

Fall 2006

Não Sou Sua Puta: An Examination of Preconceptions of Sex Work In Salvador, Bahia

Charmaine Bee
SIT Study Abroad

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection

 Part of the [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), and the [Inequality and Stratification Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bee, Charmaine, "NÃO Sou Sua Puta: An Examination of Preconceptions of Sex Work In Salvador, Bahia" (2006). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. 276.
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/276

This Unpublished Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Study Abroad at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

Não Sou Sua Puta: An Examination of Preconceptions of Sex Work
In Salvador, Bahia

Charmaine Bee
Fall 2006
Academic Advisor : Bill Calhoun

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	3
Introduction	4 - 7
Personal and Professional Motives for Reserach	8 – 9
Importance of Research	10 – 11
Location and Methodology of Research	12 – 13
Definition of Terms	14
Hypothesis	15
Content of Research	
APROSBA	16 - 17
Confronting Perceptions of the Black Female Sex Worker	18 - 20
Police encounters by Black female Sex Workers and how this speaks to the De-valuation of the Black female Body	21 - 23
Empowering Spaces of Self – Definition - Confronting Societal Notions and Preconceptions	
APROSBA Radio Station	24 - 25
Creating Space Within Economic And Educational Spheres	26
Sexual Binaries	27 - 28
Body Image and Diversity of Such Within the Profession	29 – 31
Conclusion	32
Endnotes	33 - 34
Bibliography	35
Indications for Further Research	36
Learning Acquired and Application of ISP in the Home Environment	37
APPENDIX	38 - 46

PAGE ABSTRACT: SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

“For Black women ceding control over self - definitions of Black women's sexualities upholds multiple oppressions. This is because all systems of oppression converge, " Patricia Collins.

The system of Slavery is essential in any conversation around various systems of oppression which black women encounter, as many ideologies that support systemic racism were constructed during slavery. Black women face the intersectionality of multiple oppressions on a daily basis, one of these oppressions being sexism. Because of these various oppressions and definitions of black female sexuality by those in power the diversity of black female sexuality and self - definition has been silenced. In addition to constructed ideologies of black "womaness" black women have been forced to encounter unequal economic and educational disadvantages. I plan to examine how these constructed ideologies and systemic racist practices against black women impact black women in the profession of sex work. How these do constructed ideologies impact sex work, and how do sex workers view these ideologies as well as how they impact the work? Due to the varying expressions of black female sexuality and experience it is vital for empowerment that black women self define their sexuality, as well as societal roles.

Many spaces of empowerment have been created and many times societal preconceptions of what it is to be black, woman, and sex worker are confronted by these spaces How these women go about interrogating societal notions of their role and existence creates a space for self definition. Specific examples of these would include the creation of the radio station, the rejection of particular Eurocentric standards of beauty, such as being thin, and the denunciation of the police in the APROSBA space.

INTRODUCTION

The ancestors of African Brazilians were forced to survive through government sanctioned murder, discrimination, racism, sexual exploitation and exclusion from the wage making economy. The transatlantic slave trade transported over 10 million Africans from regions of West Africa and Angola to Brasil to engage in forced labor that would contribute to the wealth of Europe.¹ The systemic exclusion from the academy and wage making economy as well as the normalized sexual and physical brutality that Africans and African descendants in Brasil faced was often justified by the creation of negative stereotypes of these people. Stereotypes such as the Black being savage, practitioner of demonic religions, unintelligent, and sexually insatiable were created in order to dehumanize the Black. For, to systemically murder and exclude a non - being or other was deemed acceptable.

It can be said that many of these challenges remain a reality for African descendants in Brasil and that they simply manifest themselves somewhat differently. The abolition of slavery in Brasil was not the end of a system that left African - Brazilians disenfranchised, marginalized, and discriminated against, in a white supremacist racist society. The Abolition of slavery took place for varying economic reasons including making Brasil appear more attractive and "civilized" to European immigrants. While this did in fact remove physical shackles and legally "freed" slaves it did not necessarily end societal discrimination, societal constructed ideas associated with blackness, nor the exclusion of blacks from a competitive wage economy. Ideas of blackness that were constructed to justify the system of slavery such as Blacks being lazy, unproductive, savage, overly sexualized, and unintelligent continued to prevail and unequal job distribution to Blacks after slavery remained a reality.

This is especially apparent in the Northeast region of Brasil which has a large

population of African Brazilian women who are at a greater economic disadvantage. In 1850 laws such as the first land law established that ownership of land could only happen through buying and selling, which excluded African - Brazilians from this transaction because of their prior exclusion from the wage economy during slavery and their exclusion from the newly developed industrial wage making economy of the country; leaving them with no means with which to purchase land. Approaching the abolition of slavery Brasil was engaged in encouraging European immigration in an effort to exclude African Brazilians from the job market as well as to initiate a "whitening" of the country. The majority of European's immigrated to the Southern region of Brasil, which was quickly becoming highly industrialized in comparison to the underdeveloped northeast where there was and today still is a large African Brazilian population.² The regional economic disparities in the country are spoken to in studies such as PNAD (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios). According to the 1996 PNAD while the average monthly income of those living in the urbanized southeast region of the country was R\$366, the average monthly income in the Northeast was R\$158. (Nascimento, Nascimento. 2001, 112)

