strongly activated while observing *capoeira* play than while observing classical ballet and *vice versa*, in the second group F5 neurons were more strongly activated while they were watching the ballet performance.

Machiavellian intelligence

Parallel with research related to brain functioning and development of modular theories, some other hypotheses of social intelligence, such as Machiavellian intelligence, have appeared. The latter has become an important concept in the comprehension of interpersonal interactions in the fields of neuro-physiology, social anthropology, medicine and even IT sciences. Whiten and Byrne (1997, pp.1-3) write that the common presumption to all such hypotheses is that cognitive capacity, called intelligence, is related to social life and therefore causes the problems of social complexity. Humphry's hypothesis (Whiten and Byrne, 1997, pp.1-3) presumes that social life influences the intelligence development in primates. Coexistence in the group brings certain benefits to individuals, but only individual development is significant and beneficial for evolution. Therefore, an individual has to master social manipulation in order to reach individual benefits. He applies deception to manipulate, however that may not threaten the individual's existence within the group, if I consider that deception, thievery and other violations of the social contract¹⁰⁸, represent some of the dangers of social life. Cosmides and Tooby (1992, pp. 163-228) argue that violation of social contract is the result of individuals' incapacity to act reciprocally in pro-social economic processes.

5.1.4 Depression and evolution

I have already presented the concept of Machiavellian intelligence in previous chapters when describing the development of *capoeira* and *malandragem*. I will now relate the theory with the analysis of social intelligence, with modular theories and then analyse the appearance of depressive disorders in the context of the named theories. Whiten and Byrne (1997, pp. 4-5) stress the following about the existence of social intelligence: if intelligence is the brain's adaptation to cope with complexity, is it possible to equal social complexity with complexity of physical environment exploration, and can development of social intelligence influence the development of logical intelligence? If so, can the growth of human brain be the consequence

¹⁰⁸ In this context I understand the social contract as described by Hobbes, Lock and Rousseau, where the individual is willing to be subordinate authority and to be ready to give up a certain amount of freedom in exchange for order and safety, achieved by the social legal system. The mentioned philosophers have different perceptions of what authority should represent, yet their ascertainments stem in the presumption that society is in its natural state unorganized, and hierarchy is established through the individual's demonstrations of power. Yet power doesn't necessarily create the justice, therefore we are only obliged to subjugate jurisdiction achieved through social contract (Rousseau, 2001).

of social intelligence development? In this context we can also ask ourselves if depression might be a cognitive evolutionary adaptation of the individual's social life, and if so, is it also connected with social intelligence? Thus, if depression is a cognitive adaptation and documented in the modular system, does it mean that in today's society it is still an effective means of manipulation to gain social benefits – as a technique to reach social acceptance or an obstacle pushing individuals into the risk of being socially excluded? Before I try to answer these questions I would like to look at some definitions of social cognition and social intelligence.

Social intelligence

The massive and complex information-crunching capacities of the human brain were designed to help our ancestors make functional decisions in an environment that included other people as a prominent feature (Schaller, Park & Kenrick, 2007, p. 491).

As the authors claim, such prominent features might be relatives or even complete strangers who play different roles in an individual's life such as: partners, enemies, allies, friends, co-workers... An individual's task is to re-establish relationships, and according to Baumeister and Leary (1995, pp. 497-529) the fundamental social risk is represented in the potential exclusion from a certain social group. Schaller, Park and Kenrick (2007, pp. 494-499) write about some of the advantages of social life and are of the opinion that the historical process of goal achievement and avoidance of social threats represents the main motivation of human social life evolution. According to them, each individual has to develop two basic functions of manipulation of social space, which are: hyper-vigilance and selective allocation of objects of attention and also activation and manipulation of social knowledge structures. Carretié and others (2004, pp. 290-299) have ascertained that human sight selectively allocates the perception of environmental perils. Schaller, Park and Kenrick (2007, pp. 494-499) claim that similar might be true of the perception of social environment risks. Humans are capable of perceiving gesticulation and facial expressions, which denote danger. In accordance to the selective allocation of information gained by the visual apparatus, I may presume that different sets of stimulants are recorded in different modules that provoke specific reactions, related to an individual's experience, knowledge and capacity to activate and manipulate such knowledge.

In this context I can apply the hypotheses of Machiavellian intelligence, as an individual has to be capable of manipulating and deceiving and also recognizing the manipulators and cheaters. Mealey et al. (1996), Oda (1997), Yamagishi et al. (2003) are convinced that the individuals infringing the social contract are perceivable and remembered. Schaller, Park and Kenrick (in Dunbar & Barrett, 2007, p. 495) argue that neurologists have located different sets of brain structures that collaborate in some for survival of crucial and also unimportant cognitive functions.

Such structures may be described as modules according to Fodor, because they are fast, domain specific, specifically oriented and operate with fast, simple outputs. As a response to certain stimulus, these structures activate appropriate actions. However Schaller, Park and Kenrick (2007, pp. 497-499) stress that they are not completely automated. Social cognitive functions regarding social costs, benefits and functional flexibility of certain action influence the performance of these actions. Humans adapt throughout their life, therefore new modules are formed and old informational sets changed. According to Bateson (1972, pp. 287-306), change of information in a certain set or addition of new modular sets that are patterns for different actions can be considered as Learning III learning level, where an individual is aware of the usefulness of specific sets of reactions and is capable to create new sets to cope with similar stimulants from the environment. In this context a specific adaptation, which has been useful and beneficial in interpersonal relationships throughout history, could be unfavourable or even harmful today. As it is stored in a module and represents a part of the brain's architecture, it cannot be erased by the individual and in the case that the individual was not capable of changing or learning new sets, the brain reacts automatically and heuristically.

Depression as evolutionary adaptation

In accordance with the already written, I can suppose that depressive disorders represent a special adaptation, that in some stage of human social development it was beneficial or even protective for the individual. This can be discussed in two ways. Firstly, it can be seen as an adaptation to the existing or potential threat from the social environment; developing depression, thus lowering emotional and cognitive sensibility, individuals might protect themselves from stimulus causing emotional pain and threatening emotional survival of the

individual. Such environmental irritants might be wars, illnesses, catastrophes, violent sexual acts, etc. As depression retards emotions and senses, it has a similar effect as the physical reaction of freezing in the case of physical environmental danger. Secondly, depression might be perceived as manipulation, which assures a certain level of social attention and compassion for individuals. In this case individuals have help to perform social tasks or even avoid specific tasks and responsibilities. As humans, in accordance with Machiavellian intelligence and dominance hypotheses have to constantly develop the capability to deceive and to detect fraud, I may presume that the module for depressive reactions, which can also be understood as a manipulation technique was modified. For Cummins (1999) *cheater-detectors* represent cognitive algorithms disclosing fraud, maintaining social norms and hierarchies and assuring access to crucial survival resources.

Both cheating/deception and cheater detection are fitness-enhancing in that they have direct impact on access to resources and, hence, survival and reproductive success. (Cummins, 1999, p. 233)

As the latter have evolved parallel with techniques to deceive, they are undoubtedly today more sophisticated than they were in archaic social forms, and also the fraud is more complex and concealed. Mental states such as depression have become useless with time, not achieving desired benefits to individual. Yet such reactions were still registered in the evolutionary programme of the human psychological structure.

5.2 Depression today

Appearance of depressive disorders has increased in the last fifty years, which can be ascribed to several factors, for instance growth of population, medicalization of depressive states, division of diagnosis of depression from other mental disorders, invention of antidepressant drugs, living conditions, stress and coping with it. In today's societies I can also perceive at least two potential functions of depressive disorders¹⁰⁹. As depression is classified as mental disorder, the individual diagnosed with depression becomes a patient. From that moment on different rules are in force for the individual than for other healthy members of society. The

¹⁰⁹ In this case it would be reasonable to analyze if depression could be defined as a mental disorder. In this context it can be perceived as cognitive adaptation, a technique for coping with environmental stimuli, which represents potential danger for the individual. In what follows I will use the term depression according to this presumption.

individual receives special attention and care, and becomes an object of the medical system in a specific society, included in the actual healing system. Society treats the individual in accordance with beliefs and practices regarding illness and healing in that specific society. Mostly the individual is excused from performing social obligations and has no responsibility for acts, which are ascribed to his medical condition. I have noticed that relatives, friends and neighbours were more polite and sympathetic with depressed individuals, than they were with other society members. Moreover, some of the depressed individuals are aware of the benefits they gained by being diagnosed as depressive and ill. In what follows I present some statements of and about depressive patients in Salvador.

Não posso ficar com raiva d'ela por caso de doença que ela tem. (I cannot be angry with her regarding the condition and illness she has.) (author's translation).

Ele matou algem por caso de depressão. É melhor deixar ele em paz. (He killed someone because of his depression. It is better to leave him alone.) (author's translation).

Não preçizo mais trabalhar, porque sou depremido. Eu não sei quando vou ter que voltar pra o trabalho. (I do not need to work anymore since I was diagnosed with depression. I do not know when I will have to start again.) (author's translation).

E bom que sou só depremido. Poso tomar terapia aqui em centro durante o dia, e ao note volto pra casa. (It is good that I was declared depressive, now I can do the therapy here in the centre during the day, but at night I go back home.) (author's translation).

I would certainly not like to claim that depression does not represent a serious psychological problem. Patients suffering from depression are without any life energy to perform normal daily tasks, are without goals, anxious, without courage to make decisions, they ascribe guilt for their condition to external factors, are always tired and in a bad mood, are not able to be happy and have low self-respect. Cervone and Pervin (2008, pp. 122-123) argue that these symptoms are consequences of the unsuccessful catharsis of aggressive and sexual tensions. Through defensive mechanisms like projection and denial, the individual reduces the pain caused by frustrations and anxiety. In this context depression can be seen as a defensive mechanism of the brain for coping with stressful situations. However, if the presumption that depression is a defensive or a manipulative adaptation is true, why is it in most societies treated as an illness and connected with strong somato-symptomisation? Solomon (2007, p. 178) claims that depression is a very serious illness, causing amygdale and hippocampus

injuries if present for a longer period or if it is developed into a chronic depression. In my research I was not concerned with somatic medical symptoms and effects of depression as I analyse it from the anthropological point of view, but I noted that my interlocutors were frequently complaining about physical problems caused by depression. They mostly mentioned headaches, disturbances in sight and hearing, bodily weakness; numb joints and spinal pains represented the most serious somatisation. When performing therapy with *capoeira*, some patients used spinal problems as an excuse not to join the therapy and only positive experience with physical activity has convinced them to continue with therapy. I will argue more about this issue in the following sections.

Since I am not focused on malevolent effects of depression on an individual's organism in my research, it is not relevant to consider depression as a medical condition, social construct, modular neuron evolutionary adaptation or something else. For further analysis I will presume that depression can still appear as a defensive reaction to specific environmental stimuli, regardless of the fact that in human brain it might be modulated as an adaptation of potential threats of the social environment or as consequence of oppressed tensions of primary human drives. More important for me are the social functions and consequences of depression.

Besides the already mentioned functions of depression, the coping with stress technique from the natural and social environment can also be considered. Coping, as Kleinke (2007, p. 289) writes, starts with situation assessment. Kleinke argues (2007, pp. 289-291) that Lazarus and Folkman identify two appraisals, **primary appraisal** and **secondary appraisal**. The first one refers to the assessment of specific stress situation that might represent actual danger, potential danger or no danger at all. Such assessment is subjective and in many cases subconscious. The secondary appraisal is needed to define the strategies and manners of coping with a situation. Coping techniques can also be chosen by our brain on a conscious or subconscious cognitive level or they can be the result of instinctive response to a stimulus. The authors present the following definition of coping: "*Coping can be defined as the efforts I take to manage situations I have appraised as being potentially harmful or stressful.*" (Kleinke, 2007, pp. 290-291).

Since I have presumed that depression can be the neuron evolutionary adaptation of coping with dangerous situations in a social environment, it is reasonable to make inferences that depression appears as a subconscious reaction in certain situations, perceived by our brain as potentially harmful or stressful.

Chapter 6: Depression in Salvador

"*Depression brings together all the tensions of the modern individual.*" (Ehrenberg, 2010, p. xxx).

In Salvadorian society depressive patients are mostly perceived similar to other patients with mental disorders. Such stigmatization is typical for patients that were diagnosed as depressive in hospital. As doctors in Juliano Moréira Hospital claim, depression is mostly diagnosed accompanying the diagnosis of some other psychological disorder like schizophrenia, psychosis or mania. Depressive patients discuss their diagnoses with friends and family, so it is possible that public notions about depression are a consequence of such debates and public beliefs regarding psychological disorders. Some claim that depressive patients, together with all others suffering from any psychological problems, are better to be left alone, since a wrong statement or even a word can already aggravate their condition. Some considered all individuals who visited psychiatrist as *locos* (crazy, stupid, mad) and were convinced that they were pushed in such conditions due to their living conditions. The expression *loco* is in many cases used to describe people being hospitalized regardless of their condition or the disorder they have suffered. For example, fifty year old Wanessa has been suffering from chronic depression for several years. The first episodes appeared already after her puberty. Some neighbours, her brother and even her sons have often insulted her with statements like:

Ela é loca! Ela tem que ficar no hospital. Ela só reclama e não está capaz de viver sozinha. (She is crazy! She is supposed to be in the hospital. She only knows how to complain and is incapable to survive alone) (author's translation).

Obviously, stigmatization represents an additional obstacle in a depressive person's life. Martin (2007) and Ehrenberg (2010) also write about this problem. They argue that research regarding depression should be focused on consequences of social suffering of those being diagnosed as depressive. In French psychiatry there is a tendency to join all mental problems into one category "*of broken social bonds*" (Ehrenberg, 2010, p. xxii). Also in Brazil there exists a similar tendency and therapists in CENA¹¹⁰ have mentioned that they were avoiding

¹¹⁰ Centro de Convivência (The Cohabitation Center) of the Juliano Moréira Hospital.

the use of diagnosis in conversations with patients and families, so in many cases patient do not even know what the diagnosis is. They are more concerned with the ways to treat the problem and reintegrate the patient into society. The director of the centre is convinced that their main task is reintegration of stigmatized individuals into his local society and the removal of the factors that have influenced the development of psychological problems with certain individuals. These factors can be external influences or individuals' internal responses in stressful situations. As external factors she mentioned family relationships, relationships with neighbours and living conditions in *favelas*. Some patients and therapists have ascribed reasons for development of depression only to the living conditions in *favela*, which are similar to the causes of violence. They mentioned lack of intimacy, poor economic situations, unsupportive family relationships, overpopulation, noise, criminal and stressful life of those who work, especially women taking care of their children alone.

6.1 Connections between aggression and depression

As I have argued, several external and internal factors affect the individual and may provoke frustrations and stress. They can be expressed in an introverted or extroverted way. Introverted expression might be harmful for the individual, causing psychological problems, including depression. I have also argued that human aggression is a possible reaction to environmental stressful factors. I have defined violence as a possible form of expressing aggression, and one of the functions of violence, according to evolutionary psychology, should be acquiring important resources. Campbell (2005, p. 629) states that there are many ways to express aggression and the individual will apply violence when the cost of using violence is perceived as lower than the cost of not applying it. She further argues that there is no precise mathematic calculation performed in the brain, but rather a subjective assessment. At this stage I will presuppose that I can put violence and depression on the same continuum that represents expression of aggression. Thus, one extreme of expressing aggression can be violence and the other depression. I will not argue that violence and depression are necessarily and exclusively the result of aggression, here I only presume that there is a possible connection between aggression, violence and depression, latter being a result of introverted expression of aggression. In former chapters I have discussed the possibility of the existence of a special module in the human brain as result of evolution, which controls depressive responses to environmental threats. In this context depression might also be perceived as a

specific technique to survive and even acquire resources with fraud, which would also correspond with our concept of *malandragem*. To uphold my argument about the connection between aggression, violence and depression, I also refer to Kempf (in Hacker, 1985, p. 37) who writes about different types of aggression and the ways of expressing them. He divides aggression into justified and unjustified, constructive and destructive, and mediatory aggression to solve conflicts. He also argues about legitimate, illegitimate, self-defensive and retaliatory aggression, about aggression to increase personal strength and pro-social aggression. The last type is understood as self-aggression that might lead to suicidal tensions and feelings of worthlessness corresponding to symptoms of depression classified in DSM-IV (1994). However, in my research I can only presume that there is an existing connection between aggression, violence and depression, since I have not performed an analysis and research that might confirm or reject this supposition. Marcus (2007, p. 69) argues that there were several studies performed by Roeser, Beyers & Loeber and Angold in the last twenty years, analysing connections between aggression and depression. These scholars examined anger and depression in USA youngsters. 45% of high schools youngsters are found to constantly feel anger or be in a depressive mood for at least two or more weeks continuously (Marcus, 2007, p. 69). Marcus (2007, p. 71) writes that scientists like Kilpatrick, Rohde, Lewinsohn, Seeley, Cole and Martin see a positive correlation between aggression and depression. The most evident was the connection between the experience of a violent act and the appearance of depression. Therefore, for further analysis I will presume that depression might also be the consequence of a violent experience or auto-aggression when coping with stress and frustration.

6.2 Why do some fall ill and others do not?

In Salvador most of the population is exposed to stress, violence and frustration due to problematic living conditions or relationships, therefore I may ask ourselves why some react to negative factors with violence, some with depression and others with psychological problems, and why some cope with these negative factors in a less destructive manner. In what follows I will be more concerned with the introverted mode of expressing aggression, since some of my interlocutors have argued that they assume they became depressive due to their constant unexpressed anger. I may argue that the way an individual expresses and copes with stressors is influenced by sex differences, personal characteristics, education, living

conditions, economic factors, cultural particularities, etc. Kleinman (1986, pp. 173-174) explains the appearance and coping of several mental disorders using the context of cultural particularities. He shows cultural construction of illness in the **Model of cultural influences on affects and affective disorders**, where he emphasizes the following factors: 1. presence of internal and external stimulus, 2. primary affects (un-cognitive universal psycho-biological experiences), 3. secondary affects (cognitive and cultural particularities), 4. affective experiences (marked as normal or deviant, adaptable or inadaptatable), 5. development of sickness (disease, illness; inadaptatable normal or deviant affective experiences are classified illness)¹¹¹. Kleinman's cultural relativism was criticized by Horowitz and Wakefield (in Ehrenberg, 2010, p. xxiii), who claim that the biological body is universal, and that what varies are cultural contents and forms of emotional expressions.

As a consequence diseases are the same everywhere; only illnesses are different. The mistake of the relativism is that unlike DSM, it offers only soft criteria and, as a result, is not able to limit the expansion of the diagnosis. In the end culturalism has nothing to say about what objectively distinguishes normal intense sadness from authentic depression. (Horowitz and Wakefield in Ehrenberg, 2010, p. xxiii)

6.3 Influence of religious institutions on perceptions about depression

Since I have already shown that most of the Salvadorian population is religious, I can argue that religious institution have a significant influence on the public perceptions of illness, ways of coping with it, and its stigmatizations. Salvadorians would often relate the appearance of psychological disorders with breaking the rules, taboos and sinning. Some ascribe the development of illness to harmful acts of spirits or to other people manipulating spiritual powers, others would interpret illness as a consequence of unmoral acting, lack of faith in the Saviour and veneration of wrong deities and spirits. Some Christians stress that individuals with mental disorder are possessed by evil spirits and demons. The *umbandaeiros* and the *candombleiros* are afraid of harmful spiritual acts from *pretos-velhos* (old blacks), or other people with the help of cosmical transmitters. They also believe in harmful effects of *mão-*

¹¹¹ Cultural beliefs can partly determine if a certain stimulus is perceived as a stress factor and how it is ranked among potential stressors. Perception, marking, valuation of affect is performed through cognitive processes and social constructions of affective categories. Affective experiences can be socially sanctioned as normal or marked as deviant.

olhado and *mandinga*. However, I have to consider that in Salvador there is no consistent explanation regarding supernatural acts, which is notable with some other, mostly small-scale societies. Therefore, regarding religious beliefs, I can only suspect that there are different interpretations and beliefs about illnesses, including depression, and no established practices on how to cope with them. Depression for example is perceived as a problem of urban life, yet most of my interlocutors stressed that the individual is the one who decides how to cope with it. They are convinced that if the individual chooses only bio-medical treatment and chemotherapy, it might not be enough. Such people were perceived as uneducated and irresponsible, because they were supposed to also try other means of coping with the illness. One of them described his mother as follows:

Ela só toma remédio. Iso não vai resolvér o problema. Ela preçizasse um tipo de psico-terapia o esporte ou algo pra melhorar. (She only takes pills. That will not solve the problem. If she wants to get better, she has to apply psychotherapy and start practicing some sports) (author's translation).

The mother of another patient said:

Ela nunca vai melhorar, se não resolve o problema com sua igreja. Eu penso que ficou loca por caso d'eles. Esas cóisas de diablo e demones é aquilo, que lo-locurese. (She will never get better if she does not solve the problem with her church. I think she got crazy because of them. Those issues regarding demons and the devil have driven her out of senses.) (author's translation).

Even if in Salvador they would rarely explicitly ascribe reasons for psychological problems to the harmful agents of the spiritual world, they perceive the metaphysical as one of the potential explanations for the development of illness. However, there is no such social construct, connecting health problems with sorcery, as is the case in some African small-scale societies or even indigenous Amazonian societies. For example Evans-Pritchard (1976, pp. 22-25) writes about the sorcery among the Azande, where it represents a missing connection between cause and consequence. If somebody commits suicide after getting into conflict with relatives, for Azande the relation between cause and consequence is obvious, yet only a mad man would kill himself after such a conflict, and madness was caused provoked by sorcery. If all individuals with familiar conflicts kill themselves, the society would decay.

In Salvador there is also the opinion that interpersonal relationships and living conditions cannot be the determinant reasons for depression. When they argue about depression, they do

not believe that for example *mão-olhado* or harmful spiritual acts could have decisive effects on the development of illnesses. Most of my interlocutors have claimed that much depends on the individual's personal characteristics. Beliefs about reasons for development of illness or disorder are different for people who are not directly or indirectly affected by the illness and for people who are affected.

6.4 Coping with depression and consequences of the disorder

In this sub-chapter I will not argue about the factors causing depression in Salvador since I have indicated that they are similar in every urban society. I will rather analyse the effects of depression on the social environment and how people cope with problems connected with diagnoses of depression. I will also discuss about perceptions of depressed patients in Salvadorian society and what the applied techniques to cope with this disorder are.

When a certain psychological state is diagnosed as pathological, this might have positive as well as negative consequences for the individual. The individual gains the status of a patient and is therefore excused from various social responsibilities, has the right to treatment and gains more social attention, yet on the other hand, becomes the victim of stigmatization and is expected to start solving his problems. If I discuss depression like Widlöcher (in Ehrenberg, 2010, p. 168) writing that depression constitutes a protective attitude involving retreat that allows the subject to survive when he has no energy to fight (*ibid.*), then it is hard to expect from the patient that he will be able to put effort into problem solving. It would cost him a lot of energy that he does not have. The incapacity to cope with the problem represents additional pressure on the individual and therefore new frustrations and stress. Therefore, the question is: how to escape from the enchanted circle? Ehrenberg (2010, pp. 137-141) describes depression as *disorder of the modern time* and argues that in 1970s its treatment was the domain of general medicine. With the development of new antidepressants medicine was concerned only with short-term treatment of the illness and improvement of the patients' actual condition. Through improvements in diagnostics and better understanding of depression in 1980s, the treatment of this disorder has become the domain of psychiatry.

Despite the profound approach of psychiatry toward treatment of depression there was still a strong alliance between medicine and pharmacy. Tatossian (1985, pp. 257-309) for example

ascribes increased prescription of antidepressants in France to the development of a new generation of drugs, SSIR, which are less toxic, with fewer side effects than the former ones. Ehrenberg (2010, pp. 142-143) estimates that the quantity of prescribed antidepressants has increased from 3.7 million in 1977 to 7.4 million in 1982. The most successful are the so-called stimulative antidepressants such as amineptin. The reasons for success can be found in the perception of depression as the state of low energy and insufficiency (ibid.). If chemical substance can increase energy and mental or physical activity, it is surely perceived by the general public as the easiest way to cope with depression. As Kleinke (2007, p. 305) states:

We live in a society where people want easy answers to their problems—a pill, a quick fix, or a guaranteed solution that doesn't require much cost of effort. (Kleinke, 2007, p. 305)

However the psychiatrists, even if they prescribe the chemicals more and more often, have second thoughts about efficacy and side effects of the drugs. According to psychiatrists in Juliano Moréira Hospital, antidepressants are supposed to cause long term addiction and even increase the patients' inability to cope with stress. They perceive trouble in long term therapy with antidepressants, namely the drugs are not successful in the short term treatments. Research in the field of psychiatry has even disclosed new symptoms connected with the usage of antidepressants, such as subordination of anxiety to depression. Ehrenberg (2010, p. 144) writes about the increased importance of inhibition in the depression diagnostic. Most antidepressants influence the patients' dark and negative thoughts.

The increased number of symptoms has caused higher heterogeneity in depression diagnostics, which can be also ascribed to the appearance of new chemical products on the market. They did not bring a new complex solution for depression, but were rather affecting the different symptoms of depression such as: sadness, general weakness, anxiety, dejection, headaches, and neck stiffness. Thus several factors have influenced the increased heterogeneity of depression and consequently higher numbers of diagnoses.

Between the clinical pictures, which were less clear than in earlier times and the increasing number of products on the market, there was an overall increase in the heterogeneity. (Ehrenberg, 2010, p. 146)

Lafer and Filho (1999) and Ehrenberg (2010) argue that new drugs have not only influenced the heterogeneity and become popular due to lower toxicity, but they also offered new

possibilities for better understanding of depression and its biology. Bio-chemists have defined three important neuro-mediators that are believed to affect the development of depression: noradrenalin, serotonin and dopamine. The hypothesis about urgent connection between the lack of named neuro-mediators and depression was criticized by authors like Zarifian, Lôo, Widlöcher and Scotto. In such context the real depression was the one where antidepressants had positive effects. Such discourse within the psychiatric public has led to the reduction of importance of other methods to cope with depression, such as, for example, psychotherapy. Hinz (2010) writes that new research shows the harmful effects of antidepressants, which in the long term can even hinder the formation of neuro-mediators.

The director of the CENA centre has argued that in Brazil there is an existent discrepancy between the doctrine of the psychiatric chamber and the one of the association for reintegration of patients, which CENA is part of. When the psychiatric chamber, due to pharmaceutical interests, praises chemotherapy, CENA advocates other approaches to treat depression: movement therapy, working therapy, change of life-style and environment, psychotherapy. Drugs are useful in acute stages of certain illnesses, but as soon as the condition is stabilized, the individual has to become active to be able to feel pleasure for life, and set new goals. My interlocutors' opinion also corresponds to the one by CENA professionals; they claim that depressed individuals should associate with other members of the local community and start practicing a physical activity, instead of spending the whole day in their apartments. *Capoeira* masters emphasize the healing power of the art in regards to psychological problems. *Capoeira* is believed to be very effective in coping with sadness, dejection, feelings of inferiority and exclusion, and even depression. One of them said:

Capoeira me ajudou reintegrar-se, porque antigamente antes de começar jogar a capoeira eu era muito deprimido, eu não saía e não tinha amigos. Agora jogo com amigos de grupo as vezes nós saímos junto, principalmente quando alguém tem aniversário. Com a capoeira eu fiquei mais alegre e ganhei mais autoestima. (*Capoeira* helped me to reintegrate into society. Before I started practicing *capoeira* I was depressive, home alone and without friends. Now I train and play with friends from the group and sometimes I go out for a drink, usually when somebody has a birthday. I have become happier with *capoeira* and gained self-esteem.) (author's translation).

Peluso and Blay (2009) who perform research about the general public's perception of schizophrenia and depression in São Paulo also claim that when treating and coping with these two illnesses, people would first trust popular methods and then the psychiatrists. As

most effective methods psychotherapy, general and physical activities were mentioned. They have less confidence in chemotherapy with antipsychotics and antidepressants (ibid.). People in Salvador generally have a negative attitude toward psychoactive drugs and chemical treatment of psychopathologies. Even those using antidepressants would choose also other methods to treat their problems like: sports, participation in religious groups, walking on the beach, dance, etc. some of them have argued that they have chosen *capoeira* to improve their psychological condition.

6.4.1 Men are embarrassed

"Alternatively, a series of factors may decrease the rates in men, such as masking by alcohol and substance abuse, increased rates of suicide, shorter life span, and decreased acknowledgement and help-seeking." (Keyes and Goodman, 2006, p. 15).

Almeida-Filho and others (2003) claim that in Bahia the ratio between men and a woman suffering from depression is 1:2. Authors perceived a bigger difference among the poor population, while the difference among the upper middle class was not as significant. Depression is mostly diagnosed among single working women with children from lower middle classes.

Statistic shows us that there are differences between men and women regarding depression, yet it does not offer us an answer why the differences appear. Are women from lower middle classes more exposed to stressful factors than men or are the reasons elsewhere? Are women more sensible to stressful factors from the environment, or do men express their frustrations in a different manner? Brüne (2008, p. 92) argues that the current psychiatric conceptualization cannot explain differences between the sexes regarding presentation of psychopathological signs and symptoms. Emphasizing the role of hormones cannot explain why there are cognitive, emotional and behavioural differences between men and the women, and how those should be translated into diagnostic scheme of psychiatric disorders. Furthermore, he claims that the suppositions about differences in sensibility of both sexes on stressful factors were rejected already long time ago (ibid.).

However, the differences exist and also in Salvador women are more affected by depression than men, so the reasons for such differences should be found elsewhere and not in biological

differences of both sexes. My interlocutors have argued that men are embarrassed to admit that they have psychological problems, and they also do not visit doctors very often. So the question might be, are men from lower classes more embarrassed to admit their problems than men from upper classes? Cubitt (1994, p. 84) argues that honour and fear of embarrassment are two of the most important factors influencing the formation of interpersonal relationships in Latin America. Portuguese and Spanish heritage are still strongly present in many cultural elements. Honour and fear of embarrassment are especially characteristic for men, and the reasons might be found in the typical Latino-American perception of men, that Cubitt (1994, p. 111) denoted as machismo. The term's roots are in the Spanish word *macho* (man) and represent ideology and behaviour in environments where men and women have completely different roles and life-styles. Machismo is strongly manifested in man's superiority over the woman and in his constant competition with other men (ibid.). Yet if machismo is the heritage of Portuguese colonizers, as Cubitt claims, why are not the differences between depression in men and women bigger among the white population of higher classes than among Afro-Brazilian population of lower classes? I can presume that embarrassment might be connected with the economic situation, or that it is just a feature regarding psychological problems, which affects the men more than it does the women. Interlocutors have argued that men do not relate mood problems with depression or any other psychological problem, so it was in my interest to find out why women are more likely to seek medical help.

6.4.2 Salvation is in stupor

Men in *favela* complain about being in a bad mood caused by their economic condition and disturbing environmental and social factors. They complain about the political system corruption, the state that allows poverty, their superiors and conditions for working, while drinking beer. Younger men also smoke marijuana in addition to drinking beer. Most men are under the influence of marijuana or alcohol as soon as they come from work or even before. Women complain in a similar way, yet they stay on the street or in bar only for one beer, because they have to cook dinner and clean house; they do not have as much time as men after work. I noticed that the women were mostly drunk on the weekends, while for the men each day was the same. According to this I can even claim that the alcohol and drug use is much more frequent in men than in women. If I classify alcohol and THC as psychoactive substances, I can argue that men already cope with stressful situations using these drugs, while women have to visit the doctor to prescribe them drugs. I noticed that it is generally

believed that for a woman it is not appropriate to get drunk on the street, when she has to take care of the family and home. Men, people say, deserve beer or even more after a hard day at work.

Unemployed people also like to hang out on the streets and drink. They start in the morning, with loud debates, laughing, playing cards and listening to music. Loud music is played in local bars and almost every house, so dogs bark all day and children scream on the street. Some people who work during the day join the party as soon as they come home, others search for privacy and hope for some quiet at home. The noise is probably easier to support for people hanging around in the streets than for those who want to do some work in the house. *Favela* becomes quiet only after midnight and till six o'clock in the morning, when the first inhabitants go to work and wake up the dogs. They start to bark and wake up the children, so the *barulho* (uproar) can start again. When people are awake they all become very loud and of course they also start listening to the loud national pop-folk music. One of the neighbours, whom I have often seen to be rejected, commented on the noise:

This is awful, I think Brazilians have this in their blood. It is the lack of education ...no! It is the lack of consideration towards others. I do not think you need to finish school to be aware that you should not throw the garbage in front of the neighbours' door, you do not turn the radio on full volume and you do not start screaming as soon as you wake up. Probably you do not need education to stop you from scream under somebody's window at two o'clock in the morning, because you forgot the keys. This is ignorance I am living in today. Nobody cares about others and everyone does what they want. If you do not want to join the tribe and scream when they do, play music when they do, watch football when they do, drink when they do, you probably become crazy. I do not know how long I will be able to handle this, I have high blood pressure and "meu mente tem so mais poco espaço" (my brain does not have much more space). If I do not move out of here in the period of one year, I will probably die. The bad thing is that in Salvador all the quarters are like this, this one is even a quiet one, and already here it is unbearable.

I have frequently heard phrases like: *meu mente tem so mais poco espaço* (my brain does not have much more space), *não aguento mais* (I can't take it no more), *preciso sair da qui* (I need to get out of here), *não sei mais qué qui fazer* (I do not know anymore what to do) from people suffering of depression or anxiety in the CENA centre, but also from some neighbours in local society. I focused on case studies of two women diagnosed as depressive and a man that did not visit the doctor, although he was showing the same symptoms as both depressed women. He was dejected for most of the time; he was sad, not showing any interests for

activities, he was complaining of having headaches and about the unbearable life in the quarter. Both women were treated with antidepressants, when a man did not use any drugs. Both women were keen to debate about their problems spontaneously; the man was more reserved, hiding his distress behind the smile. He expressed his feelings after a longer debate. He started to complain only when I triggered him with my reaction. For example, the above mentioned commentary was provoked with my anger against Brazilians, *favela*, dogs and screaming children, after some neighbours started a fight in the middle of the night. I am not sure if he wanted to be sympathetic, or if he just used the advantage to release his frustrations. Men mostly did not complain in such manner, they did not argue about local problems, but rather about general political, economic or social problems. As I have mentioned, they also complain about bad football players, about their salary, corruption, and raising prices. When I asked him why he does not discuss his frustrations more often and why he does not change his life-style or at least visit a doctor, he answered with the smile and a gesture with his shoulders. Sometimes he concluded with a comment like:

Não vale pena reclamar, porque iso não vai mudar nada. Um dia vou sair da qui e voltar pra interiór da onde eu venho. (It is not worth complaining, because it will not change anything. One day I will return to the countryside, where I belong.) (author's translation).

If I observe life in *favela* only superficially, I might conclude that individual troubles only have a secondary meaning for men. However, if you are ready to listen attentively and you find the way to provoke debates and situations, it becomes obvious that men and not just women are affected by the same stress and frustrations of the social and natural environment in *favela*. Yet women are in many cases ready to share their problems with friends, doctors and people from religious or any other groups. For man it makes more sense to discuss global and macro-political and social problems on which they have no influence. Such activity is always accompanied with alcohol and marijuana. I can argue that both manners represent different forms of coping with stress and frustration. The men solving their problems with alcohol would probably also be diagnosed as depressive, if they visited a doctor, however men in my neighbourhood did not ascribe their distress to internal problems, but rather to distant external problems. I could also argue that they are simply too proud or embarrassed to admit that the actual economic and urban situation represents frustration, stress and potential danger for them.

6.4.3 Depressive or crazy

My interlocutors were not keen to discuss psychological disorders; however they agreed that they represent a serious problem in Brazilian society. They connect the development of psychological problems, especially schizophrenia and depression with poverty, violence and living conditions in *favela*. Lopes and others (2008, pp. 112-118) write that there is a connection between violence and psychological problems in Brazil, when Martin and others (2007, p. 654) ascertain that the general public ascribes the reasons for depression to external economic and social factors.

My interlocutors often labelled depressive individuals as *locos*, even if they previously mentioned that mostly external factors and poverty influence the development of depression. Martin et al. (2007, p. 654) claim that most of the *favela* inhabitants do not differentiate between depression and other psychological problems, therefore the patients are mostly stigmatized as mad or are accused of faking their illness. Some doctors and therapists in Juliano Moréira Hospital have agreed that poverty represents an additional frustration, yet psychological illness does not choose between the rich and the poor, because it also has internal, biological causes. However, the director of CENA does not share the opinion of other therapists, namely she is convinced that poverty, living conditions and ignorant attitude of the state toward social problems are the main reasons for the development of psychological disorders. This is very obvious in the case of depression, where the numbers are growing together with the growing socio-economic problems of the population. She claims that the problem is even bigger than it seems, because many depressed people do not seek medical help, so the numbers are even higher than the ones presented by official statistics.

6.4.4 Fatal relationships

Psychopathologies might be understood as the result of human suffering. According to Ehrenberg (2010, pp. 22-24) I cannot discuss psychological illnesses exclusively in the context of psychology and psychiatry, but also biology, sociology, anthropology and other sciences that are concerned with the functioning of the brain and mind. The bio-medical view on psychopathologies is therefore always confronted with moral questions, since it was only in the modern period that mental illness was internalized and individualized. In the middle ages it represented a possession or devils work and Ehrenberg (2010, p. 24) argues that, to

begin believing in a mental disorder where I previously saw only the Devil, I had to cleanse the body of its sacred image.

Since mental illness is no longer perceived as a result of the supernatural - incorporation of demons, spirits and devils - on which individual has no influence, the views on illness and beliefs about it have changed accordingly. Not only medicine, but also other sciences have developed several theories regarding mental illnesses and psychological problems. From an anthropological point of view the influences of interpersonal relationships on the development of psychological problems are of great importance. Social relationships are important factor for the constitution of an individual's beliefs, persuasion and opinions, and influence the senses, emotions and cognitions¹¹², which consequently influence reactions and psychological conditions of the individual, constitute his personality and potentially change his gene design. Ingold and Gibson (1994, pp. 460- 470) are of the opinion that human beings learn how to act in society and form their mental scheme through the socialization processes; therefore human culture is incorporated in their body and mind.

I can presume that culture is the result of intra- and interpersonal relationships, and if I refer to Hacking (1999), it can also be understood as a social construct. As this is an anthropological study it is reasonable to analyse some (according to Kleinman, Whisman and Lennon) crucial relationships between the individual and society. I will divide them in the following categories: inter-familiar relationships, relationships with friends, relationships at work and in school, relationships between the individual and institutions (state, religious and cultural institutions).

The individual and the state

As Kleinman states (1986, pp. 68–142), the reasons for the development of depressive illnesses can also be found in political decisions affecting the members of a specific society and their course of life. I am referring here to the adoption of laws, economic development control and social policy management. The relationship between the individual and the state is not only directly reflected through state institutions; the ruling elite's actions also have indirect consequences on interpersonal relations and the quality of life.

¹¹² Humphrey (1992) and Tomc (2000) categorise the brain's perceptive and analytical functions. I have divided it into sensations, feelings and thoughts.

Political and economic factors, for example, have an impact on the formation of a pluralistic healthcare system in a society or state. Lock and Nichter (2002, p. 4) perceive the state's influence in decisions regarding granting licences, in conducting research to test the effectiveness of a specific treatment method and in accepting health-related laws, systems and sanctions. Foucault (1975) calls these methods 'instruments of governmentality'. Lock and Nichter (2002, p. 8) also emphasise the importance of modernisation and the dissemination of new values.

It is clear that although people may seek out certain medical technologies, they respond with ambivalence to other technologies, as well as to forms of medical and public health knowledge, when these are perceived as promulgating ideologies that threaten the moral order. (Lock and Nichter, 2002, p. 8)

Naturally, the effects of policy and modernisation also contribute to a lifestyle that is more or less decisive in developing pathological psychosis. Ianni (2004, pp. 153–155) argues that the global trend of increasing problems associated with the urban environment such as mental illness, aggression and violence is the result of urbanisation and mass migration. He finds the city to be the ideal place for these phenomena to develop with its continuous mixing of interests, extensive tension, fragmentation, inequality and alienation. Roberts (2008, pp. 18–19) attributes health problems and human insecurity to the structural violence of economic, social and political institutions – that is, to all circumstances that prevent the individual from achieving self-realisation.

The Brazilian government is aware of these problems, but the projects to combat them are often left to volunteers or supported only at the local community level. Economic interests and the federal government's corruption are responsible for no existing interest in developing constructive and long-term solutions, which would demand less economic inequality and extensive investments in the urban environment. Owing to the high levels of urban violence, mental problems are of secondary importance; they are therefore individualised, while attempts to address them are predominantly viewed as the responsibility of the individual and of healthcare institutions rather than of public programmes launched to eradicate malaria, dengue fever and yellow fever in areas where tourism is being developed. Economically less important social problems are therefore individualised. Foucault (1975) is of the opinion that biomedical institutions are a tool of the ruling political apparatus; by medicalizing social problems, this apparatus transforms them into problems faced by individual citizens. Social

problems become medical problems, meaning that the responsibility for them, as well as interventions to address them, fall on the individual. The state therefore disavows responsibility for the development of certain pathologies, whereas treatment costs are transferred to the individual and the health insurance system.

If an individual is not covered by health insurance and does not have sufficient funds, the inability to treat him/her leads to even greater problems associated with the pathology in question, and also increases treatment costs. In countries where healthcare services are constitutionally provided for all citizens, as is the case in Brazil, the state is committed to lowering costs; this leads to the problem of cost reduction on the one hand and the industry's pressure on the other. State institutions wish to reduce treatment costs, while the interests of the pharmaceutical and medical industry lie in increasing drug and technology sales. Medicalization is the logical consequence of this contradiction, since giving a pathological label to a certain medical state or symptom justifies an increase in treatment costs. Brüne (2008, p. 92) believes that medicalization can also be the consequence of improved diagnostics and treatment methods, while Ehrenberg (2010, pp. 20–25) addresses the impact of the development of new drugs on medicalization. Both authors agree, for example, that not every feeling of sadness is depression; however, due to pressure from pharmaceutical engineers at the national level as well within medical institutions themselves, it is often too quickly diagnosed as pathological.

In the context of the relationship between the individual and the state, a further discussion could be held on the impact that totalitarian political systems have on the development of psychopathology, particularly depression; this is addressed by Kleinman (1986). In theory, however, Brazil's political system and its constitutional arrangements guarantee the individual complete freedom. The people I interviewed have already pointed out that problems arise as a result of political and police corruption, the economic pressures exerted by large corporations, economic inequality and unregulated urban development.

The family

My interviewees regarded family relations as the most important interpersonal relations. Most of my interviews on relationship problems focused on problems with partners or problems between mother and son. Men in Salvador are very attached to their mothers and their

relationship with them is frequently similar to the one they have with their partners. Such strong connections understandably intensify all emotional reactions. Intense displays of love and approval alongside fierce arguments featuring extremely offensive language are an everyday occurrence in Salvador. Despite the fact that people involved in the arguments react very aggressively, the arguments generally do not end in physical violence. Arguments between partners, however, more frequently end in violence, even though women are well protected by law. As Martin et al. (2007, pp. 644–645) point out, chauvinistic mentality still leads men to expect women to clean, cook, tidy and look after the children, in addition to earning money. Where women no longer meet these expectations, some men, under the influence of alcohol, physically attack their partner as well as their children. At the CENA centre, I took part in therapy sessions with two patients who were victims of domestic violence. The first had initially been exposed to violence from her father who had beaten her mother and her; she later became involved with a partner who had broken her nose and cheekbone while drunk. She began to resist her father soon after beginning *capoeira* training and learning the *rastera*. The second patient had problems with her partner who had attacked her several times when under the influence of alcohol. Since she was physically strong enough, she managed to control him and avoid serious injury. After she had thrown him out of the house he continued to harass her; she therefore threatened him with the police. She explained:

I told him not to show his face in our neighbourhood again, otherwise I would call the police – something he clearly did not want. When I told my brother and father what he had done, they wanted to kill him. They spent the whole evening wandering around the neighbourhood looking for him. They waited for him the whole week and kept repeating that he had better not come anywhere near them.

Verbal and emotional violence can also have an impact on the development of psychological problems. In the neighbourhood where I lived I observed the relationship between a neighbour, Wanessa, who suffered from chronic depression, and her older son. Wanessa was constantly complaining about her son and his behaviour, and she suspected him of using drugs and on occasion stealing money. He would behave disrespectfully to her, frequently referring to her as *loca* (mad), demanding that she would admit her problem and take steps to deal with it. I was present when she was looking for some important documents she had mislaid; her greatest worry was the abuse she might get from her son when he found out. She was convinced that he would abuse her and kept insisting she would go to hospital. Wanessa was

often forgetful, which she attributed to the antidepressants and tranquillisers she had been prescribed. One day she broke a drawer when cleaning her two sons' room and called me for help. While I was repairing the drawer, she kept repeating that her son would surely hit her. She said he was rude and violent towards his younger brother and that he had hit him one day in front of his friends without provocation. When I asked the older son to describe the event he said the main reason he had acted violently was his brother's inappropriate behaviour and the fact that he would stick his nose into his (the older brother's) relationships with women. One of the older brother's lovers found out that he had another lover; she was allegedly informed of this by the younger brother. Because Wanessa feared her older son, she faced the constant dilemma of whether to move away or to remove him from the house. She said:

Because I live in fear of my son and am under stress from work and because of money, I am more and more depressed and exhausted. My depression is only getting worse and I don't dare stop taking my antidepressants. I don't want to throw my son out, because he's not capable of surviving on his own; but if he's violent, I don't dare call the police.

Not considering calling the police was the case with the other two women of domestic violence as well. The people I spoke to claimed that calling the police was the last resort, since a man reported for domestic violence finds himself in a very bleak position. First the police drag him into the street and hit him. Beatings and torture follow in custody, and the injuries can be fatal. The man is immediately forbidden to have any contact with his partner and his children. He is in danger on the streets of his partner's neighbourhood as well, if he decides to move there, because the entire family including several neighbours come together to defend the victim of domestic violence. In order to protect their partners who they love in a pathological way, or out of fear of them, women prefer not to report violent men to the police. The same applies to violent fathers. Espinheira (in Oliveira et al., 2000, pp. 34–36) describes this reticence as the 'law of silence' (*lei do silêncio*), which predominates in city districts where violence has become a matter of fact. Where violence is a *modo de ser* (a way of being), special methods of preservation and survival are developed within the network of family relations.

The social expectation is that people will respond reciprocally, but not necessarily in the same way. The response may be proportionate to the transgressive force, or subordinate in the case of an inability to express a proportionate response. (author's translation) (Espinheira in Oliveira et al., 2000, p. 34)

In Espinheira's opinion, people face a constant dilemma whether to express their opinion and thereby incur hatred, to stay silent and suppress their feelings and emotions as much as they can, or to call the police, which is the last resort reserved for cases of extreme violence. Even the police themselves often resort to indiscriminatory and violent methods.

Friends

As I have noticed in Salvador, friendship is perceived as human relationship where the parties involved should enjoy equal status, giving rise to a specific mode of communication. Kleinman (1986) writes, that the power ratio plays an important role in institutional, workplace, family and partner relations, which are often driven by emotions. As my interlocutors mentioned friendship should represent a relaxed social bond in which frustrations are worked out through discussion or a common activity. I noticed that for the inhabitants of Salvador, getting together with friends was one of the most important ways of relaxing. This was confirmed on many occasions in informal discussions. Friends, acquaintances and members of various faith and interest groups got together most days of the week. The most intense neighbourhood get-togethers start on Saturday afternoon and last until Sunday evening. Saturday chatting and drinking begins after work and continues until 2 am. Men often start Sundays with a morning game of football and women with preparations for lunch. At noon, everyone gathers for lunch and a drink, carrying on the party through the afternoon until midnight at the latest. Friends mostly gather at someone's home or in front of their house, which usually gives directly onto the street and where they grill meat (*churrasco*), drink beer and listen to Brazilian popular music. Loud debates on football, politics, absent friends and current events produce smiles and laughter. All of the neighbours are invited to the street *churrasco*. Many people who live near the coast gather in bars (*barracas*) on the beach. The bars are lined up one after the other, each playing its own music and some with live music. Sunday get-togethers on the beach (*domingo na praia*) are often the precursor to a street party later on. Sundays are a day of relaxation before the rigours of the working week. As I have already mentioned, men start the Sunday festivities with a game of football – which might take place as early as 6 am during the hot summer months. If they spent Saturday evening watching their home team play,¹¹³ the debates will carry on over a beer in the bar after the Sunday game.

¹¹³ Salvador has two strong clubs, Bahia and Victoria. Every Saturday afternoon, when the working week ends for most people, they watch a match either on television or at the stadium. Although Bahia is only in the

Music and dance are integral components of the street party, with almost everyone dancing (except people who drink too much, which are the exception rather than the rule). In Salvador, the most popular dances at such gatherings are the *Forro* and the *Lambada*, which are danced in pairs, spicing up the party with sexual energy. Women who do not wish to dance with men dance among themselves; this happens especially on the beach, where large numbers of random people gather in the bars. Children mostly play close to the water or in the streets if the party is taking place in their home district. These Sunday get-togethers are normally very loud and most partygoers are very drunk by the end of the evening, which can be disturbing to some. Wanessa and her brother have frequently complained about the Sunday parties – particularly the brother, whose two-year-old son is unable to fall asleep before midnight because of the music from the downstairs neighbours' party. The neighbours often lit a fire in the 10 m² atrium, and the smoke travels through the glassless window up to the rest of the building. During the day, the music gets louder and louder, reaching its peak in the late afternoon. The evening ends with loud discussions and laughter. Despite the fact that the Sunday events always put Silvano and Wanessa in a bad mood, they would only complain to each other in their flat or at our informal discussions. Neither of them would tell the neighbours to turn the music down or talk and laugh more quietly. Of course, I soon got fed up with it (all I wanted to do on Sunday was rest or work on the computer), and so I nervously confronted the neighbours during the second party and asked them to keep the noise down. Unconcerned, they replied: "*Mas a casa não vai cair!*" (It's not as if the building's going to collapse!). This comment made me laugh, so I replied: "*Não, a casa não, so que eu vou terminár em hospitál de saude mental.*" (No, the building won't fall down, but I'll end up in the madhouse.) (author's translation).

The neighbours then tried to keep the noise down, which is very difficult for the inhabitants of a *favela* to do. The parties took place almost every weekend, but at least they listened to the music at a lower volume. I got somewhat used to the moderate noise, but Wanessa was in an even worse mood on Sundays than during the week. Silvano was in a good mood on Sunday mornings at least, because he often played football on the beach. He would become irritable only towards the evening, and on Monday mornings he would sit, hunched up and bleary-

Brazilian third division, most of their home games are sold out. The stadium holds around 50,000 spectators and admission is 10 *reais*. Matches often end in fighting, although this tends to be brief and does not have the serious consequences English hooliganism once had.

eyed, in front of the entrance to the building. Wanessa took several tranquillisers on Sunday evening and even a double dose of antidepressants at times; this meant she sometimes ran out of drugs before she was due for another consultation. Often, in a daze, she would say that she was going to reduce the dose, in the same breath asking me to pick up her prescription next time I was going to the Juliano Moréira Hospital. Disputes with their closest friends had a greater impact on the well-being of these three neighbours (Paula and Wanessa had been diagnosed with depression; Silvano had not yet seen a doctor). Wanessa complained on a number of occasions about disagreeing with her friends' ideas and decisions. Paula was depressed when any of her friends did not have time for her; Silvano would often sit, depressed, in the hallway or in front of the entrance of the building when there was no one to talk to or he had not found any of his friends to play football with. He complained of their laziness and the fact that they were avoiding him by watching television or drinking. Other people I spoke to mentioned how people avoiding them and refusing to help were the most upsetting factors in their relationships with friends. A real friend is someone who listens, who you can confide in and who assists you in unpleasant situations. I also noticed how important mutual assistance was. Neighbours liked to offer each other help with physical activities as well as personal issues. When someone was renovating their house or carrying out repairs, the neighbours who were not at work all day would come to help out. The person whose house it was supplied food and drink, and the work would often end with a party. Neighbours also talked freely about the problems affecting them on the street, only the ones not directly connected to the people and way of life in the immediate vicinity, though. I noticed that for many neighbours this method of socialising and cooperating was part of their everyday life. Neighbours who socialised on the street seem to be happy on the outside at least, while the ones who avoided this kind of socialising seemed less content. This latter group included Paula, Wanessa and Silvano.

Work

Workplace relations with colleagues and superiors can be one of the factors contributing to the development of depressive disorders. Kleinman (1986, pp. 68–142) discusses the link between neurasthenia, depression and somatisation in China, stating that patients experiencing neurasthenia and depression usually had disorderly family or workplace relations. Career expectations, the type and quantity of work and relations with superiors are all important here.

The people in Salvador who manage to find a job work at least ten hours a day six days a week. They take home between 400 and 800 *reais* a month,¹¹⁴ a few vouchers for the *Bompreço* supermarket chain and a season bus ticket. If they fail to perform at work they are immediately dismissed, considering there are hundreds of people in line to take their place. It is particularly hard for women, who are often single mothers or have to look after an unemployed husband, who might be tackling his frustrations with alcohol. As the people I spoke to pointed out, women's pay can be up to 40% lower than men's for the same job.

Cubitt (1995, p. 112) argues that the number of females at the head of the household is growing in South America, which could be the result of migration and new ways of family organisation. At the same time, women are becoming the financial pillar and the protector of family interests. Zupančič (2009, p. 38) argues that the increase in employing women is the result of inflation and of the fall in real incomes, which has occurred in capitalist societies since the end of the Second World War. Seeing that wages are falling by 1% a year, the capitalist production system has in 50 years acquired double the workforce for exactly the same wage bill. Since the 1980s, women's employment has increased in capitalist societies, thus expecting to increase companies' profitability. Zupančič's hypothesis is interesting in the context of cost reduction and profit increase, which is the basic principle of economic theory. The growth in the employment of women cannot be attributed merely to a 'capitalist trick' perpetrated with the help of the media under the guise of 'women's liberation'. At the end of the 1990s feminist movements began to emphasise the importance of women's involvement in political, economic, cultural and social life. Women's emancipation therefore inevitably includes their economic independence as well.

In Brazil women are more emancipated in the black and Amerindian populations. In 1993, 37% of black women were the family breadwinners compared to 12% of white women. Despite the fact that they earned only a third of men's wages, which at that time was around 50 dollars, they still managed to support their families (Cubitt, 1995, pp. 112–116).

Being forced to look after the household and the children, as well as to provide the family income is an additional burden on women, and in many cases leads to overwork. One of my interviewees, a single mother, said the following about the situation faced by women:

¹¹⁴ Between 160 and 320 euros in 2007.

There are more and more single mothers. They work every day, and then they have to cook, clean and look after the children. Even if they have a husband, he is often unemployed and spends all his time in the bar or in front of the television. Some of us are unable to handle the stress. I fell ill with depression.

Work and raising children

Raising children and providing for the family are extremely difficult and stressful tasks when they fall upon one parent. The lack of cooperation between partners or the father's absence increases the level of stress felt by the parent assuming all responsibilities. Three of the single mothers with depressive disorders included in my research had sons aged between 16 and 23, crucial years in a young man's development – years in which he forms his self-image and looks for a position in the world of men. Offer (in Perko, 2006, p. 126) rejects the general paradigm of clinical psychology stating that adolescence is a period of identity crisis, but says that areas of self-image are formed, by and large, in adolescence. The psychological self, the social self, the sexual self, the family self and the adaptive self of self-image are, in Offer's opinion, formed normally. However, under the influence of certain external factors, they can lead to stress and crisis. These factors can be found in poor family and socio-economic relations. The life conditions in the *favela*, the lack of access to education and work, the absence of one of the parents or excessively burdened parents can lead young men to experience anomalies in the formation of their self-image. An unfavourable combination of environmental influences, family relations and overwork can, for parents as well as their children, lead to psychopathological occurrences. In two unconnected research studies from 1966, Angst and Perris (in Lafer & Filho, 1999) found that the probability for the unipolar depression development was three times higher in families where depression was already present than in the population at large. Wanessa and Clara's older sons were often depressed or turned to alcohol and drugs to give themselves a lift. As we have already seen, Wanessa and Clara are both battling depression and also their children are suffering from pathological stress – namely it represents the only pattern they know for the family. In the cases where the parents' work overload and poor relationships with their superiors had an impact on the development of depression, leading in turn to their children's' pathological battle with stress, we can conclude that workplace relationships indirectly impact relationships within the family. Feelings of guilt – arising from the knowledge that their incapacity and illness are the reasons why their children will not receive a proper education or find work, but that they will be in constant contact with crime, violence and drugs – increase the pressure on the affected

person . This has an additional impact on the self-image of the person affected, completing the vicious circle that is the fight against depression. I can conclude that single mothers find their sons' adolescence particularly stressful, since it is difficult to set boundaries for them – I have already discussed the role of men in raising boys and initiating them into the world. When boys become physically grown men, some mothers become afraid of them. With Wanessa, who is afraid of her son's violence, I was unable to ascertain whether her fear was real or whether it originated from a feeling of being powerless in controlling a growing man. During the time I conducted my research all of their conflicts were of a verbal nature; and despite the fact that I was present at several of these conflicts, I was unable to affirm if the son was violent. He would abuse his mother and ask her to get psychiatric help; after the argument, however, both mother and son would burst into tears and blame themselves for the situation. The other single mother was not afraid of her son, instead she accused him of doing nothing and smoking marijuana all the time. She said that she would like to help him, but had to spend her time working to provide for her two sons and daughter. She worked as a housemaid and was therefore away for the entire day. She sometimes came home upset because of her employers' behaviour. The people I spoke to said that relations between rich employers and their housemaids varied. Some respected the housemaids' work, paid them well and were friendly towards them; others exploited their employees, gave them extra work, treated them as being inferior and paid them poorly. Since the number of housemaids is higher than their demand, one has to be lucky to find an employer.

I can conclude from this that in Salvador both relationships at work and with the family affect the course of depression. As I have found, the latter is an important factor in the development of depressive illness.

Chapter 7: Combating Depression in Salvador

"Healing means healing culture first, then people, and finally sickness." (Kalweit, 1987, p. 1).

Since people suffering from depression are not dangerous or harmful to society, the healthcare, political and economic institutions therefore do not take this problem seriously enough. For example, basic health insurance covers the costs of treating depression with drugs, while therapies such as psychoanalysis are only available with supplementary insurance. The Constitution, guaranteeing healthcare services to all citizens, only chemical therapy using drugs approved by the insurance system, which are mainly generic drugs, is available to all. A patient must have at least one serious psychological condition to be eligible for hospital treatment, psychiatric treatment and paid absence from work. At the Juliano Moréira Hospital depressive illnesses are mostly diagnosed as neuroses or as psychoses if there are any atypical symptoms of depression such as hallucinations. I was unable to find a single independent diagnosis of depression in the hospital's annual statistics. Some therapists and doctors claim that one cause for this approach to diagnosis could be due to the difficulties involved in diagnosing depression; others believe that some doctors do not have sufficient diagnostic experience or that some doctors diagnose co-occurring illness for better treatment assessment.

The reason for the 'officially' low percentage of depressive illnesses can also be found in the accessibility of different treatment methods. In the case where an individual wishes to be treated for depression with other ways than drugs, he/she has to pay supplementary health insurance contributions (*Plano de Saude*). Patients with basic health insurance suffering from depression are sent home with a prescription for antidepressants in combination with tranquilisers, prescribed by hospital psychiatrists. Only patients with severe depression in combination with anxiety or other mental health problems are hospitalised. Other forms of treatment are available to hospitalised patients, including group therapy, therapy with a psychiatrist or psychologist, physical exercise therapy and occupational therapy.

Considering the fact that most people with depression do not visit a doctor at all, the more pertinent question here is how the people of Salvador reduce the intensity of their anxiety, fear and feelings of anguish. Kleinman (1980, p. 148) mentions the following strategies for dealing with stress in China: minimisation or denial, dissociation and somatisation.

Minimisation is the suppression of the intensity and the consequences of dysphoric effects by reducing their importance. This can become denial, where the patient does not acknowledge the painful feelings, or does not permit himself/herself to feel them.

Dissociation encompasses a large number of subconscious and non-cognitive ways of dealing with the effects. A dysphoric effect can appear in isolation, mainly in a socially acceptable manner.

Somatisation is where somatic problems stand in for dysphoric effects in the form of complaints about physical symptoms.

Kleinman (1980, pp. 150–151) argues that strategies are to a large degree universal; the difference lies in their hierarchy and in the proportions between people suffering from denial, dissociation and somatisation.

In Salvador, many men could be described as suffering from denial, because they attribute their problems to their economic situation; I noticed somatisation in one of the neighbours, while listening to music, partying and dancing could be seen as forms of dissociation.

In our informal discussions, subjects diagnosed with depression complained of the problems their psychological illness was causing them. Physical problems, poor relationships with their family, friends and colleagues, incapacity to work and other similar problems were for the subjects a consequence of their psychological problems, which in most cases had developed from a specific traumatic event or as a result of the conditions in which they lived. Some were convinced that their psychological problems had been caused by evil spirits and energies. They believed these supernatural influences could have been the result of their own immoral behaviour or the malice and spite of others. None of the patients among whom I conducted research avoided talking about their psychological problems, which is unusual given the perceived stigma attached to people suffering from mental illness. People are afraid of psychiatric hospitals, they believe that psychological problems are among the most serious illnesses, they classify everyone who visits a psychiatric hospital as *loco* and are afraid that something similar will happen to them or to members of their family. However, if a family member or friend falls ill, they display a great deal of sympathy and are ready to help them

tackle their problem in the conviction that it is only temporary and will soon be gone. As an illustration and for better understanding, I give the following example:

Carla was a 23-year-old patient who came to the CENA centre accompanied by her mother and fiancé. They were convinced that her problems had been caused by evil spirits from her participation in *candomblé* rituals (this is what the members of the religious group attended by her mother and fiancé believed). According to Carla's relatives, she would be able to overcome her problem if she followed the path of Jesus Christ and listened to the word of God, and if the psychiatrists were able to get rid of the visible problems caused by her obsession. Carla was depressed and occasionally hallucinated, interpreting the hallucinations and voices as a form of communication with the spirits. She had no energy for therapeutic activities, was always tired and would leave the therapy room after a few minutes with the excuse that she had to go to the toilet or that she was thirsty because she always had a dry throat, or that she was extremely tired and had to rest for a while. On the first day she left the therapy session altogether and went to the rest room, where she slept. She came back later, sitting down and watching what the others were doing. Her situation improved with physical activity, which she herself acknowledged, but she complained that the therapy was too hard, since she was totally physically exhausted from the problems she was tackling. Since the treatment was not as successful as the family expected, the fiancé and mother became more and more concerned with each consecutive visit. They hugged Carla, comforted her and encouraged her to continue with the therapy. Carla would be absent and distracted for most of the visit; after the visit, however, her expression would change, as would her behaviour. She loved singing and dancing, and the sound and the rhythm of the *berimbau* would often throw her into an ecstatic state, where she would dance around the room, eyes closed and moving her head as she did so. There was a constant smile on her face. When I asked her whether she was enjoying herself, she lifted her head, opened her eyes and continued smiling and dancing, only now she gazed at me and started to dance with me, as if she wanted to play *capoeira*. She avoided learning the skills involved, being more interested in playing.

Carla's problems were supposedly caused by a traumatic event or series of events. In the opinion of her family members, she caused the problems by refusing to follow the right path and by worshipping false gods. Carla did not mention this; but the change in her behaviour when her mother and fiancé came to visit indicated a discrepancy between her and her family's understanding of the reasons for her psychological problems.

7.1 The Brazilian healthcare system

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization).

I begin this chapter with a well-known quotation because I wish to emphasise that healthcare systems cannot provide individuals with the health as it is defined by the WHO. As I have established, a large number of other factors which are not dependent merely on the way the healthcare system is organised have an impact on the health of an individual. Cohen (1989, p. 7) states that human activities can cause or increase the risk of disease far more than healthcare institutions and medical practices are able to cure it or reduce the risk. The reasons may lie in the healthcare's accessibility, the healthcare system's efficiency, the effectiveness of treatment methods, the risk level of certain human activities, the convictions and beliefs of society regarding health, etc. The living conditions in Salvadorian *favelas* clearly increase the risk of illness, while their inhabitants have difficulty accessing the healthcare system in the first place. Under the new Brazilian Constitution of 1989 and the 1990 Healthcare Act (*Lei Orgânica de Saúde*) all Brazilian citizens are provided with access to health services.

Através do Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS), todos os cidadãos têm direito a consultas, exames, internações e tratamentos nas Unidades de Saúde vinculadas ao SUS da esfera municipal, estadual e federal, sejam públicas ou privadas, contratadas pelo gestor público de saúde. (Under the single healthcare system, all citizens shall have the right to consultations, checks, operations and treatments at all healthcare units, including the SUS system at the municipal, state or federal level. This shall apply to public as well as private institutions included in this system.) (author's translation) (disque saúde 0800 61 1997, Ministério da Saúde).

Nevertheless, the Brazilian healthcare system does not only comprise institutions included in the SUS. Healers, chiropractors, spiritualists, religious groups and home care using 'folk' remedies must also be taken into consideration. The Brazilian healthcare system should therefore be divided in accordance with Kleinman's classification (1980) into three sectors: professional, folk and popular. The professional sector in Brazil is divided into the public and private sector. As mentioned above, public healthcare is organised in accordance with the Brazilian Constitution of 1989 and guarantees access to health services for all inhabitants of Brazil, regardless of sex, age, religion, race or economic situation. It is financed through compulsory health insurance contributions at the federal, state and municipal levels. For example, every municipality must earmark between 7% till 12% of its budget to the funding of the public healthcare system (Cordoni, 2001, p. 11). The supplementary *Plano de Saúde* insurance system is also an important source of funding. The private sector is partly financed through the public system and partly through the *Plano de Saúde* supplementary insurance system, or by direct payments made by patients for an examination or operation. Persons insured under the *Plano de Saúde* system pay a monthly fee. There exist several types of

insurance: from 50 *reais* a month,¹¹⁵ which provides examinations by a doctor and basic treatment, to 500 *reais* a month, which allows the patients to choose the hospital they would like to be examined and treated in, gives them the right to a single room at the hospital, allows them to bypass the waiting list for examinations, etc. This last one is very important, since waiting times at public hospitals can be so long that, according to everyone I talked to about the Brazilian healthcare system, people frequently died before getting an appointment. The normal waiting time is six months, but can extend to one year. If you pay the *Plano de Saúde*, which the majority of the population unfortunately cannot afford, the waiting time is under ten days. At the Juliano Moréira Hospital they mentioned the following problems related to treating and admitting patients. Firstly, hospitalised patients did not have sufficient funds to be offered a different, perhaps more effective treatment method in addition to drug-based therapy. An important improvement has been the establishment of the CENA centre for the reintegration of patients, which is, however, only partly funded through the SUS. The majority of the funding must come from the patients themselves, while the therapists either receive the minimum wage or work as volunteers. Secondly, their under-capacity and a shortage of doctors do now allow them to receive outpatients. Thus, doctors mostly prescribe tablets and do not use other methods of treatment.

In addition to the official biomedical system, religious healing is very important in Brazil, whether they are methods such as *cirurgia espiritual* and *cura através orixás*, or Catholic or Protestant treatment methods. People also pay frequent visits to healers, who treat them with reiki, bioenergy or homeopathy, or prescribe a suitable herb for their condition. In the majority of cases people combine these methods of treatment with tablets and folk techniques. *Medicina Natural*, which relies on the use of herbs, fruit and vegetables, can be placed in this last category.

7.2 Tablet or no tablet?

The classic biomedical treatment method for depression at the Juliano Moréira Hospital is based on the use of chemical products. In accordance with the diagnosis, which in the case of depression is almost never mono-pathological, psychiatrists in most cases combine

¹¹⁵ 20 euros. The value of the *real* fluctuates between 2.4 and 2.8 *reais* to one euro. In tourist seasons, the *real* is stronger, with its value falling at other times.

antidepressants with tranquillisers or antipsychotics. An interesting conclusion is that under DSM-IV depression is classified as a neurotic illness, while at the Juliano Moréira Hospital they often diagnose it as psychosis. The psychiatrists and therapists I talked to provided different reasons for multi-pathological diagnoses in patients suffering from depressive disorders; the most common were the difficulties attendant upon diagnosis in psychiatry and certain psychiatrists' incompetence. The head of the hospital thought the reason lies in the availability of different treatment methods. As we have already mentioned, the public health insurance fund only covers the costs of drug therapy for treating depressive disorders; for a patient to receive other traditional¹¹⁶ and non-traditional treatment in psychiatric hospitals, he/she must be diagnosed with one of the disorders for which such treatment is prescribed. A frequent diagnostic combination is therefore schizophrenia and depression.

Patients at the Juliano Moréira Hospital who are entitled to other forms of treatment alongside drug therapy undergo therapy at the CENA centre, which is located within the hospital complex and operates under the auspices of the hospital. At the centre, patients are given occupational therapy, painting therapy, dance therapy, group psychotherapy and *capoeira* therapy during the day. I address this in more detail in the next sub-chapter. Despite the fact that the CENA centre operates within the hospital, the head of the centre has a different approach to treatment and a different view of mental illness to that of some of the psychiatrists in other units at the hospital. She avoids drug therapy, is against electroconvulsive therapy, and is committed to reintegrating patients into the normal living environment. She insists that patients should live in their local community – specifically, in their own house – together with their therapist. They would therefore not feel excluded from the narrower or wider community and would find it easier to overcome the problems linked to their illness. Her project has supporters all over the country, where more and more centres similar to CENA are opening up within psychiatric hospitals. Therapy at the centre includes the use of drugs, in minimal doses, though. The therapist is free to stop drug intake, which during my time working at the centre often proved to be the right move. However, the head of the centre says that conflicts arise constantly with the Brazilian Association of Psychiatry, which advocates drug therapy. They consider antidepressants an effective method of

¹¹⁶ Perko (2006, p. 74) mentions the following traditional methods of treatment at psychiatric hospitals: residence in closed or open units for between several weeks and several months, workshop-based occupational therapy, and group meetings where order, discipline and hygiene are discussed. He mentions two further methods which relate solely to the treatment of alcoholism and which eschew the use of drugs, which in this case are only required for the detoxification process.

treatment and they will not withdraw from their position. The head of the centre does not agree with this explanation and believes that excessive use of antidepressants is harmful and that it is the result of the pharmaceutical lobbies influence on doctors. González et al. (2008) state that antidepressants are a *mainstream* treatment method in the US and that their use is recommended. They note that their use is a great deal lower among the black population compared to the white population. The reasons for this are access to drugs and different cultural convictions regarding the use of drug therapy. Smith and Eliot (2003, pp. 244–249) believe that drugs work for some individuals but have a less significant effect on others. Although pharmaceutical companies invest a great deal of money in the research and development of new antidepressants, no one knows for certain how they work. In most cases they increase the level of neuromediators and therefore improve a person's feeling of well-being. However, Ehrenberg (2010), Smith and Eliot (2003), and Keyes and Goodman (2006) all point out the harmful side-effects of antidepressants such as nausea, impotence, urinary problems, headaches, insomnia, weight gain and apathy.

In Salvador, both the professional body and the general public stress the importance of comprehensive physical and mental activity for overcoming depression. Both believe that drugs should only be used to treat acute conditions and that they do more harm than good in the long term. All patients wanted to complete their drug therapy as quickly as possible; however, some had become dependent on the antidepressants and, at the time the research was carried out, had not managed to stop taking the drugs. I examine some of the alternative methods of treatment for depression below.

7.3 ‘*Jogue comigo!*’ (Play with me!)

This sub-chapter is the result of the unplanned part of my research, since as an anthropologist with no prior medical knowledge, I did not expect to get the opportunity to work in a psychiatric hospital. I embarked on my fieldwork doubtful as to whether I would be able to collect enough clinical data on depressive disorders – one cannot walk into a hospital and ask for patient data without the necessary licences and application forms. Together with my fieldwork colleague who was at the same time engaged in research connected with *capoeira*, we had already been practicing *capoeira* for some time and were at least partly integrated into *capoeira* circles; with the help of acquaintances this gave us the opportunity to hold *capoeira*

therapy sessions. At the occupational therapy unit of the CENA mental health centre at the Juliano Moréira Hospital they were looking to reintroduce *capoeira*, which had not been on the programme for some time but had previously yielded positive therapeutic results in the treatment process. The teacher who had held the therapy sessions had left for Europe at the end of 2003 and therefore, they had only had occasional therapists. The head of the centre explained to me that very few *capoeira* teachers and masters were prepared to work at psychiatric hospitals, because the work is either voluntary or very poorly paid, because the majority of them did not find the work to represent a sufficient challenge (they were aware that the therapy process would not produce good *capoeiristas* or consequently their successors who would be able to promote the master's name or the group in the wider Salvador society or worldwide), and finally because mental illness bears the same stigma in Salvador as it does in most societies.

As I have already mentioned, most of the people I spoke to would refer to someone who had spent a few days in a psychiatric hospital as *loco*, regardless of the mental or psychological problem the person was dealing with. Some stated that you could never tell how a person suffering from mental illness would behave. One of them declared:

Nunca se sabe quando algém se-torna maloco e mata toda a família (You never know when they will flip and kill their entire family.) (author's translation)

Corrigan et al. (2001) conducted a study of the link between the knowledge of mental illness, the perception of the danger posed by mental patients and the steps taken to avoid contact with mental patients. They concluded that there was greater avoidance and stigmatisation among those who knew less about mental illness or knew it only from watching television programmes. In the media, mental patients are mostly presented as dangerous. The more people are afraid of mental patients, the less likely it is that they will rent them accommodation, employ them or even associate with them. People who knew mental patients personally, whether it was a family member or if they were suffered a mental illness themselves were not afraid of mental patients and did not avoid them as much. Golberstein et al. (2008) also examine the stigmatisation and avoidance of patients with mental problems, and believe that stigmatisation also affects decisions relating to the treatment of psychopathologies.

In Salvador, I noticed that people who had loved ones and friends who suffered from mental illness treated them as part of society, while mental patients suffered general stigmatisation by the society in general. Unfortunately my sample was too small to be able to reach a conclusion regarding the link between the perception of the danger posed by mental patients and the familiarity with mental illness or mentally ill patients. Despite the fact that some of the statements made by my interviewees about people with psychological problems were often discriminatory, I had noticed a discrepancy between observations and discussions or between words and actions. The inhabitants of our district accepted neighbours with psychological problems as part of society, as fellow human beings, and in some cases as their friends. Nobody was afraid of them or avoided them in the street, and I frequently noticed that patients took part in street discussions and would rather socialise with their neighbours than remain isolated at home. We must consider the fact that conditions in *favela* houses are not conducive to long periods of time spent indoors; it is therefore understandable that people pass most of the day outside in the street. Two out of five neighbours with psychological or mental problems were homeless, and a third spent the majority of his time outside. The two neighbours suffering from depression preferred to stay at home or visit their church group. One reason, perhaps, for the lack of time they spent outside was the fact that they both lived in reasonably decent, tidy flats. Although I often met Paula in the street, I would mostly run into Wanessa at the door to her apartment. It is true that she was absent for most of the day, either because of work or because she attended her church group. I would meet the other four in the street every day frequently in the company of friends or family. The homeless neighbours had no family; they would therefore pass the time with anyone who wanted to keep them company. They would spend the night on staircases of one of the houses and ask for breakfast in the morning. People from the neighbourhood took good care of a woman who was around 30 years old and a regular crack user, and a man who was around 40, did not exhibit any signs of drug use, but had been diagnosed with schizophrenia. Someone would always supply them with food, they received clothing and cigarettes from the neighbours, and some of them would engage them in conversation. The woman, who otherwise communicated normally with the neighbours, would often talk loudly to herself or to invisible companions. The man only rarely established verbal contact with people on the street, although it should be pointed out that he moved around mostly at night, collecting bits of refuse that might be useful. Since I often came home after 11 pm during the week, when the streets were already empty, I would often encounter him engaged in fierce debates with imaginary companions. He would return my greeting in a friendly manner and continue talking and collecting

refuse.¹¹⁷ Despite the fact that both homeless neighbours showed signs of mental or psychological disorders and would often spend at least a few days in the psychiatric hospital, people accepted them as part of society – even those who would refer to anyone from a psychiatric hospital as *loco*. The most common explanations I heard for the difference between words and actions were:

Mas eles são da gente, parte de nosa rua, eles vivem aqui! A moça foi bonita, mais a vida puxó ela em situação contadânia. Ele foi sempre estranho, mais sobrevive sozinho. Não róuba e é gente boa. (But those two are ours! They are part of our street, because they have lived here the whole time. The girl used to be very beautiful, but it was family circumstances which led her to the situation she's in today. He has always been very strange, but he still manages to support himself. He doesn't steal and he's a good man.) (author's translation)

I noticed that things were different for the homeless people begging at the city's business, commercial and tourist centres. They always stayed in the same places and the relations between them and the passers-by were impersonal. People who gave them money however did not engage them in conversation. They existed as part of the street's infrastructure, unnoticed by people going about their daily business. This exclusion from society, the poverty they deal with, the lack of basic resources, hunger, homelessness, hopelessness, and in certain cases the physical violence they endure are extreme situations that undoubtedly increase the likelihood for a homeless person to develop psychopathologies. Botti et al. (2010) argue that depression is the most common psychological problem of the homeless. This is followed by schizophrenia, often in combination with depression. They also attribute the causes of depression in more than 50% of homeless people to their living conditions:

As condições sociais como desemprego, baixo nível de instrução, falta de moradia e alimentação inadequada ou insuficiente. Tais condições, exclusivas ou combinadas, podem favorecer o desenvolvimento de um estado de desesperança, que tem como efeito imediato a redução da capacidade para lidar com situações estressoras de maneira adequada, reduzindo a disposição para suportar fatos adversos e frustrantes. Assim, a desesperança pode propiciar o estabelecimento de estados depressivos, ansiedade e redução drástica da autoestima. (Taken in combination, social conditions such as unemployment, low education, a lack of living space, and insufficient and unhealthy food are factors that can lead to the development of a state of hopelessness, resulting in a diminishing ability to deal with stressful situations in an appropriate manner. This reduces the ability to deal with conflict and frustration factors. Hopelessness can contribute to the development of depression and anxiety, and cause a drastic decline in self-confidence.) (author's translation) (ibid.)

¹¹⁷ In Brazil, many homeless people earn money by collecting tin, paper and plastic. Every evening before the refuse collectors turn up, they browse through the rubbish that people have left in bags in the street.

The hopeless situation faced by today's homeless people can be compared to the situation that slaves found themselves in after being brought to Brazil from Africa. They were placed on the margins of society, exposed to psychological torment, suffered from the lack of food, and forced to work hard and to survive without family or other social ties; moreover, they were deprived of their freedom and of the possibility of identification. They were without doubt also prey to feelings of hopelessness, exclusion and frustration. Marquese and Joly (2008, pp. 214–223) write that the living conditions of slaves in Brazil by the end of the 17th century depended solely on economic events on the world sugar market. After losing their monopoly on the sugar trade as a result of the Dutch occupation of Pernambuco between 1630 and 1650, which led to other superpowers such as France and Spain to enter the market, the Portuguese had to increase taxes in the colonial economy and at the same time increase the size and productivity of the slave labour force. For the slaves, an increase in productivity meant greater persecution and exploitation and an increase in their number. This led to slave rebellions, which reached their peak in the mid-17th century. The authors state that the Jesuits were the first to begin tackling the issues of slavery and how to increase the efficiency of the slave labour force. According to Marquese and Joly (2008, p. 215), Jorge Benci writing for *Economia Cristã dos Senhores no Governo dos Escravos* was among the first to publicly claim that the relationship between the economy and slavery had to be mutual. For a slave to be able to contribute to better household economy, his master had to provide him with work, food and discipline. Benci came up with a proposal for slave trade on the basis of which the Portuguese ruler then amended the legislation on slave ownership (Marquese and Joly, 2008, pp. 218-219). According to the two authors (2008, p. 220) he set out the following responsibilities of a slave master to his slave, meant to prevent uprisings and increase the efficiency of the workforce: a reduction in working hours; an improvement in the material quality of life; religious indoctrination in the virtues of obedience; just punishment (ibid.). According to our analysis of the measures for dealing with frustration, we can presume that an unhappy and frustrated slave was incapable of working, or he channelled his aggression into a specific form of violence. The end result of the cruel treatment of the slave labour force was economic inefficiency, brought about by the slaves' depression and the costs of preventing rebellion.

Lambert and Davis (2002, p. 23) also examine the economic consequences of depression. They point out that depression costs the US 43 billion dollars annually due to treatment costs

and the incapacity to work. If we deal with this kind of incapacity to work problems today, it is very likely they dealt with the same problems in the slave-owning colonial economy. The owners of capital gradually had to allow slaves more freedom and permitted them to express themselves culturally. Despite the fact that this increased the possibility of revolt, the efficiency of the workforce also greatly increased. Cultural manifestations were a means of releasing frustration and of affirming one's identity in a social setting, and much like any other activity, they also influenced the general welfare of the members of the group.

It is in this context that we will supplement the theory of the development of *capoeira*. Since it is said to have developed at *senzalas* as one of the available cultural manifestations, we will define it in relation to violence, aggression and depression as a means of managing stress and frustrations, as a way of expressing and channelling aggressive tendencies, as a means of identification, and as an institution for the harmonisation of social relations, the establishment of values and the preservation of cultural heritage. To conclude our analysis, we need to further support our presupposition that *capoeira* also developed as a means of managing stress and frustration and that it has always been presented as a form of social therapy. To confirm this, we have to examine the conditions that formed the basis for the development of the discipline. As Marquese and Joly (2008, pp. 216–218) state, slaves between 1580 and 1650 were exposed to cruel exploitation by slave owners and traders because of a lack of legislation on slave ownership. Without doubt, this caused the African population, who were according to Scheper-Hughes (1992, p. 41) subjected to overwork, hunger and poor and overcrowded living conditions, a great deal of psychological torment. We have argued that an extreme situation of this kind causes an inability to deal with stress and frustration, which can, according to the views we hold today on this pathology, contribute to the development of both depression and anxiety. Even if the diagnosis of depression still did not exist at that time, the African slaves suffered psychological and physical symptoms similar to the ones we attribute to depression today. This state of affairs was damaging to the affected population, as well as to the owners of capital. As Ehrenberg (2010, p. 167) states, a depressed individuals suffer from disorders in their physical life and lose their vitality. Their energy levels slowly diminish and over time they suffer from physical symptoms.

The slaves that suffered from a specific psychopathology were incapable of working and, at the very least, their productivity was reduced. With additional persecution, they would have become completely consumed, attacked by a physical illness that would most likely lead to death. Due to the slaves' poor productivity and short lifespan, as Scheper-Hughes (1992, p.

41) writes, their masters had to buy more slaves, which gave rise to additional costs and economic inefficiency. These circumstances consequently lead, to a search for a solution and the regulation of relations between masters and slaves. As we have described, they were granted more free time, better food and just punishment, and they were subjected to religious indoctrination. The masters also probably found that leisure activities such as dance and other folkloric events improved the slaves' mood and gave them energy, which led to greater productivity. Even if they were not aware, when they permitted these activities and events they went ahead with a kind of social therapy for their workforce. These activities are also an effective means of dealing with stress today. Since, as I have written, *capoeira* could have been a way for male African slaves to express their aggressive tendencies, compete with each other and affirm their own identities to each other, i.e. a way of resolving the frustrations caused by the deprivation of freedom, dispossession and social exclusion, we can conclude that it also constituted a form of therapy for combating depression, sadness and despair. Naturally, we cannot conclude that *capoeira* was deliberately developed as a therapeutic technique; however, it is fair to say that, owing to its place in the cultural development of the Afro-Brazilian population and the components involved (music, dance, fighting, socialising, ritual), it was always a good way of coming together, of competing, and of combating frustration and stress. It could also represent a way for men who had been deprived of social capital to assert themselves socially. The following poem talks of precisely this:

*Vamos trabalhár, vamos plantár dendé
na roda de capoeira, negro joga pra valér.*

(Let's go to work, let's plant *dende*, in the *roda* of *capoeira* the *negro* plays for recognition)

We can see similar methods of dealing with frustration and of social self-assertion in today's urban subcultures. Rap duels and stand-up comedy contests can represent both a way of competing and an expression of disagreement with the social, economic and political situation.

A comparison with the situation today

I had experienced the link between *capoeira* and stress management when holding therapy sessions at the Juliano Moréira Hospital, and some people I spoke to mentioned it as well:

Capoeira é cura, é um tipo de terapia. Não só fisicamente mais principalmente mental. (*Capoeira* is medicine, it's therapy, not just for the body but also for the psyche.) (author's translation)

Capoeira influe saúde corporal e mental. (*Capoeira* has an effect on physical and mental health.) (author's translation)

Não existe melhor modo pra se-relaxar pra descargá o stress do que capoeira. (There is no better way of relaxing, of getting rid of stress than *capoeira*.) (author's translation)

Eu conheço grupos que trabalham com pessoas deprimidas e os professores dizem que tem muito sucesso. (I know groups that deal with people suffering from depression and the teachers there maintain that they are very successful.) (author's translation)

I carried out research at the Juliano Moréira Hospital between the beginning of August and the end of December 2006. I used *capoeira* as physical and music therapy in treating patients with various psychopathologies. I have to mention that I am not trained as a therapist or either have any experience in this area, however, the opportunity to be involved with those potentially depressive in the therapeutic relationship was a challenge worth trying. For director of the CENA it was only important that I was *capoeira* instructor and willing to perform the therapies. So I have designed my therapies as sport lessons considering the fact that I was already graduated amateur sport worker in Slovenia and trained *capoeira* instructor. I knew that it would not be easy, namely participants were not in good physical shape, so I started with basic easy movements and emphasized the musical elements of *capoeira*. For me it was a pleasant surprise that the patients adored the musical part of *capoeira*, which is not always the case back home where mostly people would join *capoeira* lessons to get in better physical shape. Perceiving that singing, clapping hands and playing instruments will be the core of our therapy, I realized how important - at least for Salvadorians - is a cultural aspect of *capoeira*. All patients knew how important *capoeira* was, and still is, for the emancipation of those being marginalized, so it was easy for them to find appropriate identification objects within the art. Some believed that if they will learn *capoeira*, the community in which they live, would respect or at least accept them. Some were convinced that they would be able to protect themselves against attackers and further violence since they were already exposed to it previously. So *capoeira* became very popular therapy during my stay in the hospital. Once a week the therapists brought also the patients from the locked up area of the hospital to

participate on therapy. First it was rather an unusual experience to work with those who had almost no notion about how to be focused. Yet at the same time I was instructing English in the primary school and the kids there also lacked the same notion. I had to create the appropriate technique to approach them and make them participate in the lessons. In such way the new perspective about social role and so called magical power of *capoeira* was revealed. I sometimes had more than 30 patients on therapy and could observe how involvement in capoeira changed their behaviour in positive and sometimes even in negative way. A good example of stimulated strange behaviour caused by *capoeira* therapy might be following:

The new patient came to the therapy. First she refused to participate and was sitting on the chair observing the therapy. On the next day she started to swing with the rhythm of the music while still sitting. On the third therapy when we were singing and playing in the *roda*, she entered into a state of trance, she undressed herself and started to run and jump in the circle making strange motions with her arms and body. She was chanting in incomprehensible way. Some patients did not pay any attention of her behaviour; others commented that this might be caused by sorcery as for sure she belongs to some religious group that performs magical rituals. They were sure that she is from *Macumba* or *Umbanda*. I have accompanied her to the toilet and help her get dressed but I have never found out what caused such reaction. Maybe it was the constant rhythm or it was the text of the song we were singing.

In addition to observations I held in-depth discussions with four women and two men, and I also led informal discussions during the therapy sessions. For most of the patients at the centre, the therapy lasted between three weeks and one month. We held two-hour *capoeira* sessions twice a week, which accounted for around 15% of the therapy as a whole.¹¹⁸ The patients were able to collaborate in designing the therapy, and the ones who included *capoeira* in the process participated in the sessions at least once a week. Despite the fact that it was always difficult to raise the energy levels and mood of participants at the start of the exercise, they would be eager to take part after the first ten minutes – everyone according to their own abilities, that is. In the course of five months around 50 patients with various mental problems joined the group at one time or another; these problems were most often schizophrenia, anxiety depression, manic depression, undefined depression-related psychosis, chronic depression and anti-social behaviour. The patients came exclusively from the poor districts of

¹¹⁸ As therapy, I am here referring to occupational therapy, group psychoanalytical therapy, movement therapy and creative workshops. Drug-based therapy that does not take up the patient's time is not included (except in the case of large doses, where the person is unable to undertake other methods of treatment and rests in a room set aside for this purpose. At the CENA centre, they call this kind of lying on the floor 'rest', since they would describe it as the passive part of therapy, while the other methods are the active part of therapy. The passive part of therapy lasted up to two hours a day and I do not consider it to be a form of therapy in itself.

Salvador and were mostly black – which is linked, of course, to the fact that most of the poor population of the city is black.

The link between poverty, race and mental illness at the Juliano Moréira Hospital

The reasons for the prevalence of poverty among the black population have roots in history, in elitism, and also in the ethnic make-up of Salvador's population. The black population is the most numerous in Salvador, although we must consider the classification of 'black' in Brazil. Brazilians are roughly divided into Euro-Brazilians, Amerindians and Afro-Brazilians; this last category is subdivided into *mestizos* (mixed race), *morenos* or *pardos* (brown) and *pretos* (black). *Pretos* most commonly make up the poorest sections of the population. Owing to its ethnic and cultural plurality, and the presence of immigrants from all over the world, Brazilian society at first glance appears tolerant and accepting. However, after having spent several months there, I saw that there was a big difference and a large gap between the rich and the poor, even though they live side by side; as a consequence, there exists class conflict. It is obvious from historical facts that poverty is also related to skin colour, considering that the majority of the black and Amerindian population remains penniless. Since the abolition of slavery, the poor population has wanted to be free and integrated into Brazilian society as equals. Although we cannot talk of classic racism *per se* in Brazil, we can state that, owing to the relation between skin colour and economic situation, economic racism does exist. The reasons for the ostensible plurality of Brazilian society and the absence of racism are well described by Paixão (2004, pp. 743–748). In the last 60 years, Brazil has spread the idea of a multiracial and multicultural society with equal rights for all; however, as he states, the black population was still excluded from society at the end of the 19th century, with the authorities criminalising *capoeira* as well as other cultural and religious institutions of the Afro-Brazilian population in 1890 (*ibid.*). At the beginning of the 20th century, politicians and sociologists such as Pinto and Lacerda predicted that Brazil's African population would die out by 2000. Paixão (2004, pp. 744–745) also discusses the economic exclusion of the Afro-Brazilian population, since factories employed only European immigrants, thus abandoning the black population to poverty. Owing to a lack of research and statistics, racism was not discussed in Brazil until the 1990s, which was when state institutions, under pressure from Afro-Brazilian organisations, began research and established a strong link between poverty and race.

However, as we have established, poverty and the problems linked to it are not the sole and most important reason for depression – except in extreme cases such as homelessness, where poverty is the dominant factor in the development of psychopathologies (it does not make sense to talk about the influence of relationships in the family, with friends and at work, or the impact of stress and frustration caused by a desire for success and recognition). All stress factors connected to career issues *a priori* exclude the homeless, since the homeless rarely succeed in finding employment; in most cases they also have no family and seldom any friends, unless they make friendly contact with others in a similar position. This is usually difficult. I noticed that most of them begged alone, because they see other homeless people as their competition. Family relations and cooperation are developed among homeless women with children; in such cases, the children and the mother beg together.

If we consider the exclusion facts of the black population in Brazil and recognise the link between poverty and the development of mental illness, we can conclude that the predominance of black patients at Juliano Moréira Hospital is not solely the result of urbanisation and the ethnic structure of society in Salvador. Namely all of my patients came from poor parts of Salvador and with exception of two of them they were extremely dark skinned - one was not from Salvador. Even if I have not analysed statistical data to confirm the correlation between skin colour and social status, my observations from the hospital and also some other experiences during my stay in Salvador gave me the impression that being poor and dark is not the rule but yet very common co-occurrence. Also CENA director who herself is dark skinned Afro-Brazilian agreed with my assumption that mostly dark skinned are poor, and in the case of Juliano Moréira Hospital also most prevalent patients suffering from pathologies that might be ascribed to the poverty. Even if schizophrenia is strongly connected with the poverty she claimed that we may not exclude depression as the direct result of poverty or the relationships that are re-established in poor living conditions.

7.3.1 Reasons for the psychological problems suffered by patients at CENA and the benefits of *capoeira* therapy

I understood from the discussions that many patients had fallen into difficulty also due to the circumstances within their family and their immediate social environment, and not only because of their living conditions, economic situation or the political powerlessness that

comes from a divide between individual and state. For some, depression had developed as a result of a traumatic event. Antonio, for example, had fallen into a deep anxiety depression because of traumatic events at work. He worked as a bus conductor and twice experienced an armed robbery on the bus. After they had killed one of his colleagues, he made every effort to go back to work, but ended up terrified in the corner of a motel room, and consequently the receptionist had to call for medical assistance. They took him to the São Paulo Psychiatric Hospital (the biggest one in Salvador) from where he was later transferred to Juliano Moréira Hospital. Antonio said that *capoeira* has raised his self-confidence and returned his trust in life, leaving him feeling safer and physically stronger. Physical exercise strengthens and gives courage. A number of therapists have also written about the importance of physical exercise. Rugelj (1985), for example, presents his social adult education method as an effective means for treating addiction, by way of forming a positive self-image and inducing self-respect through physical activity. He believes that regular endurance running and mountaineering are the only effective therapeutic physical activities, although we should not forget that Rugelj developed his method in Slovenia and not in Salvador, where cultural institutions and social values are different. Other authors highlight the benefits of dance, physical activity and music (Aldridge, 2008; Freeman and Power, 2007; Meekums and Dulicai, 2002; Bunt and Hoskins, 2002; Gilroy and Colin, 1995; Donald, 1985). For this reason, I will not analyse the positive effects of physical movement and music on mental and physical health at this point (we will take this assumption as a fact *per definitionem*). The conclusion that *capoeira* is understood by both the professional body and the general public in Salvador to be an effective therapeutic tool for fighting depression and other psychopathologies is essential for our research. People often choose *capoeira* to deal with their psychological and physical problems. One patient said:

Desde eu pratico capoeira aqui, tenho mais força mais tranquilidade e mais vontade pra viver. Eu escolhi a capoeira como terapia, porque sabia que vai me ajudar. (Since I've been doing *capoeira*, I have more strength, I'm calmer and I have more interest in life. I chose *capoeira* because I knew it would be useful.) (author's translation)

Karla was being treated at the CENA centre for anxiety and deep depression. They diagnosed her with chronic depression, therefore she would return for treatment on a periodic basis. She herself attributed her situation to her family relations and was one of the few patients from the lower middle class.

Luiz from Belo Horizonte presented an interesting case of depression, which had begun after he had killed a drug dealer. The court judged him to be of unsound mind and referred him to a psychiatric hospital for treatment. After undergoing two years of treatment with strong antipsychotics and electroconvulsive therapy at a hospital in Belo Horizonte and at the São Paulo Hospital in Salvador, he was moved to Juliano Moréira. As he showed signs of improvement, the therapy was administered at the CENA centre. He registered for *capoeira* therapy because he had been interested in it for some time. He said he had had no direct contact with *capoeira* before, since it is not as widespread among the white population of his home state of Minas Gerais as it is in Bahia. Despite the fact that he did not belong to the same cultural group as the patients from Salvador who are familiar with *capoeira* (some of them had experience in *capoeira* prior to developing their psychopathology), he was extremely enthusiastic about the therapy; he was one of the most committed participants and quickly began to show signs of improvement. The other patients were aware that he had killed a person and they avoided him at first; however, through exercise and play, they soon established contact with him and built mutual trust. Over the four weeks of therapy, Luiz became integrated into the group and talked freely to me as well as to the other patients.

My last example is a patient who had trained in *capoeira* when younger, but stopped when she married and had children. She had a bad relationship with her husband and on several occasions their conflicts had developed into violent confrontations. On one occasion, she told us that after he had hit her she stood up to him and was able to incapacitate him using her *capoeira* skills. She came to the CENA centre only during the day and was very happy to be able to start *capoeira* therapy again, since there had not been a teacher willing to lead the sessions there for some time. For her, *capoeira* represented happiness and creativity, and she would sing the *capoeira* songs with great enthusiasm. I made her a CD of *capoeira* music, and she would occasionally bring the printed lyrics of one of the songs and ask me if we could sing it during the therapy session. In one of our discussions, she said:

Eu me sinto tao feliz quando estou cantando canções de capoeira. É minha raiz é minha cultura e me lembra au juventude. (I'm so happy when I sing *capoeira* songs. *Capoeira* is my race, my culture, and it reminds me of my youth.) (author's translation)

As we can see, patients have different reasons for choosing *capoeira* therapy. The most likely factors to influence their decision are the chance to gain a skill, the patient's relationship with this social institution and their previous experience of therapy, their diagnosis and the psychiatrist's recommendation regarding the most suitable therapy for a specific psychopathology and last but not least curiosity, since *capoeira* is a complex skill that brings together music, dance and martial arts. Brüne (2008, p. 93) writes that therapy must be tailor-made for the individual, with the therapist taking into account the patient's age, sex, biological predispositions, previous experiences and socio-economic background.

All the therapists, as well as *capoeira* masters, mention *capoeira* as an effective means of combating psychopathologies. One of them emphasized the following:

...capoéra arté que faz bem pra saude corporál e mentál. A pessoa se-movimenta, se-integra, ganha autoestima e confiança, fica alegre cantando e jogando capoéira. (... *capoeira* is a skill that benefits physical as well mental health. You move, mix, increase your self-respect and confidence, and the singing and dancing makes you happy.) (author's translation)

Conclusion

Throughout my thesis I have argued about the social role of Brazilian martial art *capoeira* and its influences on depression, aggression and violence. If I claim that depression, aggression and violence are all results of the individual's responses to internal or external stimuli, I can argue that social relationships and institutions have an important influence on the development, beliefs and ways of coping with the above mentioned phenomena. Brazilian martial art *capoeira* has a significant social role in Afro-Brazilian society. To reveal this role I had to analyse its institutional changes and the changes in its social meanings throughout history. I argued that, due to its role in society, *capoeira* has a relevant influence on the occurrence and coping with depression, aggression and violence. To show the influences *capoeira* can exert on these phenomena, I have defined the difference between aggression and violence and analysed the perceptions of both within *capoeira*. Thus I have presented arguments for three main topics in this thesis. The first topic was the emergence and development of *capoeira* and about the changes in its social role, the second was the prevalence and reasons for aggression, violence and depression, the beliefs and behaviour for coping with these phenomena, and the third topic was the connections and relationships between *capoeira*, depression, aggression and violence; in the last one I analysed views on the afore mentioned phenomena amongst the *capoeira* public and beliefs about the role that *capoeira* has regarding the development of and coping with these phenomena. With this I have shown the importance of *capoeira* in interpersonal and inter-institutional relationships. In the first section, I have shown that *capoeira* was indeed developed as a means of emancipation and liberation in the enslaved population, but I did not agree that this institution represented only physical fighting against the Portuguese colonizer. I argued that *capoeira* represented the means to deal with frustration in enslaved African men. Many masters mentioned that they were well-guarded until the middle of the 17th century; therefore I can hardly believe that at least at the beginning of slave work exploration they had a chance to flee or fight by using *capoeira*. According to Amsel's Frustration Theory (1992, pp. 34-67), the enslaved population exposed to punishment, humiliation, hunger and hard work, had to develop some sort of persistent behaviour in order to survive physically, mentally and emotionally. Amsel (1992, p. 61) argues that if the frustration stimuli is high, the subject develops "dispositional learning", which could be equalled to Bateson's (1972, pp. 301-306)

Learning III - the ability of the individual to adopt a known set of behavioural features in a new context for unknown or new purposes. Considering Amsel's and Bateson's theories, I went on to claim that *capoeira* was developed as an activity to cope with frustration and stress. Men could compete amongst themselves and gain social status and respect within the enslaved population as good *capoeira* fighters. Talmon-Chvaicer (in Asante and Mazama, 2005, pp. 175-178) also states that *capoeira* was practiced at *senzalas* as a leisure activity, but she argues that this activity might only have represented a common cultural institution of the enslaved African population. As they came from different cultural groups, they did not have a common cultural institution. *Capoeira* was developed as a "*social expression that inherently incorporated all the basic elements of African dances: the circle, the dance, the music and the spectators, as well as rituals, symbols and other components that served the capoeiristas in the course of activity*". (Talmon-Chvaicer in Asante and Mazama, 2005, pp. 176).

Yet none of the masters I spoke to mentioned that during the years of slavery *capoeira* would have such a role. According to them *capoeira* served as fighting technique to liberate oneself and flee from *senzalas* and an effective martial art in fights to protect *quilombos*. They claim that amusement elements of *capoeira* appeared later through centuries, once *capoeira* was already allowed to be practiced as a leisure activity. Despite such claims there is a time discrepancy to be noticed in masters' narrations. Firstly, they refer to the slavery period as the period of persecution, when on the other hand historians write that slave owners changed their policies regarding slave treatment already at the beginning of 17th century. In order to improve psychical health of the enslaved, they allowed cultural manifestations - including *capoeira* - to be performed on *senzalas*. Secondly, when I asked them when the *roda* ritual appeared some would argue that it already existed on *senzalas*, but it was changed and re-created by *Mestre Bimba* and *Mestre Pastinha*. The others would say that *capoeira* was first practiced *in cognito* and that the *rodas* appeared once *capoeira* was allowed to be practiced publicly, namely at the beginning of the 20th century. At the same breath they would claim that *rodas de capoeira* were already organised in the 19th century on the markets and in harbours as amusement for sailors and those selling and buying goods for their masters. The *roda* rules and course have to be changed in the time of persecution between 1889 and 1937.

Even greater inconsistency was noticed regarding the cultural elements of *capoeira*. Some masters claim that the folklore was introduced in *capoeira* during the persecution period when the image of *capoeira* as street fight and vagabond activity had to be changed. Again others

claim that folklore elements were always present in *capoeira* and only got lost through the 19th century, when *capoeira* was indeed practiced as street fight activity. However most would speak that it was *Mestre* Pastinha that re-introduced the old traditions into today's *capoeira* rituals, and that it was *Mestre* Bimba that putted into force the rules of practice and the system of graduation. Both were the founders of modern *capoeira*, yet with different approaches.

To claim that *capoeira* was developed as leisure activity and the means to re-establish social hierarchy among enslaved men, I had to make conclusions as an insider and practitioner of *capoeira* considering the different explanations and my observations how *capoeira* is practiced and performed and what are its social effects regarding social hierarchies and psychic health. However, I present and interpret the data in accordance to already existing claims of other researchers concerned with the development of *capoeira*.

Even if I argue that *capoeira* might have represented an activity to cope with frustration, to re-establish social heirarchy or to unite different African cultures in one common activity, I do not deny that knowledge of *capoeira* served as a useful and effective defence technique for individuals against slave hunters (*capitões de mato*), once the slaves managed to escape due to lack of control. *Capoeira* could also represent a means to defend *quilombos* or to provide guns with fast and unexpected attacks on slave hunters and small army units in the wildness (*mato*). Regardless of the origin and reasons for the nascence of *capoeira*, I further analysed the development and changes in the institution throughout the years until today. When I comprehended that the notion of *malandragem* or trickster played the main role in the development of *capoeira*, and still represents one of the most important features of a good *capoeira* fighter, it gave me a good basis to interpret the meaning of *capoeira* in today's society and its influences on coping with frustration and stress. My research took place in Salvador between 2005 and 2007 and I perceived a huge cultural difference between the South and the Northeast Region of Brazil and also between Afro-Brazilians, Native-Brazilians and Euro-Brazilians. Consequently, I cannot come to any kind of general conclusion in my thesis about the whole of the Brazilian population.

Beside the characteristics of *capoeira* as an art and an institution, the public beliefs about the abilities of *capoeira* masters are also of great importance for explaining *capoeira*'s influences on depression and violence. Some of my interlocutors mentioned special magical and healing

powers that good *capoeira* masters, above all the old ones, are supposed to have. They are mostly perceived as mysterious and different than other members of society. Oliveira Cruz (2006) writes about the extraordinary abilities that *Mestre Besouro Preto Mangagá*, a great master from the beginning of twentieth century possessed. He was able to escape from any kind of danger and threat by transforming himself into a beetle. He was also capable of healing his wounds much faster than other fighters, although due to his ability to maintain *corpo fechado* (a protected body), he hardly ever got injured in fights. His knowledge and techniques of magic and healing supposedly comes from *candomblé*. Some masters mentioned that the only master still familiar with the old techniques for maintaining *corpo fechado* is *Mestre João Grande* who lives and works in New York. He was *Mestre Pastinha's* scholar, who was supposed to be *Mestre Besouro Preto Mangagá's* scholar or at least belonged to his lineage. The importance of origins, genealogy and institutional kinship is yet another feature that explains the relationships within the institution and between institution and society. Even in Salvador there are numerous *capoeira* groups and each group has a particular fighting style, ritual rules and history. Most of them would declare themselves either as *angoleiros* (these who come from *Mestre Pastinha's* line), as *regional* (these who come from *Mestre Bimba's* line) or as practitioners of *capoeira contemporânea* (contemporary *capoeira*). Later is perceived as *capoeira* that would mix and incorporate the techniques coming from other martial arts, yet preserving the essence of *capoeira* that are *ginga* and *malandragem*. The specific style the students practice also dictates a special set of rules, beliefs and behaviour. Fundamentally they are not very different, but there are multiple variations of original styles, therefore we cannot talk about a homogeneous and consistent *capoeira* style, ritual, rules or beliefs. In general all schools have in common the belief that *capoeira* is more than a sport or a martial art. Students and masters agree that it is an Afro-Brazilian cultural institution, a means of emancipation, a healing technique, a Brazilian national sport and folkloric an educational institution, and for some also a leisure activity.

Everyone I spoke to was fascinated by *capoeira* because of its significant role in Afro-Brazilian society, which was in general extremely positive in the eyes of those who practice *capoeira*. Although the majority of the public argues that *capoeira* is still stigmatized, in Brazilian society it is a violent and marginal activity due to its historical importance in the fight for emancipation of the marginalized population. In addition, the general public perceives *capoeira* as a beautiful and healthy activity, effective in coping with stress and social problems in slums, for example violence. I had the opportunity to observe the attitudes

of students and masters towards aggression and violence while training *capoeira* in two different groups. Aggression was mostly perceived as the *modo de jogo* (way of play) that bring students closer to potential real-life situations on the street. In this kind of play students used more physical contact; the kicks and the rhythm of the play were faster. They used the expression "*jogar mais agressivo*", saying that sometimes you have to play with more force, more aggressively, to get the feeling of how to protect yourself if you are attacked on the street or to play a *capoeira* like once was played on the *rodas da rua*. On the other hand the expression "*jogo violento*" is used when players are trying to describe the dirty, unfair and harmful play, with the aim of causing physical or psychological damage. Such violence is sometimes used by *capoeira* groups trying to demonstrate their superiority in order to acquire more students. Individuals play violently if they cannot control their emotions or if they have been taught to do so. Aggression is therefore accepted in *capoeira* as long as it does not bring any harm to the participants. Violence is rejected by most of the masters and groups, and is perceived as a malevolent activity that still causes the stigmatization of the institution amongst the general public. My activity in *capoeira* groups not only facilitated my observations, but also allowed me to gain the trust of students and masters. This is why I managed to access 'hidden' information, which is usually inaccessible to *gringos* and why I was able to discuss the topics and problems, which are mostly concealed behind the constructed image of *capoeira* outside Brazil. In many groups *gringo* students are perceived as costumers and not as equal co-players at *rodas* and trainings. The masters do not play with them in the same way they play with their Brazilian students, they do not easily show and teach particular movements and techniques and they do not discuss certain issues with them. I learned that if I had approached them as an anthropologist, my results would have been different from the ones I acquired as a *capoeira* student trying to write something about the art, using anthropological methodology. As I had already trained *capoeira* for three years prior to starting my fieldwork, I was already partly integrated in the *capoeira* society and *capoeira* masters introduced me to the communities in Salvador where they lived and worked. Undoubtedly this facilitated my integration. The fact that I have trained diligently and played roughly with Brazilian students enabled me to become part of the society only after a few months of living there. At the beginning some students called me *gringo* or *estrangero* (stranger) behind my back, but later on, as I did not demonstrate any major faults during play and training they started to use my name and *apelido* (nick name), which is a sign of acceptance and closeness. They realized that not only the physical part of *capoeira* but also its cultural side interested me. I will later use the argument of the pre-involvement to verify the

research method I used in my fieldwork. Regardless of my previous involvement and fast integration, I was faced with another obstacle. I could not know exactly how much of the information was biased by the glorification of the art and the idealistic views on *capoeira* amongst the involved. The fact that the art was stigmatized and persecuted in history influenced the idealistic perceptions of the role and importance of *capoeira*. Today's students and masters want to present their art as an honourable institution, which in the past involved only heroic characters whose principal aim was "*luta pra liberdade*" (fighting for freedom). That is why my constant presence at trainings, folk events where *capoeira* was performed, parties and important *capoeira* events, for example *batizado*, and at informal gatherings in the streets and beaches was necessary - to avoid the biased image of *capoeira*. I was allowed to play in all *rodas* I participated and my impression was that once the players perceived that I am a smart *capoeira* player, aware of *malandragem*, they wanted to trick me and show that Salvador *capoeiristas* are better than the European ones. There were always three or four of them that entered the *roda* successively to play with me, so that I would get tired and at least one of them could apply me a *rastera*. I was really careful not to fall on public *rodas* but when I did I could notice the glorifying smile of *capoeirista* that managed to throw me. I learned how social status and informal hierarchy are constructed through performance in the *roda*. Some masters emphasized that *capoeirista* will only prove himself through *jogo na roda*, and that those - especially the ones instructing abroad - should visit Salvador periodically and appear on as many *rodas* as possible to build and maintain their reputation. Through visiting public *rodas* and *capoeira* events I wanted to experience other non-formal aspects of the institution as well and overcome some of the difficulties anthropologists encounter when they try to integrate themselves into local ceremonies as actors. Evans-Pritchard (1976, p. 67) wrote that "*a European is never seriously regarded as a member of an esoteric group and has little opportunity of checking to what extent a performance is changed for his benefit, by design, or by the psychological responses of the participants to the rites being affected by his presence*". He also saw some difficulties in a European being involved with such institutions as a participant, since Europeans are perceived as members of the noble class and do not share the same values as commoners.

Salvadorian Afro-Brazilian perceptions of Europeans are very similar to the ones Evans-Pritchard described. Europeans travelling to Salvador are in their opinion by *de fault* full of money; they have a good job and in general come to Brazil to have fun with local girls and boys. The last in the line of this kind of generalizing perceptions in itself can already be a

significant obstacle when a researcher is trying to build genuine contact with the local community. Furthermore, another helping factor for me was that I was doing fieldwork with a female colleague, which facilitated my access to people and relationships.

I gathered much data from daily conversations with neighbours, patients, therapists and psychiatrists in the Juliano Moréira psychiatric hospital, with teachers in the Manuel Lisboa primary school and people involved with *capoeira*; the perception of me as someone trying to find girls would therefore be very disturbing. Not only empirical data collecting but also literature reviews were an important part of my fieldwork. Certain books, especially regarding *capoeira* are published in Portuguese and available only in Brazil. If I wanted to make a profound study of the historical development of *capoeira* enabling me to understand its social role today, I had to learn the language as soon as possible. The advantage of an urban environment, in my case Salvador, is that English is spoken by Portuguese instructors. By taking a few lessons I accelerated my language learning process. The availability of structured language learning and literature in Salvadorian libraries facilitated my language learning. The fact that I could learn language in few months is another argument that supports my chosen part-time fieldwork methodology.

The role of *capoeira* in today's Salvadorian society

To understand the influences of *capoeira* on depression, aggression and violence I had to perform a review of *capoeira*'s historical development and the change in its social role. Here I emphasize only the role of *capoeira* in today's Salvadorian society. As I have already mentioned, during my research from 2005 to 2007, I took part in several *capoeira* events, parties, celebrations, weekly *rodas*, trainings, etc. in Salvador. The most important and interesting outcome was that *capoeira* gatherings are not meant only as sport or fighting events, but they also play a significant role in cultural performances. The continuous presence of *capoeira* in Salvadorian society through the 19th and 20th century influenced the construction of a sophisticated social network of relationships between *capoeira* members and the local society. *Capoeira* was always feared and considered to be the violent and magical martial art of *pretos* (blacks) and *vagabundos* (vagabond), and at the same time it represented the political and cultural institution of emancipation. The people involved with it were persecuted and stigmatized by the dominant class and partly also by Afro-Brazilians. Authors such as Rego (1968) and Soares Ríbano (1999) argue that *capoeira* masters were assassins

hired by politicians throughout the second half of the 19th century. In order to survive they were paid to kill or injure political rivals. *Capoeira* was persecuted by the law with the nascence of the Republic and it still carries the acquired stigma. Today the era between 1870 and 1930 is perceived as the Dark Age of *capoeira*, when it acquired a bad reputation through legal persecution, although the same era is perceived - by people who glorified the institution - as the time of great fighters and creative institutional changes trying to change *capoeira*'s image. In that time *capoeira* masters managed to institutionalize the art as a national martial art and Afro-Brazilian cultural institution. I have shown in this paper that with institutionalization its tradition was re-created. The masters of the time reached a consensus regarding the rules and rituals of *capoeira*. The new image of *capoeira* started to be constructed. Today *capoeira* denotes rebellion, emancipation, survival, adaptation, courage, hope, African roots and ancestors. Today's role of *capoeira* might differ in several aspects from its social role in the past, but there are still many remaining characteristics such as basic body movements, ritual rules of the *jogo* (the play), music, striving for emancipation, passing of knowledge, collision of African, Native-American and European cultures. The difference in *capoeira*'s role is not only a matter of time but also of space. For example in Salvadorian society many youngsters practice *capoeira* to survive on the streets, to gain respect, for education purposes, or to provide themselves with a job. In many cases *capoeira* represents a life-style, a cultural and educational institution, and sometimes also a family for children who live in a difficult family environment. The presence of both parents in lower class families is rather rare and in many cases single mothers raise children. According to the psycho-dynamical and psychoanalytical developmental theories¹¹⁹ - still one of the prevalent paradigms in today's psychiatric understanding of psychopathologies - the absence of the father's authority in the crucial phases of a child's development¹²⁰ can cause behavioural deviances. However, I have met many young *capoeiristas* in Boca do Rio that would have only a mother or grandparents raising them. Even if I am not a psychiatrist and neither was any of *capoeiristas* examined by one, I can claim that their behaviour was in accordance to

¹¹⁹ Based on Freud's psychosexual development theory (Freud, 1954) psycho-dynamical theory is still the contemporary hegemonic paradigm in bio-medical psychiatry. In most cases, as Praper (1999, p. 15) argues, psycho dynamical theory is equaled with psychoanalytical theory, but some authors distinguish between them, claiming that psycho-dynamical theory has roots in physics, starting in the 18th century with G. W. Leibniz.

¹²⁰ Freud (1954) evolves his psychosexual development theory according to which a child passes different developmental phases or stages. It starts with the Oral phase in which two drives (libido and aggression) are constructed, it then transforms to the anal phase in the first year of the child's life and approximately at the age of three, the child enters the phallic phase during which the super-ego is born. Freud was convinced that the super-ego succeeds the ego and is crucial when identification is in progress. Super-ego is constituted through interdictions and commands. In this stage the father becomes an important socialization medium.

the established rules of certain *capoeira* group. They were scrupulous students regardless if in school or on *capoeira* trainings. They were far from being involved in criminal activities and some even became respected *capoeira* professors. So my dilemma therefore was if the *capoeira* master representing a father, an authority, a teacher, an idol and a rival can influence the normal development of young *capoeiristas* or are the institutional rules that lead the youngsters to the right way, or are both. I can conclude that proper social function of *capoeira* developed by all the actors, rules, traditions and rituals constructs the beneficial environment in local society where certain *capoeira* school operates. Youngsters are disciplined through the hierarchical system of *capoeira*, which substitutes and dictates the social order in *favela*. The master incorporates the role of a father, sets boundaries for youngsters and represents the male role-model. Lashlie (2005, pp. 35-64) argues that male role-models, regardless if they are teachers or parents, indicate the path for youngster to follow. They are their reference of identification and they should initiate the boys to become men in a particular society. In our post-modern¹²¹ society this is rather an ambiguous experience as the roles are not explicit anymore and there is a great variety of options for youngsters to follow. In many cases the means of identification are shameful for boys - they end up in jail, hospital or even the cemetery, trying to prove that they are 'real men'.

Not only discipline, but also education and identification are the benefits of participating in a *capoeira* group. The group represents the larger family or gang and therefore assures a level of security and provides the members with notions about social rules and status. Older and more experienced *capoeira* players should be respected; the Afro-Brazilian society respects the old masters for their social contribution.

In Salvador's richer parts¹²², however, *capoeira* has a different role than in *favelas*. First of all I perceived a higher percentage of older people involved in *capoeira* than in slums. This does not mean, of course, that children's groups do not exist, but only that they are smaller and not as frequent. The typical learners are students or employed men and women between 20 and 45 years old. Many of them mentioned that they practice *capoeira* to stay fit or to cope with stress after a long day. Most of them do not perceive this martial art only as a sport but also as part of the Afro-Brazilian folklore and the Brazilian culture in general. In spite of several slight differences between the perception and the role of *capoeira* in slums and richer areas,

¹²¹ I use term post-modern society in regards to contemporary society, integrated into the global net of cultural interchanges using modern information technology.

¹²² We must consider that *favelas* and *bairros nobres* are not separated. In the middle of *favela* there are rich condominiums and in the business, trade and tourist center of Salvador there are some very poor districts.

one difference significantly stands out: in richer areas *capoeira* - in its primitive sense - is rarely a survival tool¹²³, even if people from the middle and the upper middle class are the ones most frequently attacked by thieves. Only the rich can afford a bodyguard and it is illegal to carry a gun. However, attackers always use guns, therefore it is wiser to hand over all your valuables rather than try to protect them. Even if martial art is not used as a protective technique it gives the individual a certain level of self-esteem, reducing the risk of being attacked. There is an astonishing offer of various martial arts in Salvador, but according to my research *capoeira* is the most prevalent. Some people argue that local and financial accessibility plays a significant role in its prevalence. Other arts are more expensive and there are not as many instructors and schools available. Others claim that *capoeira* is prevalent owing to its being an Afro-Brazilian cultural institution. As most Salvadorians are Afro-Brazilians this might be an important issue, bearing in mind that accessibility plays an important role in *favelas*. There are many other factors influencing the choice for training *capoeira*. For example, it is perceived as a healthy, trendy and attractive activity, there is no obscure reason for someone to choose *capoeira*.

Even if in the past *capoeira* masters were perceived as trickery fighters - some possessing special powers - today's student or master of the art can be described as a **common Salvadorian person**¹²⁴. Some people still argue that a *capoeira* student or master is special because he or she dominates the body, and through the cultural knowledge of *capoeira* represents the connection with the past, with roots, with ancestors, and is therefore perceived as a descendant of great warriors for liberation and emancipation.

There is another interesting statement frequently used between masters when they try to emphasize the importance of *capoeira*: "*capoeira não é so esporte, não é so luta, é muito máis.* (*capoeira* is not only a sport, a martial art, it is much more.) (author's translation)

When I asked for the meaning of *muito máis*, the most frequent answers were: our roots, music, dance and fighting all in one, it provides education, it's therapy for the body and soul, etc. Although many martial arts and physical activities are perceived in the same way within

¹²³ Primitive is here understood as basic; for example basic activities to provide food (working, stealing, begging), or to protect yourself from the violence of others.

¹²⁴ I use this expression to emphasize that there is nothing mystical or mythological about today's *capoeira* players. They are completely integrated into society. *Capoeira* can be perceived as a sub-culture in the context of Brazilian culture - as a set of activities, habits, rituals, behaviors, ways of speech, beliefs, the knowledge and institutional rules of specific group of people within bigger society with common culture. Thus, if *capoeira* masters and students are perceived as special, it is due to their abilities to play *capoeira* and not because they are members of a sub-culture. In Salvador *capoeira* is mostly perceived as an activity and not a cult.

particular societies, the question of what is *muito mais* is not easy to answer. To reach the hidden ideas and meanings of *capoeira* I used several projection techniques in performing in-depth interviews. The prevalent perception of *capoeira's* particularity stems from its connection with African roots and ancestors. As such *capoeira* is a strong means of identification for Afro-Brazilians. This fact discloses the complexity of the art. Even if masters of *capoeira* would like to integrate this institution entirely into Brazilian society, there still exists the opposition against the dominant classes and the repression in the image and fundamental discourse of *capoeira*. The notions of blackness and marginality distance the institution from the dominant Brazilian classes and from complete integration and recognition. Despite the endeavours of some past and contemporary masters, the art is still stigmatized in accordance with its historical development and previous social role. The myth about furious fighters who were heroes for some, while for others - mainly the members of the dominant class - thieves and violent roisters, is still vivid. Some would like to identify themselves with these characters and others would like to build a new image of *capoeira*. The era of *real warriors*¹²⁵ is over and most of my interlocutors agreed that they have to make a step further toward the complete acceptance and integration of *capoeira* into Brazilian society. Today the fighting is transformed into play and playing *capoeira* is frequently interpreted as a simulation of life's daily challenges. The *roda* represents the world and the co-player represents the known or unknown person or obstacle. The play is therefore a learning process of techniques for dealing with challenges, dangers, obstacles and opportunities in real-life. The players have to control and manage the given situations and the person with superior control and knowledge leads the game, dictates the rhythm and mostly decides if the game should develop into a conflict. The level of risk in the acts of play depends on the place where *roda* is performed. If it is on the street the risk is higher, while in the academy the risk is lower. The perceived similarity with daily life might also be one of the reasons for *capoeira's* popularity which is step by step being integrated into the Salvadorian society as a legal means of education, therapy, and leisure and sport activity. Even if *capoeiristas* do have their own identity, in many cases it is not much different than are the identities constructed in other Salvadorian social groups. They would identify them as sportsmen living a healthy life. I have only perceived greater identity particularities among those proclaiming themselves *angoleiros*. They have a different dress code, which could best

¹²⁵ A real warrior is a stereotypical perception of a brave 19th century *capoeira* master, at the time when *capoeira* frightened citizens of the newly founded Brazil. They were political parties' soldiers; they were fighters for emancipation but also furious street fighters and tricksters.

be compared with Rastafarian dress style, however, they would carry white *bonezinho* (bonnet) instead of colourful hood. Also their smooth walking style and linen shoes would disclose their identity being *angoleiro*. Those belonging to fundamental *angola* groups would have different life-style living for and with *capoeira*. They will try to exhibit their identity with behavioural and dressing particularities.

Violence vs. *capoeira*

There is a rather paradoxical connection between aggression, violence and *capoeira*. Even if the art is perceived as an effective means to control aggression, there is a certain amount of aggression needed in the play, to bring it closer to the learning process and real-life situations. Aggression is then easily transformed into violence, which is strongly rejected in *capoeira*. To avoid violence and for *capoeira* to survive as an Afro-Brazilian cultural institution fighting for emancipation, the concept of *malandragem* was developed. However, *malandragem* could also have ambiguous meanings. For some it is an indispensable feature of every good *capoeira* player, for others it represents cheating and fraud. *Malandragem* is sometimes perceived as malevolent behaviour connected with historically constructed stigmatization of *capoeira* as a violent political institution. There are two kinds of beliefs regarding violence in *capoeira*. According to the first one, violence was needed in history to ensure the survival of the institution and to enable the rebellion, fighting against enslavement and emancipation, but it had to be concealed in the context of *malandragem*. The second one treats violence as *covardia* (cowardice) and is used by those who do not understand the essence of *capoeira*. If in the past it was sometimes needed to achieve a political goal or to preserve someone's life, today it represents malevolent and unnecessary behaviour. Violence is still present in *capoeira*, however, especially in fights on the street, the *rodas da rua*. *Malandragem* is also seen as a negative and dangerous feature of the art.

If I want to explain the paradox of *capoeira* - a means to control aggression and at the same time a violent institution - I have to make a distinction between violence and aggression first. In my thesis I touched on several definitions of aggression and violence, therefore I will only explain the difference and definition I described. Thus aggression can be described as an inherent human characteristic representing an individual's physical and psychological reaction of, for the most part extreme, but not necessarily negative emotions, irritations, fear,

frustrations, humiliations, provocations or influences of the environment such as: pollution, noise, lack of intimacy and bad health. When aggressive drives are aroused in human beings, the metabolic, cognitive, neural and other bodily functions are accelerated. In many individuals there are behavioural changes. Aggression can be introvert or extravert, it can be expressed in many different ways but it does not necessarily cause damage to other individuals, groups or the subject himself. One of the possible expressions of aggression is violence.

Violence is a form/mode of an individual, a group or an institutional activity with the aim of causing physical, psychological or material damage to other individuals, groups or institutions. Like aggression, violence can be introvert or extravert. Violence does not necessarily include aggressive behaviour and can be affected or systematically planned. We can therefore distinguish individual, group, institutional and institutionalized (in the case of war conventions) violence, which can be expressed in a latent or transparent form.

The distinction is unequivocal and yet in *capoeira* the students and masters do not have consistent or exact beliefs about aggression and violence. The term aggression is mostly used in a positive context, but in some cases it might be confused and diffused – in the case of using aggression instead of violence and *vice versa*. Regardless of their use in language, the appearance of aggression and violence is frequent in *capoeira*.

Sometimes violence appears without an obvious reason, and opinions of people who witness these occurrences are rather ambiguous. Here, for example, I provide three statements by *capoeira* practitioners:

The conflict started because one of the players raised his leg higher and did some moves with more style, fascinating the audience. The other was jealous and decided to resolve his problem with violence.

Even if players are from the same group there is conflict because they come from different social classes. Players from slums have to show that they are as worthy as players from upper classes. The easiest way to solve the problem is violence.

Who knows why they fought. Maybe they have to resolve some old offences.

Here I have pointed out three different reasons for violent behaviour in *capoeira* that open the questions of intra-personal and intra- group comparing and vengeance. Meanwhile comparing

is welcomed in *capoeira*, vengeance is not desired. However, *capoeiristas* would speak with proud how they manage to apply *rastera* on some arrogant violent *vadio descarado* (shameless vagabond). One of them described such occurrence during our conversation:

I have already been frequenting *rodas da rua* for a while. And there was this *vadio*, always trying to apply some dirty hit in stomach or the face. Once I received a strong *martelo* (kick from the side) in the head finding myself on the floor. I jumped on my feet but he was already gone. It took me few months to meet him again in the *roda*. I did not react so in the next *roda* he was there again and when I saw the proper moment I have applied strong *rastera* that made him fall on his back and took the breath out of his lungs. He was there on the floor and I gave him a hand acting regret, yet I was satisfied to make him fall hard. He got what he deserved this malicious vagabond!

The relatively frequent violence at events is always sanctioned by the masters. The violent students are sent home, sometimes even excluded or suspended from the group. Violent masters become the targets of indignation and are not welcome at future events. Despite disapprobation of violence some masters instigate violence between students by telling them to play hard in *roda*. Some groups sabotage the events of other groups, showing them that they are stronger and better, trying to win new students. The result is not always good, sometimes even negative, because many youngsters disagree with such behaviour. Some of them even abandon a violent group and find a new master. My interviewees all agreed that a real master teaches tough but not violent *capoeira*. In such groups aggression is allowed, but it has to be controlled and used only in the case of emergency. Aggression does not necessarily cause undesired arousal of emotion. People who make a clear distinction between aggression and violence find that violence may be the result of uncontrolled emotions and aggression or that it is a planned action to penetrate the market and win new students. Some Salvadorian masters still remember one of these strategies applied by a famous master about fifteen years ago. He and his best students entered Salvadorian academies and presented effective and violent play in front of the host master in order to prove that *capoeira* is a dangerous martial art and not a show for tourists. He won many students not only in Salvador but all around Brazil. The group also succeeded worldwide. In this case violence is not a result of marginal stereotypical behaviour but rather a planned action guided by profit, envy or the necessity to prove one's value. Violence within *capoeira* is sometimes perceived as a part of *malandragem*, which I have already recognised as a fundamental feature of *capoeira*. The questions we must raise are the following: Can such behaviour be considered universal for all human societies? Would persons from other social realities use similar techniques to

achieve the same goal? Can violence be considered as the most effective and economical technique in given situations? Surely techniques would differ in different social realities, but the intrinsic drives are universal. If violence stands for technique, aggression can represent a drive common to all human beings¹²⁶. From a biological and evolutionary point of view of the human body and life in general, the aggressive processes are always in progress. For example our defence system is in a constant struggle with intruders, breathing is a set of aggressive explosions and even procreation and birth are to some degree aggressive acts. In every society and social reality aggression exists, but the methods of coping with aroused emotions and frustration are different. If we describe aggression in a Berkowitzian (1968, 1993) sense as the response to frustrations, we can increase the intensity and state that impulsive violence might be a possible expression of aggression, which is also the case in *capoeira*. The choice of acting violently is conditioned by the cultural and personal frame. Some would, according to Marcus (2007), react to the same frustration in a depressive rather than aggressive way.

Amongst the non-*capoeira* public I have perceived different ways of expressing aggression or coping with frustration. Beside yelling or fighting in the streets and at home people listen to very loud music with a strong beat. Under the influence of alcohol they also dance and sing on the street by the local bar. At least once a week, they would drink large amounts of alcohol while watching football or just having fun by the end of the week (*curtir no fim da semana*). Even if this kind of behaviour is more typical for men, many women show similar coping with stress. Many of my interlocutors mentioned that the average Salvadorian is driven by three 'kings': *caxaça* (strong spirit) *carnaval* (Carnival), and football. Without these means to discharge tension they cannot imagine life in the slums. Football matches are played twice per week offering ample opportunity to get drunk, participate in the game, or to cheer for a team in the bar on television. Strong and numerous football leagues offer enough material to talk about for the whole week. At least once per week there is a dance or party with live music organized in the neighbourhood and at least once per month there is a *festa pública* (public concert or party) on various locations in town. Opportunities to get drunk are various and frequent. Regardless of the common pattern of life, some people would rather stay at home and watch television or try to sleep, even if they are constantly disturbed by the noise from the street or from other houses. In general they would get very upset, but they would not complain, out of fear or shame.

¹²⁶ According to Freud's psychoanalytical theory human actions and reactions are driven by two basic instincts: aggression and libido.

Capoeira can serve as an appropriate means to cope with stress. Participants can discharge redundant aggression through practice and they raise their self-esteem, which allows them to handle relationships with the neighbours more easily. Many *capoeira* students argued that they were shy prior to starting *capoeira*. As they were pushed to move, play in couples, clap hands, sing and even play instruments, they managed to express themselves and cope with their shyness. They mentioned that they are more able to resolve conflicts, because they know how to control aggression. Many mentioned that playing *capoeira* offers a possibility to discharge aggression and prevent violence even if sometimes it can be itself a violent activity. I argue that violence in *capoeira* is mostly intentional except in cases when players have not learned to control their emotions, their aggression and the way of coping with frustration aroused during the play of *capoeira*. Well-trained and experienced students or masters are able to conceal aggressive tensions, "pack them into a smile" as many masters liked to say. A good *capoeira* player is capable of raising and diminishing aggression according to a given situation. If he has to protect his life or the life of another, he can be very aggressive, even violent, but still controlled and calm. Many masters claim that hecticness is the worst enemy of the fighter. If the situation in fighting or play is not life-threatening, the player should use *malandragem* to win the game or to avoid a fight. Abilities to control aggression and use *malandragem* have to be learned through long periods of practicing *capoeira* and are considered as indispensable characteristics of good players. To achieve such a state they have to understand the fundamental rules of *capoeira*, respect the hierarchy within the institution, learn about cultural and technical development of the art and, of course, they have to practice. Many Salvadorians start practicing *capoeira* very young, therefore they become socialized through the institution of *capoeira*, which enables them to internalize the values and beliefs of a particular group. Even if the groups are very different in approach, there is the same hierarchical order in all of them; younger players respect older ones, whether it is their real age or their years of experience in practicing *capoeira*. However, aroused emotions, tensions or frustration do not necessarily motivate aggressive tensions, regardless that authors like Marcus (2007), Brüne (2008), and Berkowitz (1993) stress that any negative effect or frustration bring about aggression. Younger students have to learn to control emotions and respect older *capoeiristas*. Many times they would be provoked by *rastera* or stronger kick but it is up to them to decide if they will react or not. Everyone is aware of consequences in the case of uncontrolled reaction, namely more experienced *capoeirista* will use aroused emotions of the opponent in his favour and make the other fall even harder. Yet one may

become more aggressive but still calm and unpredictable. According to all interlocutors that is the characteristic of a good *malandro*. I have shown that aggression is not necessarily expressed as violence in the case of *capoeira*. Yet aggression can also be introverted and not even perceived as aggression. Such despondent aggression as Marecek (2006, p. 285) and Berkowitz (1998, pp. 51-52) argue might be caused by social suffering or negative effects and might lead to the development of psychopathologies. In my thesis I have discussed causes of depression, public beliefs on the problem and its coping techniques.

Depression in Salvador

Depression is undoubtedly the most prevalent psychological disorder in global modern society. DSM IV (1994) statistics estimate that 5% to 9% men and 10% to 25% women are fighting with one of the forms of depression. Even if Burton (2003) claims that 30 million out of the 70 million suffering from depressive disorders come from the USA, I have noticed that depression is widespread in Salvador as well. Marecek (2006), Kleinman (1986), Brüne (2008), Hacking (1999), and Healy (1997) describe any abnormality, especially psychological, as a social construct of time and place. Psychopathologies appear almost epidemically in certain cultures and times according to the preferred diagnose for a certain set of symptoms. The sex differences can be described in many terms but we will suppose that women are more declined to respond to frustration with introverted aggression than men, due to cultural beliefs that women are gentler or to contributing biological factors (lack of testosterone). Through the process of feminization women become exposed to constant stress by earning money and taking care for the family. In many cases, as Cubitt (1995) argues for Latin American states, women are divorced and forced to take care of children by themselves. Such pressure and social suffering can lead to melancholy, exhaustion, misery, guilt and weakness, which symptoms according to Kleinman (1986) were diagnosed as neurasthenia in the past, and are often diagnosed as depression in modern times. Women are also more willing to speak about psychological problems than men and are often directed to psychiatrists by friends and family. Statistics of Juliao Moréira psychiatric hospital show that more than 80% of people seeking psychiatric treatment¹²⁷ in the case of depression are women. I have also perceived more depressed women than men in my neighbourhood, but my example was

¹²⁷ Perko (2006, p. 74) considers traditional bio-medical treatment in psychiatric hospitals as: hospitalization in closed or opened sections of psychiatric institutions - in the duration of a few weeks or a few months; working therapy and different workshops; group meetings where order, discipline and hygiene are discussed.

too small and inappropriately chosen to make any statistical conclusions. However, I perceived that there exist several modes of coping with depression in Salvadorian society. People would use all available techniques the Brazilian medical system¹²⁸ offers. In addition to pharmacotherapy, they would join religious groups, start practicing a physical activity, they would be keen to use services offered by CENA (Centre for Reintegration of Mental Patients in Society), they would use spiritual healing, etc.

People coping with depression in Salvador seek different types of help - even if most of them use antidepressants, they also try other techniques. The problem I noticed is that many men in Boca do Rio who were melancholic, without energy, downhearted, had feelings of guilt and other symptoms that can be attributed to depression, did not seek help. They claimed that they were under a lot of stress and that external factors are to blame for their bad mood. What women would easily describe as depression, men would describe as stress and would not bother to visit a psychiatrist. Even if women sometimes work and take care of the family, men are also exposed to the same social stress, and sometimes when they do not accomplish given goals, to strong frustration. One of my neighbours was searching for a job but could not find one during the whole last sequence of my fieldwork. He was getting more and more frustrated. When we spoke on the terrace one morning he complained:

I don't know what to do anymore. I have tried everything. I am young and willing to work, have some IT knowledge but still can not get the job. I do not want to live in my mothers house anymore, but to move out I need money. I will take another computer course and keep on searching. The problem is just the relationship with my mother. She is stressing me even more than the fact to be jobless. I really need my independence, I need to find a job otherwise *quem sabe* (who knows).

According to Dressler and Bindon (in Flinn 2007, p. 282) everyday stress in modern societies, such as social discordance between what we desire and what we have, might generate maladaptive responses. Other co-factors described by Flinn (2007, p. 282) are individual differences in perception, emotional control, rumination, reappraisal, self-esteem and a social support network. Psychological stress promotes adaptive modification of neural circuits in limbic and higher associative centres that function to solve psychosocial problems. Temporary elevations of the cortisol¹²⁹ have developmental effects involving synaptogenesis and neural reorganization (Buchanan and Lovallo, 2001; Heuther, 1996, 1998 in Flinn, 2007,

¹²⁸ I use here Kleinman's classification of medical systems (Kleinman, 1980)

¹²⁹ Glucocorticoid stress hormone.

p. 281). Thus the human body controls stressful life events and stressful living in slums (lack of privacy, noise, pollution, crime...) by aroused cortisol release. Mason (1971), and Marmot & Wilkinson (1999) stress that chronically elevated cortisol might cause several problems including hippocampus damage, enhanced amygdale sensitivity and psychological maladjustment, as well as depression. If the disturbances in the processes of production of neurotransmitters and hormones in the brain can cause similar problems in men and women, why are there many differences perceived between men and women in their reactions to social stress? Campbel (2007, p. 365) argues that more than 80 % of people who respond to social stress with violence are men. There are some differences in the occurrence of depression between social classes - 50% of the 'miserable' class are estimated to be affected by depression – however, the lower middle, middle and upper middle class are believed to have a similar percentage of people suffering from depression (Botti-Lappann, 2010). Some of my interlocutors argued that poorly educated men cope with many psychological problems by using drugs or alcohol more frequently than women or higher educated men. Regardless of their social status, men are believed to be more inclined to play sports than women. This might be the crucial factor in reducing the risk of the development of psychopathologies. Even if football is the most popular sport also in Salvador the most frequent chosen physical activities, if I refer to proper training, are martial arts, primarily boxing and *capoeira*. Martial arts are more popular with the poor than the rich, but this might be due to a better offer of other activities in rich city quarters. In slums *capoeira* is the most frequently chosen activity amongst youngsters; in rich areas students and professionals frequent *capoeira* to cope with stress. Some of my interlocutors who choose *capoeira* to relax after a hard working day mentioned that people living in *favelas* know how to release tension better than people from upper classes. They know how to *curtir* (have fun). One of them stressed: "*They live from hand to mouth and they do not have ambitious plans for the future*". People living in *favelas* do not share the same beliefs about the abilities to cope with stress for the better off population. Some of my neighbours were frequently complaining about the way of life in *favela* and about relationships between residents. One of them was claiming every day that he will become crazy if he will not manage to escape from the slum. He was convinced that the noise and neighbours' behaviour were "vanishing his brain". He lived in constant fear that he might die or end up in a mental institution. Many others had similar fears and argued that the most frustrating factors in slums are loud music, screaming in the middle of the night, family fights and split up families, crime, pollution, lack of privacy, and poverty. The absence of a male parent is perceived amongst *favelados* (people who live in slums) as the biggest problem

in children's education. Children learn on the streets and in many cases they get involved with crime and drugs. This brings suffering into their families and increases the chance of depression. The lack of a father's authority can cause many difficulties for mothers raising sons and many disturbances in character and personality evolution (Praper, 1999; Erickson, 1968; Perko, 2006). Based on Freud's theory of psychosexual development, Erickson developed a model of the psychosocial development of personality, consisting of eight stages. If family relationships are unhealthy or even pathological¹³⁰ in any stage of the development, anomalies in personality structure might appear. As for Freud and Erickson, the first four stages in the development of personality are most important. Erickson's model differs from Freud's model in the genital stage, which according to Freud appears between years 5 and 7, and according to Erickson's model, only after the puberty period is concluded (Praper, 1999; Erickson, 1968; Perko, 2006).

According to these theories serious deviances can be expected in people who live in conditions typical for slums. In spite of this, I did not notice many seriously disturbed youngsters. In fact, my young neighbours were not much different from other youngsters I met in Slovenia or elsewhere in the world. They were hanging out on the street, discussing everyday life, football, girls, news, personal problems and affairs. Once in a while they got drunk or smoked cannabis. They worked or went to school, in the afternoons they listened to music, surfed the internet in local internet shops organized in garages. On the weekends they passed their time on the beach, trying to 'catch' girls or meet friends and go to parties at night. I have included four boys into my observations and study. Even if living in the same street and being exposed to the same difficulties of living in *favela*, they were significantly different regarding fashion, food habits, way of life, activities of interest and beliefs about life. We talked about their childhood, stressful events, and relationships with others, their goals and hopes, beliefs and views on life. I also observed their behaviour for a period of time, trying to analyse the statements they made and the life they were living. Since I did not notice any abnormalities¹³¹ I have to argue that other factors in addition to disturbances in psychosocial development decide how an individual will react to stress.

¹³⁰ By unhealthy relationships I understand the family relationships where parents do not cooperate in the child's education. They do not perform their parental roles, they are in constant conflict, or even one of them is missing. Pathological relationships are connected with addictions, sexual abuse, family violence, etc.

¹³¹ I talk about abnormality in a Salvadorian context. Perceptions of abnormality are culturally subjective.

My observations in the Emanuel Lisboa Primary school - I have instructed English there during my last three months in Salvador - can be comparable with those from my neighbourhood. I have first visited the school with *capoeira* master to perform a small presentation of *capoeira*. I offered myself to give *capoeira* lessons for the children once or twice a week. Unfortunately the school did not have a gym or any place to give the lessons but one of the professors asked me if I am any good in English since their English professor is on maternity leave and they can not find another one. I was more than happy to help and started to teach four different classes. The older classes were having the lessons twice a week and the younger once a week. Even if children were ready to learn they did not have the notion how to pay attention, so my teaching was rather an improvised play performed in English. Although not focused, the children were not much different than the one I am used to from back home. Namely, I am also a ski-coach and have already worked with many children groups in the past, so comparison was easy to make. Even if the kids lived in extreme *favela* living conditions, they came to school everyday ready to learn, they were ready to follow my instructions and even got quiet when I asked them to do so. They were curious as Slovenian kids are and they had fun and smiled on every given occasion like Slovenian kids do. Even if I was expecting that they would be frustrated - taking into account the living conditions and conditions in the school - they were not preoccupied with given situation. For example with one class I had the lessons in the school's courtyard since their classroom was occupied by the rats. We have positioned ourselves in the shadow under two mango trees and enjoyed the outdoor lessons. Some of the children also commented that it would be good if the rats will stay for a longer period since the outdoor lessons are much more fun than the indoor. More than once during my stay in Salvador I realised that the perception of given situation is the one that determinates how our nerve system will respond.

Ehrenberg (2010, p. 26) argues that the nervous system is what ties us to the world. Consequently our neuronal connections have to change according to external influences. Therefore, our neuronal system has developed systems to survive in given conditions and these systems have to be stored in our neuronal connections. Such connections can also be called modules according to Rasskin-Gutman (2005, pp. 216-218) explanations of biological architecture and evolutionary possibilities. Robins (2009), Mealey et al. (1996), Whiten and Byrne (1997), Rizzolatti and Fogassi (2007), and Barton (2007) emphasize the importance of modular structure theories of the brain, which have roots in Fodorian modular theory from the 1980s. According to these theories modules carry information about responses to social and

environmental influences. Modules are result of evolutionary adaptations to given living conditions of different societies. Modules are also the structures connecting theoretical morphospace that provides mathematical and generative possibilities of evolution and empirical morphospace that provides the realisation in nature (Rasskin-Gutman, 2005, p. 216). If so, than depression can also be seen as a defence to suffering expressed with a decrease in energy and increase in apathy. For sure youngsters living in slums have developed particular coping techniques and even if they would show symptoms that might be ascribed to depression they would feel normal and continue functioning within society. For some, stress and frustration are too intensive; therefore the normal consequences that follow are either psychopathology or violence. Some people, already suffering from the consequences of stressful life in *favela*, still find a way to cope with their situation. One of my neighbours Jão was already involved in street violence, drug and weapon traffic, and drug abuse. His life-style and social relationships lead him into psychological states that can be described as depression. In this case we can describe depression as a response, reaction of the human body and mind¹³² to a particular life situation. Despite the importance of social causes of depression and explanations of its origin, I consider the choices people make for coping with psychopathologies very interesting. Jão for example joined the evangelistic church society, and started to practice *capoeira* in the local school. He said he found support in his new friends who helped him on his new path. He was confronted with new values and learned that people can live differently than what he was used to. For people with problems of depression, building a new net of social relations and harmonizing the old one, can be an effective way to cope with psychopathologies. Bateson (1972), Johnson (2007), Kleinman (1986), Brüne (2008), and Marecek (2006) stress, that social relationships have a significant influence on the development of psychopathologies. Violence, abuse, problems in meta-communication, family tensions, work relationships or friendships and social suffering caused by others are in general the reasons for disturbances in personality development and the ability to cope with stressful situations. Yet the individual is not a passive agent dependent on external influences. As Ehrenberg (2010, p. 25) says about the individual's choice of signs of pleasure and displeasure: "...allow man to become the agent of his own destiny." Therefore, the individual makes decisions about whether he will join a certain group, yet his integration depends also on other members, on how they perceive the individual's behaviour. Individuals also choose

¹³² The distinction between body and mind is just theoretical. I would like the term *human being* to denote a human individual, but then we have to consider a person as a conjunction of body (biological machine), mind (executive and thinking mind), soul (energy source, subconscious, metaphysical).

references of identification and activities that help to fight depression or other psychopathologies and behavioural problems. Regardless of the fact if such groups have religious, sports or a cultural background, they have a very important role regarding the social integration and reintegration, presentation or representation of social rules and discourses and the harmonization of social relationships, which is very clearly explained by Johnson (2007) in his writing about religious rituals.

I have shown that *capoeira* has elaborated the ritual of play in *roda* and that there are at least two different events with a structured and constant form that possesses similarities with religious rituals. Even if some sociologists and anthropologists argue that there is a certain connection between myth and ritual, Kluckhohn (1942, pp. 45-79) emphasizes that the connection is not necessary and that not all myths have elaborated rituals and that they do not appear in all rituals. Myths and rituals, regardless if they work together or separately, serve a psychological function: "*Myths reduce anxiety by providing fixed ways of understanding; rituals by providing fixed ways of behaving*" (Kluckhohn, 1942, pp. 45-79).

In *capoeira* some protomyths exist, telling the stories of brave warriors and preservers of the art such as *Besouro Preto Mangagá*, *Mestre Pastinha* and *Mestre Bimba*. Their stories are passed on at every *batizado* (ritual of baptism) during the masters' speeches. According to Burket (in Segal, 1998, pp. 341-342) rituals are forms of communication and myth is the spoken part of the ritual. Even if stories are not true myths we can consider *batizado* to be a ritual. It was developed by *Mestre Bimba* and became socialized through time as an indispensable event of every *capoeira* group. DuBois (in Kluckhohn, 1942) has suggested that in the development of rituals some personal rituals have been taken over and made social by the groups. The ritual of *roda* can also be understood as a socialized personal ritual of *capoeira* players at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. *Rodas* and several *capoeira* events serve to harmonize the relationships between students, masters and members of society involved in the preparation and execution of events. Initiations and integrations in the group are achieved through these rituals. I suggest that because of these characteristics *capoeira* is an effective means to cope with social stress, although in most cases participants are not aware of that role. They would stress that body movement and socializing with friends are attributes of *capoeira* that help them cope with stress. I started to focus on the hidden meanings of *capoeira* rituals after several statements from students and masters that *capoeira* is not only a sport or martial art but much more. Since nobody could

explain to me what that "much more" was, I have, after profound observation, decided that the meaning of "much more" is hidden behind the ritual. Johnson (2007) suggests that rituals bring distant family members and friends together, so that they can solve old offences, rebuild and reconstruct relationships, gain social status and confirm the values and beliefs of a specific group. I have perceived that these same aspects are achieved through *capoeira* rituals. Thus not only the fact that *capoeira* is a physical activity but also the fact that relationships are constituted, reconstructed and harmonized through rituals and trainings of *capoeira*, makes that art effective and a frequently chosen means of coping with stress and frustration. However, many depressed people are heavy users of antidepressant drugs and tranquilizers, namely patients in Juliano Moréira Hospital and a few of my neighbours. Some of them - especially men - showing symptoms that would be diagnosed as depression if they would seek medical help, coped with their psychological condition by using drugs or alcohol. Few of my interlocutors - even those playing *capoeira* - mentioned that they use cannabis in order to cope with anxiety, sadness, depression, etc. Therefore, even if people practiced *capoeira* or other activities to cope with stress and frustration, cannabis and alcohol were the most frequently mentioned substances to release tensions, cope with stress, combat depressed moods or just to relax. Youngsters combine alcohol with cannabis; meanwhile older men would mostly choose alcohol as their primary consolation. I met them in a local bar or in front of their neighbours' house drinking and smoking. Men in general gathered during the working week, women joined them on the weekends. Women cleaned the house, cooked dinner etc., some of them even after spending 8 to 10 hours at work. Some women in Juliano Moréira Hospital claimed that they were burned out with exhausting work and that is why they developed depression. Even if they used antidepressants they frequented *capoeira* therapy. They saw several positive aspects of *capoeira* therapy such as: mind redirection away from negative thoughts, relaxation through singing and playing, body communication with other players, physical activity that relaxes the mind, higher physical and mental activity. Many patients mentioned that *capoeira* during the week and *churrasco* (barbecue) or *fejoada* on weekend afternoons and evenings was the best way to release stress, to relax, forget about problems and cope with illness. Neighbours without psychopathologies also said *churrasco* accompanied with beer was the best way to release tension after a working week. Some professionals at Juliano Moréira Hospital argued that such behaviour on weekends represents one of the safety valves to release stress and cope with aggression and depression. Poor people have more access to public parties and as some therapists argued that "*Eles sabem curtir* (They know how to have fun.)", on the other hand middle class people can afford

leisure activities such as: sport, art, vacations, travel, shopping etc. When we speak about the availability of healing practices we have to look at the problem from the view of the moral acceptance of the practice as well. Lock and Nichter (2002, pp. 8-10) emphasize the meaning of moral acceptance of a particular medical technology or practice. People choose practices that are morally accepted according to established values in a given society. We have to consider contemporary medical pluralism in the context of cosmopolitanism and from the vantage point of both local and global relationships. We have to examine global public health agendas and the influences of health and development agencies on national health policies in the name of health care reforms, homogenizing practices in the name of efficiency, etc. (Ginsberg and Rapp in Lock and Nichter, 2002, p. 10).

The process of modernization therefore constitutes plural medical systems, yet there are still some cultural differences regarding the demand within a particular medical system. In our case *capoeira* could be seen as a particular medical practice for coping with depression and other psychopathologies in Salvador. According to therapists in Juliano Moréira Hospital, they are the only hospital in Brazil using *capoeira* as an independent therapy in the treatment of psychopathologies. The leader of the centre argued that the ratio between the price and efficiency of this therapy is even better than the one for antidepressant drugs. This discourse allowed me to collaborate with the psychiatrist, and to suggest that he should lower the dosage of psychotropic drugs so that the patient would be able to participate in therapy without being too sleepy or numb. In many cases psychiatrists agreed with my proposition. However, the mentioned ratio between costs and efficiency was not the only reason why people chose *capoeira* and why therapists attributed value to this technique.

I have to emphasize the role of body communication regarding coping with stress and psychopathologies. Navarro (2008) argues that more than 80% of human communication is non-verbal, therefore the body has a crucial role in communication of feelings, hidden meanings, intentions, etc. We can say that what words hide, the body reveals. Body communication is the prevalent communication in *capoeira*, and I perceived that it was easily implemented into therapy. Through constant physical activity self-esteem is recovered, as Perko (2006, p. 145) stresses, and also the focus of energy is transmitted from the brain to the body and the executive part of the brain. Regarding any mental problems and especially depression, this might be a big change in interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. Some of the patients claimed that during the practice they forget about omnipresent problems

since they were too preoccupied with the execution of very natural but very difficult movements for beginners in *capoeira*. When they learned some of the basic movements, the main preoccupation of the player became the implementation of the learned moves in the play with another. At this stage the player starts with endless body communication. There is always a possibility to solve the body riddle of the opponent in *capoeira* and every new move represents a challenge for the other player. Supposing that the action causes reaction and reaction turns itself into action, the process does not stop unless it is interrupted intentionally. As my interlocutors said, such interaction requires much improvisation and creativity. It also diminishes the activity of thinking in the brain since everything happens too quickly to be analysed by logical procedures. Specific moves must be applied almost with reflex speed, which is just enough time for the executive part of the brain to find the proper answer and execute it. One of the masters explained this bodily interaction as following:

The play of *capoeira* is a constant exchange of questions and answers. Every attack is a question, every defence, which in *capoeira* is simultaneously an attack, is the answer and in the same time a new question for the opponent. In such manner a corporal communication is achieved in which the player forgets about the external world. They will try to communicate as long as possible but in some stage they would be interfered by the others entering to play. Even if I have serious spinal problems I do not feel any pain during the play. I just want to overlay the other using all my wisdom to predict his actions.

Body communication in *capoeira* starts with the practice in *duplas* (couples). The player goes through all stages of learning if we use Bateson's scheme of learning (Bateson 1972, pp. 287-306). First we learn different moves, then we use them in different situations, we continue by changing combinations and then we use different combinations in different situations again, etc. The final goal is to achieve fluid, almost instinct communication saturated with *malandragem*. Through this process of growth, the player develops a specific style of play in accordance to his personality, self-image, values, etc. and *vice versa*, the personality changes through the learning process of the art.

There is an important issue to be mentioned regarding the distinction between body and verbal communication in the therapy with *capoeira*. I would say that body communication is much easier to establish than verbal communication. Constant and fluid body communication can lead to the establishment of verbal communication, when there was none before. To justify this assumption I will describe the case of 21 year old Rebecca. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia and depression. She refused to speak or participate in any kind of therapy.

She mostly slept or lay on the floor, showing no interest in her surroundings. When she heard the sound of the *berimbau*, she became excited and wanted to play with me. During the first two therapy sessions she would just gaze at me and try to hit me and she did not follow the rules of the therapy. The following week she started to clap her hands while we were singing and she was keen to practice some moves and not only play. I proposed to the psychiatrist to lower the dosage of drugs and she agreed. The patient started to enjoy the play and treatment and at first she would only smile during the game, trying to hit or trick me. After three weeks of therapy she came to therapy saying: "*Bom dia Mestre*". I was shocked as I was not sure if she could speak at all. From that day on her verbal communication became clearer and more frequent every day. After four weeks she went home. I cannot claim that *capoeira* played the crucial role in her therapy, but the psychiatrist and the leader of the centre both agreed that the establishment of body communication between her and the outside world helped her to start verbal communication, which she had refused before, due to shocking events, which caused her psychopathologies. She claimed that she refused to communicate because there was nothing interesting to say or discuss and she argued that she was too affected by drugs to talk or move.

Body gestures and corporal expressions were interesting and fun for all participants in therapy. The atmosphere was relaxed, productive and creative. Communication, with the exception of singing, was prevalently based on body gestures and movements. Verbal communication was used only to give instructions and the patients spoke with me only when they did not understand the task. As the music was very loud, patients could not chat and they had to communicate with gestures, which I consider to be very direct and honest communication. Also Bateson (1972, p. 13) says that language is first and foremost a system of gestures. For him communication does not exist in *mere words*, there is always a gesture, tone, voice or something else connected with the words. Lashlie (2005, p. 134) argues that important messages are distributed through body communication, but she is convinced that women speak more using words and men using body language, which according to her presents up to 90% of men's communication. Bateson (1972, pp. 12-14) suggests that real information about peoples' feelings is transmitted through body language and for him the fundamental goal of communication is to communicate to others that we are not angry, that we feel fine.

I have noticed that it was not spoken a lot during the *capoeira* lessons. Masters had the habit to show the moves that were supposed to be practiced, speaking out loud the names of the moves included in certain combination. If they wanted to correct the student, they made him to watch the right movement and then they repeated the sequence a few times with the student. During the play everyone clapped the hands, sang and played, so actually the real verbal communication started after the lesson was finished or during the formal conversations by the end of the lesson.

Another important therapeutic feature of *capoeira* is music. Through music body movement is achieved and music brings the dynamic into the play of *capoeira*. At this stage I will not enter into a broad debate about the influence of music on human health, treatment and feelings, as many authors stress and write about. (Aldridge, 2008; Bunt and Hoskins 2002; Gilroy and Colin, 1995; Donald, 1985). Music consists of melody and rhythm and both of them seem to be of the same importance, although in a ritualistic context rhythm is the means for achieving repeated sounds and leads to a transcendental state of the brain and body. Through rhythm a meditative state of the mind is achieved, which can lead to the discharge of stressful and negative thoughts. In Afro-Brazilian religions like *candomblé*, deities are incorporated and the healing process is established through rhythm. The *atabaque* drum brings repetitiveness into *capoeira* rhythm and connects this institution with *candomblé*. Oliveira Cruz (2006) argues that it is not unusual for *rodas de capoeira angola* (rituals in one of two elaborated *capoeira* styles) that spirits enter the bodies of the participants. Some experienced masters are supposed to be able to receive powers of great masters from the past. The belief that spirits might enter human bodies in *roda de capoeira* is frightening for people who are not acquainted with *capoeira*. For others it is another feature of *capoeira* that might help them to cope with health problems, especially mental problems. Incessant rhythm also influences the body and brain pulsations, therefore it is possible that it affects the chemical processes in the brain¹³³ and consequently influences the individual's perception of the outside and inside world. *Atabaque* represents the beating of the heart. Focusing on heartbeat is according to Elmer and Freeman (1998), and Kelly and Kelly (1995) an efficient meditation and healing method. I claim that rhythm played a big role in therapy with *capoeira* and the patients whose mood was better after we played music uninterruptedly for half an hour stated the same. For some of them rhythm represented only one part of music, therefore the sound and continuity of the rhythm

¹³³ Brüne (2008), Buss (2005), Ehrenberg (2010), Korszun et al. (2006) argue that neuro-mediators play a significant role in the development of depression. They are aroused with any activity.

brought relaxation. For others whose social reality involves incorporations of the spirits through music, rhythm might represent spiritual healing.

The musical performance was of great importance also during the *rodas* in which I participated. If *bateria funcionou bem* (functioned good) the energy was good. The participants accompanied the *bateria* with loud and synchronized singing and hand clapping. The rhythm changed according to the quality of players involved in the play and *vice versa*, according to the rhythm more or less experienced players entered the game. I remember that I entered one really synchronised *roda* to play with the tall but incredibly fast professor. I felt different then on some other occasions when I entered to play - for example during the *rodas* performed on the lessons. First we started to play with the moderate speed but then suddenly the rhythm changed, we played faster and faster and in some moment I was not thinking about the techniques that were supposed to be applied and about the reactions anymore. Everything became smooth, fluid and spontaneous. I just remember that I managed to avoid the so called *mea lua de compasso* (typical *capoeira* circular kick) without even seeing it. Some of the master explained that practicing *capoeira* moves and possible combinations should give you the opportunity to play without thinking and react without seeing.

At the end of my thesis I would like to summarize the main outcomes of my research. I have made claims about the social role of *capoeira* in Brazilian, more specific Salvadorian society, and analysed its influences on violence, aggression and depression. I tried to show that a socially important institution might have significant influences on health and behaviour of members of a given society. It can influence the development of deviant behaviour or psychopathologies in positive or negative ways and it can influence decisions on coping with problems. In the case of *capoeira* we have shown that there is a consensus about the beneficial influences of *capoeira* on social and individual health. The institution can prevent violence by learning values, controlling aggression and by relieving tensions constituted by frustrations. *Capoeira* events can also harmonize social relationships. In the context of mental health, *capoeira* is believed to be a very powerful and effective therapeutic method. Even if some practices like *capoeira* are perceived by the general public as effective therapeutic methods, there exists a crucial problem regarding mental health practices. Even in the most radical and liberally improved medical systems, the service users themselves do not articulate critiques or design improvement for the system. In every historical effort to do so, the process of changing the system passed from the expert's analysis to the expert's solution (Lewis in

Cohen and Timimi, 2008, p. 73). In spite of this, I was not trying to prove in my thesis that *capoeira* is an effective therapeutic method or not; in the context of social and individual health I only discussed public beliefs and attitudes toward this martial art. The social role of *capoeira* is paradoxical, yet the institution has significant influences on Afro-Brazilian society and represents a medium for integration and reintegration of the black population, as well as being an effective therapeutic method in the context of mental health. I can conclude with Brown's statement saying that "*technique can be judged only pragmatically. Anything goes if it works*" (Brown, 1959, p. 155).

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Zaključek

V disertaciji sem razpravljajal o družbeni vlogi brazilske borilne veščine *capoeira* in njenih vplivih na depresijo, agresijo in nasilje. Če predpostavim, da so depresija, agresija in nasilje posledica individualnih reakcij na interne in eksterne dražljaje lahko trdim, da imajo družbeni odnosi in institucije pomemben vpliv na razvoj, prepričanja o in spopadanje z zgoraj omenjenimi pojavi. Brazilska borilna veščina *capoeira* ima med Afro-Brazilci pomembno družbeno vlogo. Da bi razumel in predstavil to vlogo sem analiziral njene institucionalne spremembe in spremembe v njeni družbeni vlogi skozi zgodovino. Tako trdim, da ima *capoeira* zaradi svoje specifične družbene vloge pomemben vpliv na pojav in spopadanje z depresijo, agresijo in nasiljem. Za boljše razumevanje njenega vpliva na našete pojave sem definiral razliko med agresijo in nasiljem ter analiziral percepcije obeh znotraj institucije *capoeira*. Skratka v tezi sem predstavil argumente o treh glavnih temah. Prva se nanaša na pojav in razvoj *capoeira* ter na spremembe v njeni družbeni vlogi, druga se ukvarja s prepričanja o in spopadanjem depresijo, agresijo in nasiljem ter tretja s povezanostjo in odnosi med *capoeira* in navedenimi pojavi. V povezavi z zadnjo tematiko sem analiziral poglede na omenjene probleme znotraj *capoeiristične* javnosti ter vlogo *capoeira* pri razvoju ter upravljanju s temi težavami. S tem sem predstavil vlogo *capoeira* v medosebnih in med-institucionalnih odnosih. V prvem delu sem pokazal, da se je *capoeira* razvila kot sredstvo emancipacije in osvobajanja zaslužnjene populacije, vendar se nisem strinjal s predpostavko, da je predstavljala le fizično obliko borbe proti Portugalcem. Zagovarjal sem trditev, da je med zaslužnjenci Afričani *capoeira* predstavljala sredstvo upravljanja s frustracijami. Mnogi mojstri navajajo, da so bili sužnji do sedemnajstega stoletja zelo dobro varovani, zato je malo verjetno, da so se vsaj v zgodnjem obdobju zaslužnjevanja uspeli upreti in osvoboditi s kakršno koli fizično obliko boja vključno s *capoeira*. V skladu z Amselovo (1992, str. 61) teorijo o frustracijah (ibid., str. 34-67) je zaslužnjena populacija izpostavljena poniževanju, lakoti in težkemu delu morala razviti določeno obliko vedenja, da bi lahko preživela tako fizično kot tudi mentalno in emocionalno.

Amsel (ibid.) trdi, da v primeru močnega frustracijskega stimula subjekt razvije "dispositional learning" (dispozicionalno učenje), ki ga lahko najbolje primerjamo z Batesonovim (1972, str. 301-306) Learning III - sposobnostjo posameznika, da prilagodi znan niz vedenjskih oblik novemu kontekstu za neznane in nove namene. Upoštevajoč Amselovo in Batesonovo teorijo trdim, da je bila *capoeira* razvita kot aktivnost upravljanja s frustracijami in stresom. Moški

so tako lahko medsebojno tekmovali in se primerjali, s čemer so med zaslužneno populacijo kot dobri *capoeira* bojevniki ponovno pridobili družbeni status ter spoštovanje. Tudi Talmon-Chvaicer (v Asante in Mazama, 2005, str. 175-178) navaja so na *senzalah capoeiro* vadili kot prostočasno aktivnost, vendar dalje piše, da naj bi predstavljala samo skupno kulturno institucijo zaslužnjene Afriške populacije. Ker so prihajali iz različni plemen in narodov, zaslužnjeni Afričani niso imeli skupne družbene institucije zato bi lahko *capoeira* predstavljala: "*social expression that inherently incorporated all the basic elements of African dances: the circle, the dance, the music and the spectators, as well as rituals, symbols and other components that served the capoeiristas in the course of activity* (družbeno izražanje ki je inherentno inkorporiralo osnovne elemente Afriških plesov: krog, ples, glasbo in gledalce, kakor tudi rituale, simbole in druge komponente ki so jih uporabljali *capoeiristi* med samo aktivnostjo)" (lasten prevod) (Talmon-Chvaicer v Asante in Mazama, 2005, str. 176).

Vendar nihče od izprašanih mojstrov ni omenil, da bi lahko *capoeira* imela takšno vlogo v času suženjskega sistema. Glede na njihova prepričanja je bila *capoeira* zmeraj borbena tehnika namenjena osvoboditvi in begu iz *senzal*, kakor tudi učinkovita borilna veščina uporabljena v bojih za zaščito *quilombov*. Mojstri trdijo, da so se zabavni elementi veščine pojavili kasneje, ko je bila *capoeira* skupaj z drugimi kulturnimi manifestacijami Afriških sužnjeve že dovoljena. Kljub tem trditvam sem v zgodbah mojstrov zaznal časovno protislovje. Prvič, ko govorijo o suženjskem obdobju se nanašajo na obdobje prepovedi *capoeire*, ne upoštevajoč dejstvo, da zgodovinarji pišejo o spremembi politik in načinov obravnavanja sužnjeve v začetku sedemnajstega stoletja. Da bi izboljšali psihično zdravje sužnjeve, so v *senzalah* dovolili kulturne manifestacije - vključno s *capoeiro* - . Drugič, ko sem jih povprašal kdaj naj bi se pojavil ritual *rode*, so nekateri trdili, da naj bi obstajal že v *senzalah*, vendar sta ga spremenila in poustvarila *Mestre Bimba* in *Mestre Pastinha*. Drugi so trdili, da so *capoeiro* vadili *in cognito* ter, da se je *roda* pojavila šele, ko je bila *capoeira* dovoljena, torej v prvi polovici dvajsetega stoletja. Istočasno pa trdijo, da so organizirali *rodas de capoeira* kot način zabave mornarjev in sužnjeve, ki so prodajali blago svojih gospodarjev na tržnicah in v pristaniščih že v devetnajstem stoletju. Kljub temu pa so se pravila in načini izvajanja *rode* spremenili v času prepovedi *capoeire* med 1889 in 1937.

Še večjo neskladnost sem zaznal v izjavah o kulturnih elementih *capoeire*. Nekateri mojstri navajajo, da so bili folklorni elementi vneseni v *capoeiro* med obdobjem preganjanja institucije, ko so se *capoeiristi* trudili spremeniti negativno podobo *capoeire* kot aktivnosti

postopačev in uličnih nasilnežev. Drugi trdijo, da so bili folklorni elementi prisotni že od nekdaj, ampak so se v devetnajstem stoletju, ko je *capoeira* predstavljala obliko ulične in politične borbe izgubili ter pozabili. Vendar se vsi strinjajo, da je bil *Mestre Pastinha* tisti, ki je ponovno uvedel stare tradicije v moderne *capoeiristične* rituale, in *Mestre Bimba* tisti, ki je postavil in napisal pravila vadbe in uvedel uradni hierarhični sistem pasov. Oba mojstra veljata za ustanovitelja moderne *capoeire* vendar z različnimi pristopi.

Da lahko trdim o razvoju *capoeire* kot prostočasne aktivnosti in večšine ponovnega vzpostavljanja družbene hierarhije med zaslužjenimi Afričani, sem moral zaključevati kot *insider* in *capoeirist*, upoštevajoč mnogotere razlage in na podlagi opažanj o načinih vadbe in promocije večšine. Upošteval sem tudi učinke *capoeire* na vzpostavljanje družbenih hierarhij in njen odnos ter učinke povezane s psihičnim zdravjem in problemi. Podatke interpretiram in podajam v skladu z že obstoječimi teorijami in trditvami povezanimi z razvojem *capoeire*.

Kljub temu, da razpravljam o možnem razvoju *capoeire* kot prostočasne aktivnosti in kot sredstva vzpostavljanja hierarhij ali načina združevanja različnih Afriških kultur ne zanikam, da *capoeira* ni služila kot učinkovita obrambna tehnika tistim, ki so poizkušali pobegniti iz *senzal* ter so se morali spopadati z lovci na sužnje (*capitões de mato*).

Capoeira bi lahko predstavljala tudi borilno tehniko za obrambo *quilombov* in pridobitev orožja z nepredvidenimi in hitrimi napadi na lovce sužnjev ter na majhne vojaške enote, ki so se prebijale skozi divjino (*mato*). Neodvisno od teorij o izvoru in razlogih za pojav *capoeire*, sem analiziral njen razvoj in spremembe institucije skozi stoletja vse do danes. Ko sem spoznal kako pomembna za razvoj *capoeire* sta pojma *malandragem* in *trickery* - ki hkrati predstavljata, najpomembnejši lastnosti dobrega *capoeirista* - sem zgradil dobro osnovo za interpretiranje današnjega družbenega pomena institucije ter njene vloge pri spopadanju s frustracijami ter stresom.

Raziskavo sem izvajal v Salvadorju med leti 2005 in 2007, ker pa sem v pripravljalnem delu potoval, sem imel priložnost zaznati kulturne razlike med južnimi in severo-vzhodnimi regijami ter med posameznimi skupinami znotraj Brazilske populacije kot so: Afro-Brazilci, Nativni-Brazilci ter Evro-Brazilci. Posledično v svoji disertaciji nisem mogel podajati splošnih zaključkov o Brazilskih kulturnih institucijah in Brazilski populaciji kot celoti.

Zaključki se tako nanašajo na *capoeiro* v Salvadorju in njenih vplivih na posamezne družbene pojave.

Poleg splošnih lastnosti *capoeire* kot veščine, so bila za pojasnitev vplivov *capoeire* na depresijo in nasilje pomembna prepričanja širše laične javnosti o sposobnosti *capoeirističnih* mojstrov. Nekateri so omenjali magične in zdraviteljske sposobnosti dobrih starih mojstrov. Ti so velikokrat obravnavani kot misteriozni in drugačni od ostalega dela populacije.

Oliveira Cruz (2006) piše o neverjetnih sposobnostih *Mestra Besouro Preto Mangagá*-ja, živečega konec devetnajstega stoletja. Sposoben naj bi bil uteči vsakršni nevarnosti in se v kritičnih situacijah spremeniti v hrošča. Znal je celiti rane hitreje od ostalih bojevnikov, čeprav je bil redkokdaj ranjen zaradi sposobnosti vzpostavitve *corpo fechado* (zaščitenega telesa). Njegove tehnike in sposobnosti naj bi bile povezane z afro-Brazilsko religijo *candomblé*. Nekateri mojstri so omenili, da je *Mestre* João Grande, ki živi v New Yorku, eden redkih, če ne edini s podobnimi sposobnostmi in poznavanjem zaščitnih tehnik. Bil je učenec *Mestre* Pastinha za katerega se govori, da je bil učenec *Mestra Besouro Preto Mangagá*-ja, ali je vsaj pripadal njegovi liniji. Pomembnost izvora, genealogije in institucionalnega sorodstva so še nekateri dejavniki, ki razlagajo odnose znotraj institucije *capoeire* ter med njo in širšo družbo. V Salvadorju obstaja veliko število *capoeirističnih* skupin s specifičnim stilom borbe izvajanjem ritualov ter zgodovino. Večina se umešča v tri uveljavljene stile: *angoleiros* (tisti, ki pripadajo liniji *Mestre* Pastinhe), *regional* (tisti, ki pripadajo liniji *Mestre* Bimbe) ali zagovorniki *capoeire contemporânea-e* (sodobna *capoeira*). Zadnja je razumljena kot mešanica *capoeire* in dobro inkorporiranih tehnik iz drugih borilnih veščin pri čemer se ohranja esenca *capoeire* kot sta na primer *ginga* in *malandragem*. Določen stil narekuje tudi določena pravila prepričanja in vedenja. Fundamentalno med njimi ni velike razlike, vendar obstajajo mnoge variacije originalnih različic omenjenih stilov. Zato težko govorimo o homogenem in konsistentnem stilu, ritualih, pravilih in prepričanjih znotraj *capoeire*. Vsem šolam je skupno prepričanje, da je *capoeira* več kot samo športna aktivnost in borilna veščina. Strinjajo se, da je del afro-Brazilske kulture, sredstvo emancipacije, terapevtska tehnika, Brazilski nacionalni šport, folklorna ter izobraževalna institucija in nenazadnje pristočasna aktivnost.

Vsi sogovorniki so navdušeni nad *capoeiro* zaradi njene pomembne vloge znotraj afro-Brazilske družbe. Vadeči jo vidijo kot ekstremno pozitivno institucijo, vendar pa večina meni, da je v širši brazilski javnosti še vedno stigmatizirana kot marginalna in nasilna institucija

zaradi svojega zgodovinskega razvoja in njene vloge pri emancipaciji marginaliziranega dela brazilske populacije. Širša javnost v Salvadorju jo vidi kot lepo in zdravo aktivnost učinkovito tudi pri spopadanju s stresom in družbenimi problemi v revnih četrtih, kot je na primer nasilje. Med treningi *capoeire* pri dveh različnih skupinah sem imel priložnost opazovati odnos mojstrov in učencev do agresije ter nasilja, Agresija je bila večinoma razumljena kot *modo de jogo* (način igre), ki učenca približa realni situaciji v kateri bi se lahko znašel na ulici. Pri takšni igri je bilo več fizičnega kontakta, gibi ter udarci pa so bili hitrejši in močnejši. Za takšno igro so uporabljali izraz "*jogar mais agressivo*" kar je pomenilo, da moraš včasih igrati z več moči, da dobiš občutek kako bi se lahko zaščitil v primeru napada na ulici in spoznal kako je bilo včasih igrati *capoeiro* na cesti v *rodas da rua*. Po drugi strani pa izraz "*jogo violento*" uporabljajo za igro kjer želijo igralci na umazan, nepošten in potuhnjen način fizično ali psihično raniti drugega. Takšno igro včasih uporabijo nekatere skupine za prikaz njihove superiornost in pridobitve večjega števila učencev. Posamezniki lahko igrajo nasilno tudi takrat, ko niso sposobni nadzirati svojih čustev ali pa jim je mojster tako naročil. Agresija je torej v *capoeiri* sprejemljiva tako dolgo dokler ne škoduje ostalim pripadnikom skupine, medtem, ko nasilje zavrača večina skupin in mojstrov. Nasilje je razumljeno kot škodljivo vedenje, ki še dodatno pripomore k stigmatizaciji institucije *capoeire* v širši javnosti. Da sem prišel do takšnih in tudi do tistih tako imenovanih "skritih", *gringom* pogosto nedostopnih informacij, je pripomoglo dejstvo, da sem v skupinah sodeloval kot aktivni *capoeirist*. S tem sem si pridobil tudi zaupanje mojstrov in ostalih *capoeiristov* kar mi je olajšalo opazovanje. Z njimi sem lahko razpravljal tudi o temah in problemih, večinoma skritih za ustvarjeno podobo o *capoeiri* izven Brazilije. V mnogih skupinah se na *gringo* učenca gleda kot na stranko in ne kot na enakovrednega soigralca v *rodah* ter na treningih. Mojstri z njimi ne igrajo na enak način kot z Brazilskimi učenci, jih ne učijo določenih tehnik, vsekakor pa z njimi ne razpravljajo o nekaterih temah, ki naj bi jih razumeli samo nativni *capoeiristi*. Spoznal sem, da bi bili z raziskavo pridobljeni rezultati zagotovo različni, če bi v skupini sodeloval le kot antropolog in ne kot *capoeirist*, ki želi raziskovati veččino z antropološko metodologijo. Ker sem pred izvedbo terena že tri leta treniral *capoeiro* sem bil delno že integriran v *capoeiristično* družbo, mojstri pa so me seznanili z ostalimi člani lokalne skupnosti, kjer je delovala njihova šola. Brez dvoma je to poenostavilo integracijo, vendar sem moral kar nekaj mesecev trdo trenirati in pogumno igrati v *rodah*, da so me *capoeiristi* sprejeli za svojega. Na začetku so me tudi nekateri *capoeiristi* naslavljali z *gringo* ali *estrangero*, ker pa sem se pokazal za enakovrednega soigralca so me s časom pričeli naslavljati z imenom ali vzdevkom (*apelido*), kar je znak sprejemanja in bližine. Najbrž so spoznali, da me ne zanima samo

fizična plat *capoeire*, ampak tudi njene kulturne prvine. Kasneje bom uporabil argument predvpletenosti za verifikacijo raziskovalne metode uporabljene na terenskem delu.

Ne glede na predvpletenost in hitro integracijo sem se soočil z drugo težavo, namreč zaradi glorificiranja *capoeire* in idealističnih pogledov vpletenih na veččino, nisem mogel vedeti kako točne in nepristranske so pridobljene informacije. Dejstvo, da je bila veččina preganjana in prepovedana in stigmatizirana vsekakor vpliva na ustvarjanje idealističnih predstav o njeni vlogi in pomembnosti. Današnji učenci in mojstri želijo predstaviti *capoeiro* kot častno veččino, ki v povezavi z zgodovino omenja le herojske like katerih glavna naloga in cilj sta bila "*luta pra liberdade*" (borba za svobodo). Da sem lahko prepoznal izkrivljene in idealizirane informacije in si ustvaril vsaj delno realno sliko o vlogi in ugledu *capoeire*, sem moral sodelovati na treningih, ljudskih prireditvah kjer je bila prisotna *capoeira*, zabavah ter *capoeirističnih* dogodkih kot na primer *batizado*, ter na neformalnih druženjih na ulicah in plažah. Dovoljeno mi je bilo sodelovati na vseh *rodah* in opazil sem, da so me *capoeiristi* želeli nadigrati, pretentati ter pokazati, da je salvadorska *capoeira* boljša od evropske, potem ko so ugotovili, da sem izkušen *capoeirist* večš *malandragera*. Velikokrat jih je v igro z mano stopilo več zaporedoma, da bi me izmučili ter bi me vsaj eden izmed njih lahko spotaknil z *rastero*. Igral sem zelo zaprto in pazljivo vendar, če sem padel sem opazil zmagovit nasmeh *capoeirista*, ki me je uspel porušiti na tla. Tako sem spoznal kako se skozi igro v *rodi* ustvarjata družbeni status in neformalna hierarhija. Nekateri mojstri celo poudarjajo, da se lahko *capoeirist* dokaže samo v *jogo na roda*, in da bi morali tisti, ki poučujejo *capoeiro* v tujini redno obiskovati Salvador in sodelovati na različnih *rodah*, da bi s tem ohranili svoj ugled. S sodelovanjem na javnih *rodah* in *capoeirističnih* dogodkih sem želel doživeti še drug neformalni aspekt institucije *capoeire* in premagati nekatere težave integracije s katerimi se srečuje antropolog, ko želi sodelovati na lokalnih ceremonijah. Evans-Pritchard (1976, str. 67) piše, da: "*a European is never seriously regarded as a member of an esoteric group and has little opportunity of checking to what extent a performance is changed for his benefit, by design, or by the psychological responses of the participants to the rites being affected by his presence*". Poudarja tudi, da imamo Evropejci težave z integracijo, ker za domačine predstavljamo višji razred in si z navadnimi domačini ne delimo istih vrednot.

Predstave Salvadorskih Afro-Brazilcev so zelo podobne tistim, ki jih je opisal Evans-Pritchard. Evropejci, ki obiskujejo Salvador so po *de faultu* bogati, imajo dobro službo in v glavnem prihajajo v Brazilijo zaradi zabave z domačimi ženskami ter fanti. Že zadnja

generalizacija lahko predstavlja resno oviro pri vzpostavljanju pristnega odnosa z lokalno skupnostjo. Olajševalna okoliščina v mojem primeru je bilo dejstvo, da sem terensko raziskavo izvajal z žensko partnerko, kar je poenostavilo mojo integracijo in vzpostavljanje odnosov.

Predstavo o meni kot o nekom, ki je v Salvador prišel po dekle bi bila zelo moteča, saj sem ogromno podatkov pridobil iz vsakodnevnih pogovorov in opazovanj med sosedi, pacienti, terapeuti ter psihiatri bolnišnice Juliano Moréira, med učitelji osnovne šole Manuel Lisboa in med ljudmi povezanimi s *capoeiro*. Vendar pa za mojo raziskavo niso bili pomembni samo empirični podatki, ampak tudi pregled relevantne literature. Določene knjige, ki se nanašajo na *capoeiro* in na družbene odnose v Braziliji so napisane v portugalsščini in dostopne samo v Braziliji. Da bi lahko izvedel poglobljeno študijo zgodovinskega razvoja *capoeire* in razumel današnjo vlogo institucije sem se moral naučiti jezika v čim krajšem času. Prednost raziskave v urbanem okolju, v mojem primeru v Salvadorju, je dostopnost angleško govorečih učiteljev domačega jezika. Proces učenja je bil tako hitrejši po nekaj privatnih lekcijah portugalsčine. Dostopnost strokovne literature s področja portugalskega jezika v Salvadorskih knjižnicah je dodatno poenostavila učenje jezika. Dejstvo, da sem v nekaj mesecih relativno dobro obvladal portugalsščino je eden izmed razlogov za izbrano *part-time* metodologijo terenske raziskave.

Vloga *capoeire* v današnji salvadorski družbi

Da bi lahko razumel vpliv *capoeire* na depresijo, agresijo in nasilje, sem moral narediti pregled njenega zgodovinskega razvoja in spreminjanja družbene vloge institucije. Na tem mestu poudarjam samo njeno današnjo vlogo v salvadorski družbi. Kot sem že omenil sem v času terenskega dela obiskal veliko *capoeirističnih* dogodkov, sodeloval na treningih, tedenskih *rodah*, itn. Najpomembnejše spoznanje je bilo, da *capoeiristična* druženja niso samo športno-borilni dogodek, ampak so del širšega seta kulturnih predstav. Stalna prisotnost *capoeire* v salvadorski družbi skozi devetnajsto in dvajseto stoletje je vplivala na ustroj vezi in odnosov med *capoeiristično* javnostjo ter drugimi člani lokalnih družb v Salvadorju. *Capoeira* je od nekdaj vzbujala strah in bila dojeta kot nasilna in magična borilna dejavnost *dos pretos* (črnih) in *dos vagabundos* (klatežev), vendar je hkrati predstavljala politično in kulturno institucijo emancipacije. *Capoeiristi* so bili preganjani in stigmatizirani s strani dominantnih razredov kakor tudi s strani nekaterih Afro-Brazilcev. Avtorja Rego (1968) in

Soares Ríbano (1999) pišeta, da so bili mojstri *capoeire* v drugi polovici devetnajstega stoletja plačani morilci, katere so najemali tako politiki, kot politične stranke. Za svoje preživetje so bili pripravljene sprejeti plačilo za uboj ali poškodovanje političnih rivalov. S pojavom republike so *capoeiro* zakonsko prepovedali, zato še danes nosi določeno stigmo. Obdobje med 1870 in 1930 velja za temno obdobje *capoeire*, v katerem si je zaradi preganjanja pridobila slab ugled vendar pa tisti, ki povzdigujejo institucijo vidijo to obdobje kot čas velikih bojevnikov ter kreativnih institucionalnih sprememb, ki so pripomogle k povečanju ugleda institucije in veščine. V tem obdobju so mojstri *capoeire* uspeli institucionalizirati veščino kot afro-brazilsko kulturno institucijo in nacionalno borilno veščino. V nalogi sem tudi pokazal, da se je skozi institucionalizacijo zgodila rekreacija tradicij. Takratni mojstri so dosegli konsenz o pravilih in ritualih *capoeire*. Graditi se je pričela nova podoba *capoeire*. Danes *capoeira* označuje upor, emancipacijo, preživetje, adaptacijo, pogum, upanje, afriške korenine in prednike. Njena današnja vloga se sicer v mnogih pogledih razlikuje od tiste v preteklosti, vendar še vedno ohranja določene glavne značilnosti kot so osnovno telesno gibanje, ritualna pravila igre, glasba, želja po emancipaciji, predajanje znanja ter zlivanje Afriških, Nativno-Ameriških in Evropskih kultur. Različna vloga današnje *capoeire* pa ni samo posledica časa ampak tudi prostora. Na primer v Salvadorju predstavlja *capoeira* za mnoge mladostnike način preživetja, sredstvo pridobivanja ugleda, izobrazbe ali jim celo zagotavlja delo. V veliko primerih *capoeira* predstavlja življenjski stil, kulturno in izobraževalno institucijo in včasih tudi družino, predvsem za tiste otroke, ki živijo v težkih družinskih razmerah. Prisotnost obeh staršev v družinah nižjega razreda ni pogosta in v veliko primerih so matere samohranilke tiste, ki vzgajajo in preživljajo otroka. V skladu s psiho-dinamičnimi in psihoanalitičnimi teorijami človekovega razvoja¹³⁴ - še vedno najbolj razširjenimi teorijami na področju psihiatrije in razumevanja psihopatologije - lahko odsotnost očetove avtoritete v kritičnih fazah otrokovega razvoja¹³⁵ povzroči vedenjske deviacije. Kljub temu pa sem v Boca do Rio srečal veliko mladih *capoeiristov*, ki so jih vzgajale samo matere in stari starši, njihovo vedenje pa je bilo zelo skladno s pravili, katera narekuje določena skupina *capoeire*. Bili so vestni učenci tako v šoli kot pri *capoeiri*. Nihče

¹³⁴ Sloneč na Freudovi psiho-seksualni teoriji razvoja (Freud, 1954) je psiho-dinamična teorija še vedno vodilna paradigma današnje bio-medicinske psihiatrije. Kot trdi Praper (1999, str. 15) je psiho-dinamična teorija enačena s psihoanalitično teorijo, vendar nekateri avtorji razlikujejo med njima. Trdijo, da ima psiho-dinamična teorija korenine v fiziki G. W. Leibniza iz devetnajstega stoletja.

¹³⁵ Freud (1954) zagovarja teorijo psiho-seksualnega razvoja po kateri gre otrok skozi več razvojnih faz in stopenj. Prične se z oralno fazo, kjer se oblikujeta libido in agresija, se nadaljuje z analno fazo pri starosti enega leta ter približno pri treh letih preide v falično fazo kjer se rodi človekov super-ego. Freud je bil prepričan, da je super-ego nadgradnja ega in je odločilen v procesih identifikacije. Super-ego se razvija s prepovedmi in povelji, zato v tej fazi oče postane pomemben socializacijski agent.

ni bil vpleten v kriminalne dejavnosti, nekateri so postali celo spoštovani profesorji *capoeire*. Smiselno vprašanje je torej ali lahko mojster kot avtoriteta, kot lik očeta, učitelja in idola vpliva na normalen otrokov razvoj ali pa so to institucionalna pravila oziroma oboje?

Trdim lahko, da družbena vloga *capoeire* kot jo ustvarjajo vsi vpleteni, vsa pravila, tradicije in rituali vzpostavljajo ugodno pozitivno okolje v lokalni skupnosti, kjer deluje določena šola *capoeire*. Hierarhični sistem *capoeire* nadomešča in diktira družbeni red v *faveli*, ter tako disciplinira mladino. Mojster, ki predstavlja lik očeta in moškega vzornika postavlja meje mladostnikom. Lashlie (2005, str. 35-64) piše o pomembnosti moškega vzornika pri načrtovanju življenjske poti mladostnika, ne glede ali je to učitelj ali starš. Moški vzornik predstavlja mladim fantom referenco identifikacije in je tisti, ki jih vpelje v svet odraslih. V današnji post-moderni družbi¹³⁶ to lahko predstavlja problem, saj vloge več niso eksplicitne, hkrati pa lahko mladostniki izbirajo med mnogoterimi opcijami identifikacije. V mnogih primerih so objekti identifikacije pogubni za mlade moške, ki na poti dokazovanja, da so pravi moški končajo v zaporu, bolnišnici ali celo na pokopališču.

Vendar ni samo disciplina tista, ki se je mladostniki priučijo med vadbo *capoeire*, tam se tudi izobražujejo in gradijo svojo identiteto. Skupina predstavlja razširjeno družino, oziroma družčino, ki njenim članom zagotavlja določeno varnost in družbeni status, hkrati pa narekuje družbena pravila. Eno najpomembnejših je spoštovanje starejših in izkušenih *capoeiristov*. afro-brazilska populacija v Salvadorju spoštuje stare mojstre zaradi njihovega družbeno koristnega delovanja.

Vendar pa je vloga *capoeire* v bogatejših predelih Salvadorja precej drugačna od tiste v *favelah*. Prva zaznana razlika je bila ta, da se v višjih slojih s *capoeiro* ukvarjajo večinoma odrasli. To ne pomeni, da otroške skupine ne obstajajo, jih pa je precej manj kot v *favelah*. Prevladujejo študentje in zaposleni moški ter ženske stari med 20 in 45 let. Večina je omenila, da se ob vadbi *capoeire* lažje spopadajo z napetostjo, ki je posledica stresa delovnega dne, hkrati pa skrbijo za svoje telo. Večina *capoeire* ne zaznava le kot šport ampak tudi kot del afro-brazilske folklore ter brazilske kulture.

¹³⁶ Termin post-moderna družba uporabljam za opis današnje družbe integrirane v globalno mrežo kulturnih izmenjav s pomočjo moderne informacijske tehnologije.

Kljub mnogim manjšim razlikam med družbeno vlogo *capoeire* v *favelah* in v bogatejših predelih Salvadorja, moramo izpostaviti eno pomembno razliko. V bogatejših predelih *capoeira* - v svojem primitivnem pomenu - nikoli ne predstavlja sredstva preživetja¹³⁷, čeprav so pripadniki srednjega in višjega srednjega razreda najpogosteje žrtve roparskih napadov. Samo bogati si lahko namreč privoščijo telesne stražarje v Braziliji pa sta nošenje in uporaba orožja brez potrebnega dovoljenja ilegalni. Seveda pa napadalci uporabljajo orožje, zato je v primeru napada pametneje izročiti vse svoje premoženje kot pa ga braniti. Kljub temu, da posameznik ne uporablja borilne veščine kot direktne obrambne tehnike, pa mu ta povečuje samozavest, kar lahko zmanjša tveganje napada. Napadalci namreč dobro zaznajo človekov strah in pogosteje napadajo prestrašene. Salvador se ponaša z obširno ponudbo borilnih veščin, a kot kaže moja raziskava, je *capoeira* najbolj razširjena. Nekateri trdijo, da je to zaradi njene lokacijske in finančne dostopnosti. Druge veščine so dražje, prav tako pa v Salvadorju niso tako enakomerno distribuirane kot *capoeira*. Drugi so mnenja, da *capoeira* prevladuje zaradi njene povezanosti z afro-brazilsko kulturo. Glede na to, da se večina Salvadorskega prebivalstva razglasa za Afro-Brazilce je to lahko pomemben dejavnik, upoštevajoč pomembnost dostopnosti v *favelah*. Obstajajo pa še drugi dejavniki, ki vplivajo na odločitev izbora *capoeire*. Ta namreč velja za zdravo, modno in atraktivno aktivnost, zato ne moremo govoriti o nekakšnih skrivnostnih in okultnih razlogih za izbor veščine.

Čeprav so mojstri *capoeire* v preteklosti veljali za premetene bojevnike - nekateri naj bi posedovali tudi posebne moči - lahko današnje učence in mojstre *capoeire* opišemo kot običajne Salvadorce (**common Salvadorian person**¹³⁸). Kljub temu nekateri trdijo, da so *capoeiristi* nekaj posebnega zaradi svoje agilnosti in obvladovanja telesa ter njihovega kulturnega znanja, katero naj bi predstavljalo vez s preteklostjo, koreninami in predniki. Na ta način *capoeirist* predstavlja simboličnega potomca velikih borcev za svobodo in emancipacijo.

¹³⁷ Primitivno je tukaj razumljeno kot osnovno. Na primer osnovna aktivnost za pridobitev hrane (delo, kraja, beračenje), ali osnovna aktivnost zaščite pred nasiljem drugih.

¹³⁸ S tem izrazom bi rad poudaril, da današnji *capoeiristi* nimajo mistične ali mitološke konotacije. So popolnoma integrirani člani družbe. *Capoeiro* lahko razumemo kot sub-kulturo v kontekstu celotne brazilske kulture - kot niz aktivnosti, navad, ritualov, vedenj, načinov govora, verovanj, znanja ter institucionalnih pravil specifične skupine ljudi znotraj širše družbe s skupno kulturo. Torej *capoeiristi* so posebni samo zaradi svojih sposobnosti obvladovanja veščine in ne zaradi pripadnosti sub-kulturi. *Capoeira* v Salvadorju predstavlja aktivnost in ne kulta.

Omeniti moram še eno zanimivo in pogosto izjavo mojstrov, ko želijo poudariti pomen *capoeira*: "*capoeira não é so esporte, não é so luta, é muito más.* (*capoeira* ni samo šport in borilna veščina, je mnogo več) (lasten prevod)

Ko sem vprašal po pomenu *muito más*, so bili najpogostejši odgovori: naše korenine, glasba, ples in borba v enem, pridobivanje znanja, terapija za telo in duha, itd. Vendar mnoge druge borilne veščine in telesne aktivnosti konotirajo naštetu v nekaterih drugih družbah zato ni lahko pojasniti pomena *muito más*. Da sem lahko poiskal skrite pomene in ideje znotraj *capoeira* sem v poglobljenih intervjujih uporabil mnoge projekcijske tehnike, s katerimi sem preveril opažanja. Najpomembnejša zaznana posebnost *capoeira* je njena povezanost z afriškimi koreninami in predniki. *Capoeira* tako predstavlja močno identifikacijsko sredstvo Afro-Brazilcev, prav to dejstvo pa tudi razkriva kompleksnost te veščine. Kljub želji mojstrov, da popolnoma integrirajo institucijo *capoeira* v brazilsko družbo pa ta še vedno vsebuje osnovni diskurz opozicije dominantnemu razredu in represiji. Ideje o temnopoltosti (blackness) in marginalnosti oddaljujejo institucijo od dominantnih brazilskih razredov in popolne integracije v družbo ter priznanja njene veljave. Kljub naporom preteklih in današnjih mojstrov je veščina še zmeraj stigmatizirana v skladu z njenim zgodovinskim razvojem ter preteklimi družbenimi vlogami. Še vedno je namreč prisoten mit divjega bojevnika, za nekatere heroja za druge - predvsem pripadnike dominantnega razreda - tatu in nasilnega razgrajača. Nekateri se tako želijo identificirati s takšnimi značilnostmi *capoeirista*, medtem, ko drugi gradijo novo podobo *capoeira*. Kljub temu pa je obdobje *of the real warriors*¹³⁹ (pravih bojevnikov) zaključeno in večina sogovornikov se strinja, da je potrebno narediti korak naprej k popolni integraciji in sprejemanju *capoeira* v brazilski družbi. Boj je v današnji *capoeira* prenesen v igro, ki predstavlja simulacijo realnega življenja in vsakodnevnih izzivov. *Roda* predstavlja svet, soigralec pa znano ali neznano osebo oziroma oviro. Igro lahko zato razumemo kot proces učenja tehnik, potrebnih za spopadanje z izzivi, nevarnostmi, ovirami ter priložnostmi realnega življenja. Igralci se morajo naučiti kontrolirati in upravljati dano situacijo in tisti z boljšo sposobnostjo kontrole in večjim znanjem obvladuje ter vodi igro, narekuje tempo in je tisti, ki ima moč odločanja kako se bo igra končala. Tveganje, da se igra zaključi s konfliktom je odvisno od lokacije in tipa *rode*. To je večje, če je slednja organizirana na ulici, medtem, ko je znotraj akademije možnost konflikta dosti manjša. Tudi primerljivost igre *capoeira* z realnim življenjem lahko uvrstimo med enega izmed razlogov za

¹³⁹ Pravi bojevniki je stereotipna percepcija pogumnega mojstra *capoeira* iz devetnajstega stoletja, ko je ta predstavljala zastrašujočo institucijo v novo nastali državi Braziliji. Takratni *capoeiristi* so bili vojaki političnih strank, borci za emancipacijo a hkrati zastrašujoči ulični bojevniki in prevaranti.

popularnost te večšine, ki je vedno bolj integrirana v salvadorsko družbo kot izobraževalna institucija, terapevtsko sredstvo ter športna in prostočasna aktivnost. Kljub temu, da *capoeira* razvije specifično identiteto, ta v veliko primerih ni zelo različna od tistih, ki se ustvarjajo v drugih salvadorskih družbenih skupinah. *Capoeiristi* se v glavnem identificirajo kot športniki, ki živijo zdravo življenje. Bolj specifično in različno identiteto bi lahko pripisali le tistim, ki pripadajo skupinam tradicionalne *capoeira angol*, tako imenovanim *angoleiros*. Imajo lasten način oblačenja - nekaj podobnega Rastafariancem - vendar namesto barvnih kap nosijo bele čepice *bonezinho branco*. Tudi mehak način hoje in lanena obuvala razkrivajo *angoleirota*. Pripadniki tradicionalnih *angola* skupin imajo tudi specifičen življenjski stil saj živijo za in s *capoeira*, svojo identiteto pa navzven izkazujejo z vedenjskimi in oblačilnimi posebnostmi.

Nasilje vs. *capoeira*

Govorimo lahko o paradoksalni povezavi med agresijo, nasiljem in *capoeira*. Kljub temu, da je v večšini poudarjena sposobnost kontrole agresije, pa je za približanje igre realni situaciji potrebna določena stopnja agresije. Agresijo pa se lahko hitro sprevrže v nasilje, ki pa ga v *capoeira* močno obsojajo. Na tem mestu se srečamo s konceptom *malandragem*, s katerim se spretno prikrivajo nasilne težnje, kar je tudi omogočilo preživetje *capoeira* kot institucije boja za emancipacijo. Vendar pa *malandragem* skriva dvoumne pomene. Za nekatere je nepogrešljiva lastnost dobrega *capoeirista*, za druge predstavlja koncept prevare in goljufanja. *Malandragem* je včasih dojet kot zlonamerno vedenje povezano z v preteklosti ustvarjeno stigmatizacijo *capoeira* kot nasilne politične institucije. Kar se tiče nasilja pa obstajata vsaj dve prevladujoči mnenji. Prvo zagovarja tezo o potrebi nasilja v preteklosti, da bi se tako zagotovilo preživetje institucije in omogočil upor proti zaslužnjevanju ter emancipacija, kljub temu pa je nasilje moralo biti prikrito v *malandragem*. Drugo mnenje obravnava nasilje kot *covardia* (strahopetnost), katerega naj bi ga uporabljali predvsem tisti, ki ne razumejo esence *capoeira*. V preteklosti je bilo občasno potrebno za zagotovitev političnih ciljev ali zaradi samoobrambe ter ohranitve življenja, danes pa predstavlja škodljivo in nepotrebno vedenje. Kljub temu pa je nasilje v *capoeira* še vedno prisotno, največkrat pride do njega na tako imenovanih *rodas da rua* (uličnih *rodah*). *Malandragem* pa je velikokrat razumljen kot negativna in nevarna lastnost večšine.

Za pojasnitev paradoksa *capoeira* - na eni strani večšine kontrole agresije in na drugi strani nasilne institucije - sem moral opisati razliko med agresijo in nasiljem. Dotaknil sem se nekaterih teorij in definicij nasilja ter agresije, tukaj pa navajam samo lastni zaključek razlikovanja. Agresijo tako lahko opišemo kot inherentno človeško lastnost, ki predstavlja posameznikovo fizično in psihično reakcijo na ekstremna, vendar ne nujno negativna, čustva, dražljaje, strah, frustracije, ponižanja, provokacije ali vplive okolja kot so na primer: onesnaževanje, hrup, pomanjkanje zasebnosti ter bolezni. Ko se pri človeku pojavijo agresivne težnje, se pospešijo njegove metabolične, kognitivne, nevronske in druge telesne funkcije. Pri večini se pojavijo vedenjske spremembe. Agresija se lahko izrazi v mnogih oblikah, introvertirano ali ekstravertirano vendar ne povzroči nujno škode drugemu posamezniku, skupini ali subjektu samemu. Ena izmed možnih oblik izražanja agresije je tudi nasilje.

Nasilje je oblika/način delovanja posameznika, skupine ali institucije s ciljem povzročitve fizične, psihološke ali materialne škode drugemu posamezniku, skupini ali instituciji. Podobno kot agresija je lahko tudi nasilje introvertirano ali ekstravertirano. Nasilje ne vsebuje nujno agresivnega vedenja in je lahko afektirano ali načrtovano. Razlikujemo lahko med individualnim, skupinskim, institucionalnim in institucionaliziranim (v primeru vojnih konvencij) nasiljem, ki se lahko izraža latentno ali transparentno.

Razlikovanje je jasno, kljub temu pa učenci in mojstri *capoeira* nimajo konsistentnih in natančnih prepričanj o agresiji ter nasilju. Beseda agresija se velikokrat uporablja v pozitivnem kontekstu vendar sem zaznal zmedo in nejasnosti pri uporabi termina - na primer uporabo besede agresija namesto nasilje in *vice versa*. Ne glede na lingvistično nekonsistentnost je pojav tako agresije kot tudi nasilja v *capoeira* pogost.

Včasih pride do nasilja brez očitnega razloga in mnenja očitvidcev o tem so deljena. Navajam tri različne izjave *capoeiristov* v zvezi s pojavom nasilja med igro *capoeira*:

Konflikt se je začel, ker je eden izmed *capoeiristov* višje dvignil nogo in izvedel nekaj gibov z več stila ter agilnosti in tako bolj navdušil publiko kot drugi. Drugi se je zaradi ljubosumja odločil rešiti problem z nasiljem.

Včasih pride do konflikta tudi med igralci iz iste skupine saj prihajajo iz različnih družbenih razredov. Tisti iz *favele* želijo pokazati, da so prav toliko vredni kot *capoeiristi* iz višjih družbenih razredov. Najlažji način rešitve težave je nasilje.

Kdo ve zakaj sta se stepla, morda sta želela rešiti kakšne stare zamere.

Trije izpostavljeni razlogi pojava nasilja odpirajo vprašanja med osebnih in med skupinskih dokazovanj ter maščevanja znotraj *capoeire*. Med tem, ko je primerjanje znotraj institucije zaželeno, maščevanja v *capoeiri* ne podpirajo. Vseeno pa *capoeiristi* radi ponosno poudarijo kako so uspeli z *rastero* podreti nekoga, ki je aroganten in nasilen *vadio descarado* (nesramen vagabund). Eden izmed njih je takole opisal takšen dogodek:

Že nekaj časa sem se udeleževal *rodas da rua* in tako srečal tistega *vadia*, ki je zmeraj želel izvesti zahrbtnen udarec v trebuh ali obraz. Enkrat me je zadel z močnim *martelom* (stranski udarec v višino glave) v glavo, tako, da sem padel po tleh. Skočil sem nazaj na noge, a ga že ni bilo več. Čez nekaj mesecev sem ga ponovno srečal v *rodi*. Nisem se odzval ali nakazal, da se želim maščevati, tako se je udeležil tudi naslednje *rode*. Ko sem v igri z njim začutil pravi trenutek sem izvedel *rastero*, ki ga je dvignila visoko v zrak. Padel je na hrbet in pričel hlastati za zrakom. Ko je ležal na tleh, sem mu obžalujoče ponudil roko, vendar v sebi zelo zadovoljen, da sem ga uspel tako premeteno spotakniti. Dobil je kar je iskal ta zahrbtni vagabund!

Relativno pogosto nasilje na določenih *rodah capoeire* mojstri kaznujejo. Nasilneža pošljejo domov, dobi lahko začasno prepoved obiskovanja treningov ali je celo izključen iz skupine. Nasilni mojstri so tarče obtoževanj in niso dobrodošli na prihodnjih dogodkih. Kljub neodobravanju nasilja pa nekateri mojstri še vedno spodbujajo nasilje z nagovarjanjem učencev naj v *rodah* igrajo grobo. Nekateri skupine sabotirajo prireditve drugih skupin, da bi s tem pokazale svojo superiornost in si pridobile nove učence. Rezultat ni zmeraj ugoden, včasih celo negativen saj veliko mladih zavrača takšno vedenje. Nekateri so zaradi tega tudi zapustili takšne nasilne skupine in poiskali novega mojstra. Vsi moji sogovorniki se strinjajo, da pravi mojster uči trdo a nenasilno *capoeiro*. Takšne skupine sicer dovoljujejo agresivno igro a ta mora biti kontrolirana, agresija pa je lahko uporabljena tudi v nujnih primerih. Agresija naj ne bi nujno povzročila dodatnega čustvenega vzburjenja. Tisti, ki razlikujejo med agresijo in nasiljem menijo, da je nasilje posledica nenadzorovanih čustev in agresije, ali pa je to načrtovana akcija tistih, ki želijo tako na tržišču pridobiti nove učence. Nekateri salvadorski mojstri se še vedno spominjajo mojstra, ki je pred približno petnajstimi leti uporabil takšno strategijo. S svojimi najboljšimi učenci se je pojavljal na *rodah* različnih šol in predstavljal učinkovito ter nasilno igro v pričo mojstrov gostiteljev. S tem je želel pokazati, da je *capoeira* nevarna borilna veščina in ne zabava za turiste. Ne samo v Salvadorju, ampak po vsej Braziliji si je pridobil veliko učencev. Skupina je uspela tudi na svetovnem nivoju. V tem primeru, kot

trdijo nekateri mojstri, nasilje ni bilo rezultat marginalnega stereotipnega vedenja, ampak planirane strategije s ciljem ustvarjanja dobička, motivirane z zavistjo in željo po dokazovanju svoje veljave. Nasilje pa je pri *capoeiri* včasih razumljeno tudi kot sestavni del *malandragema*, ki sem ga opisal kot osnovno značilnost *capoeire*. V tem kontekstu si moramo postaviti naslednja vprašanja: Ali je takšno vedenje univerzalno za vse človeške družbe? Bi nekdo iz druge družbene realnosti uporabil podobne tehnike za doseg istega cilja? Lahko nasilje v takšnem primeru razumemo kot najučinkovitejšo in najbolj racionalno tehniko? Zagotovo bi bile tehnike različne v različnih družbah, kljub temu pa trdim, da so notranji goni univerzalni. Če je nasilje tukaj tehnika, lahko agresija predstavlja gon skupen vsem ljudem¹⁴⁰. Z biološkega in evolucijskega vidika razvoja človeškega telesa in življenja na splošno so agresivni procesi neprestani. Na primer naš imunski sistem se nenehno bori z zunanjimi vsiljivci, celično dihanje je niz agresivnih eksplozij in celo razmnoževanje ter rojstvo sta do neke stopnje agresivni dejanji. V vsaki družbi in družbeni realnosti obstaja nasilje ampak metode upravljanja tega ter čustvenega vzbujenja in frustracij so različne. Če opišemo agresijo v skladu z Berkowitzem (1968, 1993) kot odgovor na frustracije, lahko pri visoki intenziteti dražljaja trdimo, da je impulzivno nasilje možna oblika izražanja agresije, kar lahko velja tudi za *capoeiro*. Na odločitev o uporabi nasilja pa vpliva kulturni in osebni okvir posameznika. V skladu z Marcusom (2007), bodo nekateri na isti dražljaj frustracije reagirali na depresiven in ne agresiven način.

Med ne-*caopeiristično* javnostjo pa sem zaznal nekatere drugačne načine izražanja agresije in spopadanja s frustracijami. Poleg kričanja in pretepanja na ulicah in po domovih večina posluša ritmično poudarjeno glasbo zelo na glas. Pod vplivom alkohola nekateri plešejo in pojejo v lokalnih barih ali celo na ulici. Vsaj enkrat na teden je na vrsti opijanje ob gledanju nogometa ali ulični zabavi za vikend (*curtir no fin da semana*). Kljub temu, da je takšno vedenje bolj tipično za moške, se tudi veliko žensk na ta način spopada s frustracijami. Mnogi sogovorniki so omenili, da življenje povprečnega Salvadorca vodijo trije kralji: *caxaça* (žganje sladkornega trsa) *carnaval* (karneval) in nogomet. Brez teh načinov sproščanja napetosti si ne znajo predstavljati življenja v *faveli*. Nogometne tekme so na sporedu dvakrat tedensko in ponujajo dovolj priložnosti in izgovorov za opijanje, sodelovanje na tekmi ali navijanje doma pred televizorjem oziroma v baru. Močne in številne nogometne lige ponujajo dovolj materiala za pogovor skozi ves teden. Vsaj enkrat tedensko pa je nekje v soseščini

¹⁴⁰ Glede na Freudovo psihoanalitično teorijo, so človeške akcije in reakcije motivirane v skladu z dvema osnovnima instinktoma: agresijo ter libidom.

organizirana zabava z živo glasbo in vsaj enkrat mesečno je nekje v mestu *festa pública* (javni koncert ali zabava). Priložnosti za opijanje je tako dovolj. Ne glede na nek skupen življenjski vzorec, pa nekateri raje ostanejo doma ob gledanju televizije in želji zaspati, čeprav jih nenehno moti hrup iz ulice ali sosednjih hiš. V glavnem se takšni ob tem razburijo a se zaradi strahu ali sramu večinoma ne pritožujejo.

Capoeira lahko predstavlja primerno sredstvo za spopadanjem s stresom. Vadeči se skozi igro in trening znebi napetosti in agresije, prav tako pa si poveča samozavest, kar mu omogoči boljše upravljanje odnosov tako z družino kot tudi s sosedi. Veliko *capoeiristov* je omenilo, kako so skozi vadbo *capoeire* postali manj sramežljivi. Na treningih se morajo gibati, igrati v parih, ploskati, peti in igrati inštrumente, takšno izražanje pa zmanjša sramežljivost. Navajajo tudi, da sedaj lažje rešujejo konflikte saj znajo nadzirati agresijo. Mnogo jih je neposredno omenilo, da igra *capoeire* ponuja možnost sproščanja agresije in preprečuje nasilje, kljub temu, da je lahko nasilna aktivnost. Trdim, da je nasilje v *capoeiri* večinoma načrtovano razen v primerih, ko igralci še ne znajo nadzirati svojih čustev in agresije ter so se nezmožni spopadati s frustracijami povzročenimi z igro *capoeire*. Dobro trenirani učenci ter mojstri so sposobni prikriti agresivne težnje, "jih zapakirati v nasmešek" kot to mnogi mojstri radi poudarijo. Izkušen *capoeirist* je sposoben dvigovati in spuščati stopnjo agresije v skladu z dano situacijo. Če mora na primer zaščititi svoje življenje ali življenje drugega, lahko postane zelo agresiven, celo nasilen, kljub temu pa hladnokrven in zmožen nadzirati situacijo. Veliko mojstrov poudarja, da je razburjenost najhujši sovražnik borca. Če med igro ali bojem ni v smrtni nevarnosti mora za zmago ali preprečitev konflikta uporabljati *malandragem*. Sposobnosti kontrole agresije in uporabe *malandragema*, ki sta nepogrešljivi lastnosti dobrega *capoeirista* se ta priuči skozi dolgoletno vadbo in igro. Za dosego tega mora poznati in razumeti fundamentalna pravila *capoeire*, spoštovati institucionalno hierarhijo, poznati kulturni in tehnični razvoj veščine in seveda ogromno vaditi. Mnogi Salvadorci pričnejo vaditi *capoeiro* že v svoji mladosti ter se tako skozi institucijo *capoeire* tudi socializirajo. To jim omogoči ponotranjenje vrednot in prepričanj določene skupine. Čeprav imajo skupine različne pristope, pa v vseh obstaja podobna hierarhija; namreč mlajši *capoeiristi* spoštujejo starejše, pa naj gre za dejansko starost ali izkušnje pri *capoeiri*. vendar pa čustva, napetosti ali frustracije ne motivirajo nujno agresivnih teženj, kljub temu da avtorji kot Marcus (2007), Brüne (2008), in Berkowitz (1993) navajajo, da vsako negativno učinkovanje ali frustracije povzročijo agresijo. Mladi *capoeiristi* se morajo naučiti nadzirati čustva ter spoštovati starejše *capoeiriste*. Velikokrat jih slednji izzovejo s *rastero* ali močnejšim udarcem, mlajši pa se

mora odločiti kako bo reagiral v takšni situaciji. Vsem so poznane posledice nekontrolirane reakcije, namreč bolj izkušen igralec bo čustveno vzburjenje soigralca izkoristil v svoj prid in drugega porušil na tla še z večjo silo. Vendar pa lahko nekdo postane bolj agresiven a še vedno miren in nepredvidljiv, kot navajajo moji sogovorniki, so to lastnosti dobrega *malandra*. Pokazal sem, da se agresija pri *capoeiri* ne izrazi nujno kot nasilje. Vendar moramo razlikovati med nadzorovano in introvertirano, prav tako neopaženo agresijo. Taka despondentna agresija je lahko, kot trdita Marecek (2006, str. 285) in Berkowitz (1998, str. 51-52), posledica družbenega trpljenja ali negativnega učinkovanja in lahko pripelje do razvoja psihopatologije. V svoji tezi sem razpravljajal o vzrokih depresije, družbenih pogledih nanjo in načinih spopadanja z navedeno psihopatologijo.

Depresija v Salvadorju

Depresija je zagotovo najbolj razširjena psihološka motnja modernih družb. DSM IV (1994) navaja, da naj bi se 5% do 9% moških in 10% do 25% žensk svetovne populacije spopadalo z eno od oblik depresije. Kljub temu, da Burton (2003) navaja da 30 milijonov od skupno 70 milijonov tistih, ki trpijo za depresivnimi motnjami prihaja iz ZDA, sem opazil, da je depresija razširjena tudi v Salvadorju. Marecek (2006), Kleinman (1986), Brüne (2008), Hacking (1999), in Healy (1997), vsako deviacijo, še posebej psihološko, razumejo kot družbeni konstrukt časa ter prostora. Psihopatologija se pojavi v določeni kulturi in času skoraj epidemično v skladu z veljavno diagnozo določenega niza simptomov. Razlike v pojavljanju med spoloma pa lahko opišemo na več načinov, a predpostavili bomo, da so ženske bolj nagnjene k introvertiranemu izražanju agresije kot moški in sicer zaradi kulturnih prepričanja o nežnejšem spolu ter pomembnega biološkega faktorja - odsotnosti testosterona. V procesu feminizacije je ženska izpostavljena stalnemu stresu ker mora tako skrbeti za družino kot tudi služiti denar. Kot za Latinsko Ameriko navaja Cubitt (1995), je veliko žensk ločenih samohranilk z enim ali več otrok. Tak pritisk in družbeno trpljenje lahko vodita do melanholije, izčrpanja, žalosti, občutka krivde in opešanosti. To so simptomi za katere Kleinman (1986) navaja, da so jih včasih diagnosticirali kot neurastenijo, danes pa kot depresijo. Ženske pa tudi raje spregovorijo o svojih težavah kot moški zato jih prijatelji ali družina napotijo k psihiatru. Iz statistike psihiatrične bolnišnice Juliano Moréira je razvidno,

da je 80% tistih, ki iščejo psihiatrično terapijo¹⁴¹ zaradi suma depresije ženskega spola. Tudi v svoji soseščini sem srečal več depresivnih žensk kot pa moških, vendar je bil moj vzorec premajhen in neprimerno izbran za kakršnekoli statistične zaključke. Sem pa opazil, da se salvadorska družba spopada s problemom depresije na različne načine. Ljudje se poslužujejo vseh razpoložljivih tehnik, ki jih ponuja brazilski pluralni zdravstveni sistem¹⁴². Poleg farmakoterapevtskih možnosti, se poslužujejo religijskega zdravljenja in spiritualnega zdravljenja, se pričnejo ukvarjati s kakšno od fizičnih aktivnosti ali znotraj biomedicinske doktrine izberejo tehnike, ki jih na primer ponuja CENA (Center za reintegracijo mentalnih bolnikov v družbo).

Prebivalci Salvadorja, ki se spopadajo z depresijo iščejo različne načine pomoči - četudi večina poseže po antidepresivih, preizkusijo tudi ostale tehnike. Zaznal pa sem, da melanholični moški v Boca do rio, tisti brez energije, potrti, z občutki krivde in drugimi simptomi katere bi lahko pripisali depresiji, ne poiščejo strokovne pomoči. Zatrjujejo, da so izpostavljeni prevelikemu stresu in pripisujejo vzroke za svoje težave zunanjim dejavnikom. Kar bi ženska z lahkoto opisala kot depresijo, moški opiše kot stres in ne razmišlja o obisku psihiatra. Kljub dejstvu, da veliko žensk dela in skrbi za družino, pa moški niso nič manj izpostavljeni družbenemu stresu in močnim frustracijam zaradi nedoseženih ciljev. Eden izmed sosedov je že dalj časa iskal službo in je do konca mojega terenskega dela ni uspel najti. Vedno bolj je bil zaskrbljen in nekega dne, ko sva se pogovarjala na terasi se je potožil:

Ne vem več kaj naj naredim, saj sem poizkusil že vse. Sem mlad in željan delati, imam zadovoljivo IT znanje, pa vseeno ne dobim službe. Ne želim si več živeti v hiši moje mame, ampak za selitev potrebujem denar. Udeležil se bom še enega računalniškega seminarja in nadaljeval iskanje. Težava je v odnosu z materjo, ki me obremenjuje še bolj kot dejstvo, da sem brezposeln. Res se moram osamosvojiti in res potrebujem službo, če ne *quem sabe* (kdo ve).

Kot trdita Dressler in Bindon (v Flinn 2007, str. 282) lahko vsakodnevni stres v moderni družbi, kot je na primer družbeno nesoglasje med tem kaj želimo in kaj imamo, povzroči neželene odzive. Drugi so-dejavniki, ki jih opisuje Flinn (2007, str. 282) so individualne razlike v dojetanju, čustvenem nadzoru, razglabljanju, samoocenjevanju, samozavesti in

¹⁴¹ Perko (2006, str. 74) opisuje tradicionalno biomedicinsko zdravljenje v psihiatričnih bolnišnicah kot: hospitalizacijo na zaprtem ali odprtem oddelku v psihiatrični bolnišnici - v času od nekaj tednov do nekaj mesecev so pacienti deležni delovne terapije in delavnic ter sestankov skupin kjer se razpravlja o redu, disciplini in higieni.

¹⁴² Tukaj uporabljam Kleinmanovo klasifikacijo zdravstvenih sistemov (Kleinman, 1980).

mreža družbene podpore. Psihološki stres spodbuja adaptivne spremembe nevronske povezave v limbičnih in visoko asociativnih centrih, ki so namenjeni reševanju psiholoških težav. Začasno zvišanje kortizona¹⁴³ ima razvojne učinke vključujoč sinaptogenezo ter nevronske reorganizacije (Buchanan in Lovallo, 2001; Heuther, 1996, 1998 v Flinn, 2007, str. 281). Torej se fizično telo spopada s stresnim življenjem in dogajanja v *favelah* (pomanjkanje intimnosti, hrup, onesnaženje, kriminal...) s povečanim izločanjem kortizola. Mason (1971) in Marmot & Wilkinson (1999) navajajo, da lahko kronično povišan kortizon povzroči mnoge težave vključujoč poškodbe hipokampus, povečano občutljivost amigdale, slabo psihološko prilagodljivost, prav tako pa tudi depresijo. Torej, če motnje v procesu proizvodnje neurotransmitorjev in hormonov v možganih lahko povzročijo podobne težave tako pri moških kot tudi pri ženskah, zakaj potem prihaja do razlik v reakcijah moških in žensk na družbeni stres? Campbel (2007, str. 365) navaja, da je 80 % tistih, ki na družbeni stres odgovorijo z nasiljem moških. Navaja, da prihaja do razlik v pojavu depresije med družbenimi razredi - 50% popolnoma obubožanih (v Braziliji uporabljajo termin *miserável pobre*) naj bi trpelo za določenim tipom depresije - vendar pa naj bi bil v nižjem srednjem, srednjem in višjem srednjem razredu približno enak odstotek tistih z depresivnimi motnjami (Botti-Lappann, 2010). Nekateri sogovorniki so navedli, da nižje izobraženi moški psihološke težave pogosteje rešujejo z uporabo drog in alkohola, kot to počnejo ženske ali višje izobraženi moški. Ne glede na njihovo izobrazbo ali družbeni status pa naj bi se moški pogosteje ukvarjali s športom kot ženske, kar pa je lahko odločujoč dejavnik zniževanja tveganja razvoja psihopatologije. Čeprav je tudi v Salvadorju nogomet najpopularnejši šport, pa so najpogosteje izbrane športne aktivnosti - tukaj imam v mislih organizirano in redno vadbo - borilne veščine, predvsem boks in *capoeira*. Borilne veščine so bolj razširjene med revnejšo populacijo kot med višjimi razredi, ampak na to ima lahko vpliv tudi boljše ponudba drugih športnih aktivnosti v bogatejših predelih mesta. V *favelah* se s *capoeiro* najpogosteje ukvarjajo mladostniki in otroci, v bogatejših predelih pa so študentje in poslovneži tisti, ki se na ta način spopadajo s stresom. Nekateri izmed sogovornikov, ki so izbrali *capoeiro* zaradi sprostitve po napornem delovnem dnevu so omenili, da znajo prebivalci *favel* bolje sprostiti napetosti, kot pa ljudje iz višjih družbenih razredov. Oni vedo kako *curtir* (se zabavati). Eden izmed njih je dejal: "*živijo iz roke v usta in nimajo ambicioznih planov za prihodnost*". Prebivalci *favel* nimajo podobnega mnenja o tem kdo ima boljše sposobnosti upravljanja s stresom. Nekateri sosedje so se pogosto pritoževali nad življenjem v *faveli* in nad odnosi med

¹⁴³ Glucocorticoid stress hormone.

prebivalci četrti. Eden izmed njih je zatrjeval, da se mu bo zmešalo, če ne bo uspel pobegniti iz *favele*. Prepričan je bil, da mu hrup in vedenje sosedov "perejo možgane". Živel je v nenehnem strahu pred smrtjo oziroma, da bo pristal v psihiatrični bolnišnici. Mnogi drugi so se spopadali s podobnimi strahovi in zatrjevali, da so najbolj moteči dejavniki v *faveli*, glasna glasba, kričanje sredi noči, družinski prepiri in pretepi, nasilje, onesnaženje, pomanjkanje zasebnosti in revščina.

Odsotnost moškega starša je za *favelados* (prebivalci *favel*) največja težava vzgoje otrok in mladostnikov. Otroci se vzdajajo na ulici in se velikokrat vpletejo v kriminalne dejavnosti ter preprodajo in uporabo drog. To prinese trpljenje v družine ter poveča možnost razvoja depresije pri ostalih družinskih članih. Pomanjkanje očetovske avtoritete lahko pripelje do mnogih težav pri vzgoji mladih fantov ali celo do motenj pri razvoju karakterja in osebnosti. (Praper, 1999; Erickson, 1968; Perko, 2006). Sklicujoč se na Freudovo teorijo psiho-seksualnega razvoja je Erickson razvil osem stopenjski model psiho-socialnega razvoja osebnosti. Če so družinske razmere nezdrave ali celo patološke¹⁴⁴ v katerikoli izmed stopenj razvoja, se lahko pojavijo anomalije v strukturi osebnosti. Tako za Freuda kot tudi za Eriksona so najpomembnejše prve štiri razvojne stopnje. Eriksonov model se razlikuje od Freudovega v genitalni fazi, ki se za Freuda prične med petim in sedmim letom starosti, Erikson pa trdi, da se ta pojavi šele po puberteti (Praper, 1999; Erickson, 1968; Perko, 2006).

V skladu s temi teorijami bi lahko pričakovali resne motnje pri ljudeh vzgojenih v razmerah značilnih za *favele*. Kljub temu pa v svoji soseski nisem srečal resno motenih mladostnikov. Nasprotno, moji mladi sosedje niso bili dosti drugačni od tistih, ki jih srečujem v Sloveniji ali drugje po svetu. Družili so se na ulici, razpravljali o njim pomembnih temah kot so: nogomet, dekleta, novice, osebni problemi in afere. Občasno so se napili ali kadili marihuano. Nekateri so hodili v šolo, drugi delali, popoldne pa so se prepustili poslušanju glasbe, srfanju po internetu v lokalnem internet caffe-ju v garaži enega izmed sosedov. Za vikend so se zabavali na plaži in iskali simpatije. V mojo raziskavo sem vključil štiri fante iz soseske. Kljub temu, da so odraščali v isti ulici, izpostavljeni podobnim težkim razmeram življenja v *faveli*, so se močno razlikovali glede mode oblačenja, prehranjevalnih navad, načina življenja, aktivnosti in življenjskih prepričanj. Pogovarjali smo se o njihovem otroštvu, stresnih dogodkih, odnosih

¹⁴⁴ Kot nezdrave odnose razumem tiste, kjer starši ne sodelujejo pri vzgoji otrok. Ne opravljajo svojih starševskih dolžnosti in vlog, so v stalnem konfliktu ali pa je celo eden izmed njih odsoten. Patološki odnosi so povezani z odvisnostmi, spolnim zlorabljanjem, družinskim nasiljem itn.

z drugimi, njihovih ciljih, upanjih in pogledih na življenje. Nekaj mesecev sem lahko opazoval njihovo vedenje v vsakdanjem življenju, da bi tako zaznal razlike med tem kar govorijo in kar delajo. Ker v njihovem vedenju in odnosih z mano ter ostalimi člani skupnosti nisem opazil anomalij¹⁴⁵ sklepam, da še nekateri drugi dejavniki - ne samo motnje psiho-socialnega razvoja posameznika - vplivajo na posameznikove odzive na stres ter izzive okolja.

Moja opazovanja v osnovni šoli Manuel Lisboa - tam sem tri mesece nadomeščal učiteljico Angleščine ter poučeval v štirih razredih - so primerljiva s tistimi iz soseke. Šolo sem najprej obiskal z mojstrom *capoeira* in jim ponudil možnost poučevanja dvakrat tedensko. Žal šola ni imela telovadnice ne prostora za vadbo, me pa je ena izmed profesorice vprašala kako dobro govorim Angleško. Njihova učiteljica je namreč odšla na porodniški dopust, niso pa uspeli najti nadomestnega učitelja. Z veseljem sem privolil in pričel poučevati. S starejšimi sem imel dve lekciji tedensko, z mlajšimi samo enkrat tedensko. Kljub temu, da so bili otroci željni učenja, pa niso znali ostati zbrani. Moje učenje je bilo tako improvizirana igra v Angleščini. Kljub tej nezmožnosti koncentracije, pa otroci niso bili drugačni, kot tisti, ki sem jih navajen od doma. Sem namreč tudi trener in učitelj smučanja in ker sem v preteklosti imel priložnost poučevati kar nekaj skupin otrok, sem lahko brez težav primerjal. Čeprav so otroci živeli v ekstremnih razmerah življenja v *faveli*, so vsak dan prišli k pouku željni učenja. Pripravljene so bili slediti mojim napotkom in poučevanju, ter celo utihnili, ko sem jim to ukazal. Bili so prav tako radovedni kot so slovenski otroci. Čeprav sem pričakoval, da bodo zamorjeni in frustrirani - glede na življenjske razmere in slabe prostorske razmere v šoli - se z danimi razmerami niso obremenjevali. Na primer z enim izmed razredov sem moral izvajati pouk na prostem, saj so njihovo učilnico zasedle podgane. Posedli smo se v senco pod mangovcem in uživali v pouku na prostem. Nekateri so celo komentirali, da bi bilo v redu, če se podgane zadržijo dalj časa, saj je pouk na prostem bolj zabaven. Med mojim bivanjem v Salvadorju sem tako večkrat spoznal, da je dojemanje dane situacije tisto, ki determinira reakcije posameznikovega živčnega sistema.

Ehrenberg (2010, str. 26) piše, da je živčni sistem tisti, ki nas povezuje s svetom. Posledično se zato v skladu z zunanjimi vplivi spreminjajo naše nevronske povezave. Tako je naš živčni sistem zagotovo razvil načine preživetja v danih razmerah, ki morajo biti sistemsko zapisani v nevronskih povezavah. Takšne povezave lahko v skladu z Rasskin-Gutmanovo (2005, str.

¹⁴⁵ O anomaliji govorim znotraj Salvadorskega konteksta. Percepcije anomalij so namreč kulturno subjektivne.

216-218) razlago biološke arhitekture in evolucijskih možnosti, imenujemo moduli. Robins (2009), Mealey in drugi (1996), Whiten in Byrne (1997), Rizzolatti in Fogassi (2007), ter Barton (2007) poudarjajo pomen teorij modularne strukture možganov, ki izhajajo iz Fodorjeve modularne teorije iz 1980-tih. V skladu s temi teorijami so moduli tisti, ki nosijo informacije o odgovorih in reakcijah na družbene in okoljske vplive. Moduli so rezultat evolucijskih adaptacij na specifične razmere življenja v različnih družbah ter okoljih. Module lahko razumemo tudi kot tiste strukture, ki povezujejo teoretični *morphospace* - kateri zagotavlja matematične ter generativne možnosti - ter empirični *morphospace*, ki zagotavlja njihovo realizacijo (Rasskin-Gutman, 2005, str. 216). Če je tako, lahko tudi depresijo razumemo kot obrambo pred trpljenjem, ki se izraža z zmanjšanjem energije in povečanjem apatije. Zagotovo mladostniki iz *favel* razvijejo določene načine spopadanja s frustracijami in četudi kažejo simptome, ki bi jih v drugem družbenem kontekstu pripisali depresiji, se počutijo normalno in brezhibno funkcionirajo v družbi. Za nekatere pa so stres in frustracije preveč intenzivne, zato se posledično pri njih razvije določena psihopatologija ali pa delujejo nasilno. Nekateri, ki že trpijo za posledicami stresnega življenja v *favelah*, še vedno najdejo primeren način spopadanja z njihovo situacijo. Eden izmed sosedov, imenoval ga bom Jão, je bil član tolpe in izvajal ulično nasilje, ter se ukvarjal s preprodajo drog in orožja. Njegov življenjski stil in družbeni odnosi so ga pripeljali do psihološkega stanja, ki bi ga lahko opisali kot depresijo. V tem primeru bi lahko depresijo opisali kot odgovor, reakcijo človeškega telesa in uma¹⁴⁶ na določeno življenjsko situacijo. Kljub pomembnosti družbenih razlogov depresije in njenega pojava, pa so za nas zanimivi načini kako se ljudje spopadajo s psihopatologijo. Jão se je na primer priključil evangelistični cerkveni skupini, ter pričel vaditi *capoeiro* v lokalni šoli. Navedel je, da je pri novih prijateljih dobil podporo in pomoč na tej novo načrtani poti. Spoznal je nove vrednote in uvidel, da je lahko življenje tudi drugačno od njegovega prejšnjega. Za tiste, ki trpijo za depresijo je ustvarjanje novih odnosov ter harmonizacija starih odnosov uspešen način spopadanja s psihopatologijo. Bateson (1972), Johnson (2007), Kleinman (1986), Brüne (2008), in Marecek (2006) pišejo, da imajo družbeni odnosi pomemben vpliv na razvoj psihopatologij. Nasilje, zloraba, problemi meta-komunikacije, družinske napetosti, odnosi na delu, odnosi s prijatelji ter družbeno trpljenje, ki ga povzročijo drugi, so pogosti razlogi za razvoj motenj osebnosti ter tudi sposobnosti spopadanja s stresnimi situacijami. Vendar posameznik ni pasivni subjekt pogojen samo z

¹⁴⁶ Razlikovanje med telesom in umom je teoretične narave. Za opis človeškega individuuma bi morali uporabiti termin *human being*, vendar bi v tem primeru morali upoštevati osebo kot skupek telesa (biološkega ustroja), uma (izvršilni in misleči um), duše (vir energije, podzavestno, metafizično).

vplivi zunanjih dejavnikov. Kot v zvezi z individualnimi znaki ugodja in neugodja piše Ehrenberg (2010, str. 25): "...allow man to become the agent of his own destiny." Posameznik se sam odloča ali se bo pridružil določeni skupini, njegova integracija pa je odvisna tudi od dožemanja posameznikovega vedenja med ostalimi člani skupine. Posameznik si sam izbira tudi reference identifikacije in aktivnosti, ki mu pomagajo spopadati se z depresijo, drugimi psihopatologijami ter vedenjskimi težavami. Ne glede na to ali se posameznik pridruži religijski, športni ali kulturni skupini, igrajo te pomembno vlogi v družbeni integraciji in reintegraciji posameznikov, pri vzpostavljanju in predstavljanju družbenih pravil in diskurzov in pri harmonizaciji družbenih odnosov, o čemer zelo nazorno piše Johnson (2007).

V nalogi sem pokazal, da ima *capoeira* dovršen ritual *rode*, ki se lahko izvaja na način podoben religijskim ritualom. Kljub temu, da nekateri sociologi in antropologi poudarjajo povezavo med ritualom in mitom pa Kluckhohn (1942, str. 45-79) poudarja, da povezava ni nujna, saj vsi miti nimajo izpopolnjenih ritualov prav tako pa se ne pojavljajo v vseh ritualih. Mit in ritual imata psihološko funkcijo, ne glede ali se pojavljata skupno ali ločeno: "*Myths reduce anxiety by providing fixed ways of understanding; rituals by providing fixed ways of behaving*" (Kluckhohn, 1942, str. 45-79).

Pri *capoeiri* lahko govorimo o obstoju proto-mitov, ki pripovedujejo o pogumnih bojevniki in zaslužnih mojstrih za ohranitev večine kot so: *Besóuro Preto Mangagá*, *Mestre Pastinha* in *Mestre Bimba*. Njihove zgodbe se prenašajo na dogodkih kot je *batizado* in sicer med nagovori mojstrov. Kot trdi Burket (v Segal, 1998, str. 341-342) so rituali načini komunikacije, mit pa je verbalni del rituala. Kljub temu, da takšne zgodbe ne moremo razglasiti za tipično mitološke, je *batizado* natančno razdelan ritual. Pravila zanj je postavil *Mestre Bimba*, s časom pa je postal nepogrešljiv dogodek vsake *capoeiristične* skupine. DuBois (v Kluckhohn, 1942) piše, da se pri razvoju rituala socializirajo in habitualizirajo tudi nekatere osebne tehnike pripadnikov skupin. Ritual *rode* lahko tako razumemo tudi kot habitualizirano in socializirano obliko medosebnega druženja in tehnik *capoeiristov* konca devetnajstega in pričetka dvajsetega stoletja. *Rode* ter različni *capoeiristični* dogodki imajo funkcijo harmonizacije odnosov med učenci, mojstri ter ostalimi člani skupnosti vpletenih v organizacijo dogodka. Skozi takšne rituale se izvaja integracija v določeno skupino. Zaradi teh lastnosti menim, da je *capoeira* učinkovito sredstvo spopadanja z družbenim stresom, čeprav se vadeči te funkcije večine večinoma ne zavedajo. Poudarjajo, da sta druženje in fizična aktivnost tista atributa, ki jim pomagata pri spopadanju s stresom. Na te skrite pomene

capoeira sem postal pozoren, ko sem večkrat slišal *capoeiriste* poudarjati kako *capoeira* ni samo šport in borilna veščina, ampak mnogo več. Ker mi nihče ni znal razložiti kaj je ta "veliko več" sem v skladu z opazovanji zaključil, da se ta "*muito mais*" skriva v ritualu *rode*. Johnson (2007) navaja, da rituali združujejo družinske člane, zato lahko pomagajo pri reševanju starih sporov ter zamer, pomagajo ponovno zgraditi ali preoblikovati odnose, omogočajo pridobitev družbene veljave in potrjujejo vrednote ter prepričanja določene skupine. Opazil sem, da se pri *capoeirističnih* dogodkih odvijajo prav ti navedeni procesi. Torej ne samo dejstvo, da je *capoeira* zdrava fizična aktivnost, ampak tudi vzpostavljanje in ohranjanje odnosov, njihova ponovna vzpostavitev ter harmonizacija na različnih dogodkih *capoeira*, so tisti dejavniki, ki promovirajo *capoeiro* kot učinkovito ter velikokrat izbrano aktivnost za spopadanje s stresom ter frustracijami. Kljub temu pa mnogi depresivni bolniki uživajo antidepresive in pomirjevala - tukaj imam v mislih nekatere sosede ter paciente psihiatrične bolnišnice Juliano Moréira. Nekateri - predvsem moški - v moji soseski, ki so kazali nekatere simptome katere bi lahko pripisali depresiji, so se s težavami spopadali z uporabo alkohola ali drog. Nekateri sogovorniki - med njimi tudi *capoeiristi* - so omenili, da kadijo marihuano, da bi tako zmanjšali težave, ki jih povzročajo anksioznost, žalost, depresija, itn. Kljub temu, da ljudje izbirajo *capoeiro* ali druge športne aktivnosti za spopadanje s stresom in frustracijami, pa sta alkohol in marihuana najpogosteje omenjeni sredstvi za spopadanje z napetostjo, stresom, depresivnimi razpoloženji in preprosto za sprostitev. Mladostniki hkrati uživajo tako alkohol kot marihuano, medtem, ko se starejši praviloma odločajo za uporabo alkohola. Srečeval sem jih v lokalnem baru ali pred vrati dvorišča katerega izmed sosedov, kjer so kadili ter pili. Moški so se tako družili tudi med tednom, ženske so se jim praviloma pridružile za vikend. Ženske so po vrnitvi iz službe skrbele še za dom. Pacientke bolnišnice Juliano Moréira so kot glavni razlog razvoja njihove depresije navedle izčrpanost zaradi prekomernega dela. Kljub temu, da so uživale antidepresive, so se udeleževale terapije s *capoeiro*. V tem so videle mnoge pozitivne aspekte kot na primer: preusmeritev misli, sprostitev s petjem in igranjem, telesna komunikacija z drugimi, fizična aktivnost, ki sprosti tudi um, povečana fizična in mentalna aktivnost. Mnogi pacienti so omenili, da jih *capoeira* med tednom ter *churrasco* (piknik s pripravo hrane na žaru) ali *fejoada* za vikend najbolje sprostito, pomagajo odgnati negativne misli, pomagajo spopadati s stresom in z boleznijo. Tudi moji sosedge brez diagnosticirane psihopatologije so izpostavili *churrasco* in pivo kot najboljši način sproščanja stresa in napetosti po napornem delovnem tednu. Nekateri terapevti bolnišnice Juliano Moréira menijo, da je tak način vedenja ob koncu tedna eden izmed varnostnih ventilov sproščanja napetosti in stresa ter spopadanja z nasiljem

in depresijo. Prebivalci *favel* imajo dober dostop do javnih zabav in nekateri terapevti trdijo: "*Eles sabem curtir* (Oni se znajo zabavati.)", po drugi strani pa si lahko srednji in višji srednji razred privoščijo druge aktivnosti sproščanja kot: šport, umetnost, počitnice, potovanja, nakupovanje, itn. ko govorimo o dostopnosti določene zdravilne tehnike, pa moramo gledati na problem tudi s stališča moralne sprejemljivosti določene tehnike. Lock in Nichter (2002, str. 8-10) poudarjata pomen moralne sprejemljivosti določene medicinske tehnologije ali prakse. Ljudje namreč izbirajo tehnike, ki so moralno sprejemljive s stališča vrednot določene družbe. Današnji medicinski pluralizem moramo tako razumeti v kontekstu kozmopolitanizma in z vidika lokalnih ter globalnih odnosov. Raziskati moramo globalno ljudsko zdravstveno agendo in vplive zdravstvenih ter razvojnih agencij na nacionalne zdravstvene politike oblikovane v duhu zdravstvenih reform, ki homogenizirajo prakse v imenu večje učinkovitosti, itn. (Ginsberg in Rapp v Lock in Nichter, 2002, str. 10).

Proces modernizacije tako vzpostavlja pluralne medicinske sisteme, kljub temu pa se srečujemo z nekaterimi kulturnimi razlikami v povpraševanju po tehnikah znotraj posameznih medicinskih sistemov. V našem primeru bi lahko *capoeiro* obravnavali kot posebno medicinsko tehniko spopadanja z depresijo in drugimi psihopatologijami v Salvadorju. Kot navajajo terapevti v bolnišnici Juliano Moréira, so oni edina bolnišnica v Braziliji, ki uporablja *capoeiro* kot neodvisno terapijo pri zdravljenju psihopatologij. Vodja centra za reintegracijo bolnikov v družbo navaja, da je razmerje med ceno in učinkovitostjo te terapije boljše kot tisto pri antidepresivih. Tak diskurz znotraj bolnišnice mi je omogočil sodelovanje ter možnost vplivanja na odločitve psihiatrov o predpisani dozi psihotropnih zdravil, da so bili pacienti sposobni sodelovati na terapiji. Psihiatri so se večinoma strinjali z mojim predlogom saj vedo, da psihotropna zdravila povzročajo zaspanost ter otrdelost udov. Kljub temu, pa omenjeno razmerje med ceno in učinkovitostjo ni edini razlog zakaj se ljudje odločijo za *capoeiro* kot terapevtsko tehniko in zakaj ji terapevti pripisujejo učinkovitost.

Tukaj moram poudariti pomen telesne komunikacije pri spopadanju s stresom in psihopatologijami. Navarro (2008) piše, da je več kot 80% človeške komunikacije neverbalne, zato ima telo odločilno vlogo pri komuniciranju občutij, skritih pomenov, namenov, Rečemo lahko, da kar besede prikrivajo telo razkriva. Telesna komunikacija prevladuje pri *capoeiri*, in opazil sem, da sem jo zlahka uporabil pri terapiji. Kot navaja Perko (2006, str. 145) se s konstantno fizično aktivnostjo izboljša tudi posameznikova samozavest, fokus energije posameznika pa se prenese iz možganov v telo in v izvršitvene funkcije uma. V primeru

mentalnih težav in še posebej depresije to predstavlja veliko spremembo delovanja posameznika v inter- ter intra-osebni komunikaciji. Nekateri pacienti so navedli, da med vadbo pozabijo na vedno prisotne težave, saj so usmerjeni samo v izvedbo sicer naravnih, a za začetnika težkih gibov *capoeire*. Ko so se naučili osnovnih gibov, je bil njihov cilj in fokus implementacija teh gibov v igro z nasprotnikom. Na tem mestu pa igralec prične s telesno komunikacijo nešteti možnosti. Vedno namreč obstaja rešitev uganke postavljene s telesnim gibom soigralca, pri *capoeiri* kajti vsak gib predstavlja izziv drugemu igralcu. Če predpostavimo, da akcija sproži reakcijo, ki sama postane akcija, potem se proces komunikacije ne ustavi dokler ni namenoma prekinjen. Kot navajajo moji sogovorniki zahteva takšna interakcija dosti improvizacije ter kreativnosti. S tem pa se zmanjša intenziteta tuhtanja in neplodnega razmišljanja, saj se stvari dogajajo prehitro za analitično logične procedure. Določene gibe je potrebno izvesti skoraj s hitrostjo refleksa, kar daje dovolj časa le izvršilnemu delu možganov, da poiščejo pravi odgovor ter ga izvedejo. Eden izmed mojstrov je takšno telesno interakcijo opisal kot:

Igra *capoeire* je stalna izmenjava vprašanj in odgovorov. Vsak napad je vprašanje in vsaka obramba, ki je pri *capoeiri* tudi nov napad, je istočasno odgovor ter novo vprašanje. Na tak način se vzpostavi telesna komunikacija pri kateri igralci pozabijo na zunanji svet. Igralca bosta komunicirala tako dolgo dokler jih ne bodo prekinili drugi željni igre. Kljub temu, da imam resne težave s hrbtenico, med igro ne čutim bolečin. Vse kar imam v mislih je kako s svojim znanjem nadigrati soigralca in predvideti njegove namere.

Telesna komunikacija se pri *capoeiri* prične z vadbo v *duplas* (parih). Igralec gre skozi vse faze učenja opisane v Batesonovi shemi učenja (Bateson 1972, str. 287-306). Najprej se učimo različnih gibov, nato jih uporabimo v različnih situacijah, nadaljujemo s spreminjanjem kombinacij in spremenjene kombinacije uporabimo v drugačnih situacijah, itn. Končni cilj je doseči tekočo, skoraj instinktivno komunikacijo prežeto z *malandragemom*. V tem razvojnem procesu igralec izpopolnjuje specifičen stil skladno z osebnostnimi značilnostmi, samopodobo, vrednotami, itn., ter *vice versa*, se skozi ta proces spreminja tudi njegova osebnost.

V zvezi z razlikovanjem med telesno in verbalno komunikacijo pri terapiji s *capoeiro*, pa je pomembno omeniti, da je lažje vzpostaviti telesno komunikacijo kot verbalno. Stalna in tekoča telesna komunikacija pa lahko privede do verbalne komunikacije tam kjer je pred tem ni bilo. Da bi lahko potrdil to predpostavko, navajam primer enaindvajsetletne Rebecce.

Postavljena ji je bila diagnoza shizofrenije in depresije. Zavračala je pogovor in sodelovanje pri terapijah. Večinoma je spala ali ležala na tleh ter ni kazala zanimanja za okolico. Ko je slišala zvok *berimbaua*, je prihitela do mene v želji po igri z menoj. Med prvima dvema terapijama je večino časa strmela vame ter me na vsak način želela zadeti z udarcem, ni pa sledila pravilom terapije. Naslednji teden je pričela sodelovati s ploskanjem med vadbo petja in privolila tudi v poučevanje določenih gibov *capoeire*. Psihiatrinji sem predlagal znižanje doze zdravil v kar je privolila. Pacientka je pričela uživati v igri in terapiji, ter se med igro celo nasmihala medtem, ko me je želela preslepiti ali udariti. Po treh tednih je prišla na terapijo in spregovorila: "*Bom dia Mestre*" (dobro jutro mojster). Bil sem šokiran saj nisem bil prepričan, da sploh zna govoriti. Od tega dne naprej je postala njena verbalna komunikacija vse bolj jasna in obsežna. Po štirih tednih je odšla domov. Ne morem trditi, da je imela *capoeira* odločilno vlogo pri njeni terapiji, ampak psihiatrinja ter vodja centra sta se strinjali, da je vzpostavitev telesne komunikacije z zunanjim svetom pomagala pacientki vzpostaviti verbalno komunikacijo, katero je pred tem zavračala zaradi šokantnih dogodkov povezanih z razvojem njene psihopatologije. Povedala je, da ni želela govoriti saj ni bilo nič pametnega za povedat ali razpravljat, za komunikacijo ali gibanje pa je bila tudi preveč omamljena od zdravil.

Ker so se telesna izražanja zdela zabavna vsem sodelujočim, je bilo vzdušje na terapiji sproščeno, produktivno ter kreativno. Razen pri petju, je večina komunikacije potekala z uporabo gest ter telesnega gibanja. Verbalno komunikacijo sem uporabil le za dajanje napotkov, pacienti pa so govorili z menoj takrat, ko niso razumeli dane naloge. Pacienti tudi niso klepetali, saj je bila glasba med vadbo zelo glasna. Medsebojno komunikacijo so morali izvesti s telesnimi tehnikami, kar smatram za zelo direkten in odkrit način komuniciranja. Tudi Bateson (1972, str. 13) piše, da je jezik najprej in predvsem sistem gest. Za njega komunikacija niso gole besede ampak tudi geste, intonacije in drugi zvoki povezani z besedami. Lashlie (2005, str. 134) trdi, da so pomembne informacije distribuirane s pomočjo telesne komunikacije, vendar je prepričana, da ženske komunicirajo več z besedami, medtem kot moški s pomočjo govornice telesa, ki naj bi predstavljala tudi do 90% komunikacije moških. Bateson (1972, str. 12-14) je mnenja, da se točne informacije o človekovih občutjih in čustvih prenašajo preko govornice telesa. Za njega je osnoven cilj komunikacije sporočanje drugim, da nismo jezni in, da se počutimo v redu.

Tudi pri treningih *capoeire* sem zaznal okrnjeno verbalno komunikacijo. Mojstri so gibe in sekvence pokazali ter pri tem naštevili imena uporabljenih udarcev in gibov. Ko so želeli popraviti gibanje učenca, so mu počasi ponovili gibanje ter nato vadili nekaj sekvenc z njim. Med samo igro pa so prisotni ploskali, peli in igrali, tako, da se je prava verbalna komunikacija pričela šele po končanem treningu. Treningi so se velikokrat zaključili tudi s formalno verbalno komunikacijo med mojstrom ter učenci.

Omeniti moram še eno pomembno terapevtsko lastnost *capoeire*, namreč glasbo. S pomočjo glasbe se vzpostavi telesno gibanje, glasba pa tudi narekuje dinamiko igre. Na tem mestu ne bom obširneje debatiral o vplivu glasbe na človeško zdravje, zdravljenje in njegova občutenja o čemer pišejo mnogi avtorji (Aldridge, 2008; Bunt in Hoskins 2002; Gilroy in Colin, 1995; Donald, 1985). Glasba se sestoji iz melodije in ritma, ki sta enako pomembna, vendar pa je v kontekstu izvajanja ritualov ritem sredstvo vzpostavljanja ponavljajočega zvoka, ki pripelje do transcendentnega stanja telesa in uma. Skozi ritem se vzpostavi meditativno stanje uma v katerem se lahko sprostijo stres ter negativne misli. Pri afro-brazilskih religijah kot je na primer *candomblé*, se s pomočjo ritma inkorporirajo božanstva ter izvajajo zdravilne tehnike. Boben *atabaque* je pri *capoeiri* tisti instrument s katerim se doseže ponavljajoč ritem, hkrati pa institucijo *capoeire* povezuje z religijo *candomblé*. Oliveira Cruz (2006) navaja, da ni nič nenavadnega za *rodas de capoeira angola* (tradicionalno izveden ritual *rode* pri *capoeiri angoli*), da duhovi prednikov vstopijo v telesa udeležениh. Za nekatere izkušene starejše mojstre se celo verjame, da so zmožni inkorporirati znanja in izkušnje že preminulih slavnih mojstrov. Prepričanje, da lahko pri *roda de capoeira* duhovi vstopijo v človeško telo je za tiste, ki jim je *capoeira* tuja, zastrašujoče. Za nekatere *capoeiriste* pa je to lastnost *capoeire*, ki lahko pomaga pri spopadanju z zdravstvenimi težavami, predvsem mentalnimi. Ponavljajoč se ritem vpliva na telesno in možgansko utripanje zaradi česar je možno, da vpliva tudi na telesne kemične procese¹⁴⁷ in tako na posameznikove predstave o zunanjem in njegovem notranjem svetu. *Atabaque* predstavlja tudi bitje srca in osredotočanje na bitje srca je po mnenju Elmer in Freeman (1998), ter Kelly in Kelly (1995) učinkovita meditativna in zdravilna metoda. Prepričan sem, da je ritem igral pomembno vlogo pri izvajanju terapij s *capoeiro*, kar so zatrjevali tudi pacienti potem, ko smo se pogovarjali o njihovih občutkih na terapijah. Za nekatere je ritem predstavljal le del glasbe, ki jim je prinesla sprostitev ter boljše

¹⁴⁷ Brüne (2008), Buss (2005), Ehrenberg (2010), Korszun in drugi (2006) navajajo, da igrajo nevro-transmitorji pomembno vlogo pri razvoju depresivnih motenj. Kakršnakoli aktivnost poveča njihovo izločanje.

razpoloženje. Za druge, katerih družbena realnost je povezana z inkorporacijo duhov ter božanstev, pa je ritem predstavljal del spiritualnega zdravljenja.

Tudi v *rodas de capoeira* je bila glasbena izvedba zelo pomembna. Če je *bateria funcionar bem* (dobro delovala), je bila energija dobra. Sodelujoči so sledili *bateria*-i z glasnim ter usklajenim petjem in ploskanjem. Ritem se je spreminjal v skladu z znanjem prisotnih na *rodi* in *vice versa*, so v *rodo* stopali bolj ali manj izkušeni glede na ritem. Spomnim se, da sem stopil v igro pri zelo ritmično usklajeni *rodi* z visokim a neverjetno hitrim profesorjem. Počutil sem se drugače kot v nekaterih drugih *rodah* - na primer v tistih izvedenih na treningih *capoeire*. Igro sva pričela z normalno hitrostjo, vendar se je spremenil ritem in pričela sva pospeševati hitrost igre. V določenem trenutku sem se zalotil, da ne razmišljam več o tehnikah, ampak sledim toku dogajanja pod vplivom ponavljajočega ritma. Gibanje telesa je postalo mehko, prelivajoče se in spontano. Spomnim se le, da sem se uspel umakniti tako imenovani *mea lua de compasso* (značilen *capoeira* krožni udarec), ki je sploh nisem videl. Nekateri mojstri so mi razložili, da se z vadbo gibanja, udarcev, sekvenc in različnih možnih kombinacij izuriš za igro brez razmišljanja in reakcije brez gledanja.

Na koncu bi želel strniti najpomembnejše rezultate raziskave. Razpravljal sem o družbeni vlogi *capoeire* v Braziliji, bolj natančno v Salvadorski družbi, ter analiziral njene vplive na nasilje, agresijo in depresijo. Želel sem pokazati, da lahko družbeno relevantna institucija pomembno vpliva na zdravje ter vedenje pripadnikov določene družbe. Na razvoj deviantnega vedenja ali psihopatologij lahko vpliva na pozitiven ali negativen način. Prav tako lahko vpliva na odločitve o načinih spopadanja s problemi. V primeru *capoeire* smo pokazali, da obstaja konsenz o pozitivnih učinkih institucije na družbeno in individualno zdravje. Institucija lahko preprečuje pojav nasilja z vzpostavljanjem in promocijo vrednot, nadzorom agresije in s sproščanjem napetosti, ki so posledice frustracij ter stresa. Na *capoeirističnih* dogodkih se harmonizirajo tudi družbeni odnosi. Na področju mentalnega zdravja predstavlja *capoeira* močno ter učinkovito terapevtsko metodo. Ne glede na javno mnenje o učinkovitosti določenih tehnik kot je na primer *capoeira*, se na področju mentalnega zdravja srečamo z naslednjim problemom: tudi v najbolj liberalnih in radikalnih zdravstvenih sistemih, uporabniki storitev ter produktov ne kritizirajo in oblikujejo zdravstvenega sistema. V vseh modernih sistemih je proces spremembe sistema prešel od strokovne analize do strokovne rešitve (Lewis v Cohen in Timimi, 2008, str. 73). Kljub temu v svoji tezi nisem želel pokazati ali je *capoeira* učinkovito terapevtsko sredstvo ali ne. Znotraj konteksta družbenega in

individualnega zdravja sem razpravljajal o prepričanjih in pogledih javnosti na to borilno veščino. Družbena vloga *capoeira* je paradoksalna, a institucija ima kljub temu pomemben vpliv na afro-brazilsko družbo. Predstavlja namreč sredstvo integracije ter reintegracije temnopolte populacije ter hkrati relevantno terapevtsko metodo na področju mentalnega zdravja. Zaključim lahko z Brownovo izjavo: "*Technique can be judged only pragmatically. Anything goes if it works (tehniko lahko sodimo samo pragmatično. Vse je dobro, če deluje)*" (lasten prevod) (Brown, 1959, str. 155).