Job distribution to African Brazilian women, who were not only forced to encounter negative societal notions of what it is to be black but specifically what it is to be black and woman in Brazilian society, continued to be disproportionate.³ When gender is examined the disparities become even more visible. In 1994 while White men in Brasil earned 6.3 times the amount of minimum wage, Black women earned 1.7 times that. ⁴ Exclusion of Blacks from the academy is quite prevalent as well, there is a high population of women of African descent having no or less than one year of school compared to the wealth of access to formal schooling of white women and men. ⁵ This exclusion in turn impacts the work that black women have access to in the wage making economy. While a great number of white women and men living in the Southeast

region of the country work in white collar positions , the majority of Black women in the northeast a relegated to work in blue collar positions which pay substantially less . Often times when African Brazilian women are infact employed in White collar positions they are paid a great deal less than White men and women.⁶

In addition to forced economic disadvantage fostered by racism, many Black Brazilian women also suffer societal notions that they are less intelligent as well as hyper-sexualized. Notions of black Brazilian women being highly sexual were constructed during slavery often to justify the sexual exploitation of these women by white slave owners. Therefore the sexuality of black women is often approached with the assumption of black women being sexually "promiscuous," "free," and/ or sexually "insatiable."

Although this does not speak to the entire population of women sex workers, the high concentration of Black and specifically Black women in the northeast region, the economic disadvantage imposed upon these women, compounded by the northeast region being a target for sexual tourism has led to the population of women sex workers in northeastern regions having a high concentration of blacks. The Black female sex worker is quite often approached with the assumption that she is of little or no value, that her profession is immoral, that she is uneducated disempowered and cannot or does not create spaces of resistance. It is also believed that because of her profession those in positions of power are granted free access to her body.

Along with the defining what it is to be woman and defining her economic situation those in power seem to be sexually exploiting the bodies of black women once again.

"Prostitution represents the fusion of exploitation for an economic purpose - namely, the commodificatoin of Black women's sexuality - with the demeaning treatment afforded pets. Sex become commodified not merely in the sense that it can be purchased - the dimension of economic exploitation - but also in the sense that one is dealing with a totally alienated being who is separated from and who seemingly does not control her body: the dimension of power as

domination (McNall. 1983, 181 - 203)

These notions and actions based on these notions of Black womanhood intend to render the Black woman commodified, victimized, and powerless. The commodification of the Black female body does not readily address her voice in terms of how she interprets the idea of commodification and racist and sexist notions in regards to her work.

With this in mind my research is geared at an investigation of how a group of four Black female sex workers in the city of Salvador, Bahia perceive, integrate and/or reject social notions regarding the nature and character of sex work and women engaged in this profession. I am particularly interested in exploring social notions related to race, class and gender that are known to this group of sex workers and what reactions they have to these ideas, how do they perceive the impact of these ideas on their work and lives? Do they believe that they are forced to integrate and behave according to these ideas?

These questions are essential in order to hear a voice often unheard, ignored, misconstrued, or silenced; the voice of the Black female sex worker. These questions may also serve to shift power through self definition.

bell hooks states that, "as subjects people have the right to define their own reality, establish their own identities, name their history"(hooks. 1989, 42)

The economic power of the elite has not only given them the power to commodify bodies but to construct social definitions of the other and to normalize these social definitions as well. I am curious as to what takes place when this power is questioned, when these imposed definitions are questioned and if there are conflicts with socially constructed definitions what this means.

PERSONAL/ PROFESSIONAL MOTIVES FOR CHOICE OF RESEARCH TOPIC

Elite groups in power have created binaries that deem the "other," or more clearly anything other than white as abnormal. In this creation of the category of the "other" people of African descent have had belief systems of "normality" imposed upon their way of thinking/ life and have been discriminated against based on negative stereotypes created to support this binary. As a woman of African descent living in a societal construct which defines her as "other" deconstructing these notions as well as confronting those in power who impose these constructs is essential.

In addition, as a woman of African descent living within the African Diaspora it is crucial to understand the model of oppression that transcends one specific context such as the United States and to understand how it impacts a larger population of women of African descent throughout the world. This impact on a larger population speaks to a global system of oppression and domination that has benefited off of the labor of black women for centuries and continues to benefit off of the marginalization and discrimination of her despite her centuries of labor.

Negative stereotypes of what it is to be the "other," and specifically what it is to be black and woman foster a space where this domination and marginalization can thrive.

The exploitation of the black female body in terms of labor as well as sexual exploitation came to be justified by viewing her as less intelligent, overly sexualized, and overly content and not fully aware of the situation which oppressed her. These stereotypes have been critical in defining the role of black women in society, exclusion of the black woman and deeming the black woman as invisible. Because of what society has been made to believe it means to be black and female, which is also to be hyper - sexualized, the profession of sex work seems to be a natural "talent" or "role" of the black female. This assumption contributes to the idea of the Black female sex worker as having no value, her body is viewed as freely accessible and she is viewed as completely dis-empowered.

As a woman of African descent who has experienced marginalization I find it empowering to dialogue with other women of African descent throughout the Diaspora as to how they interpret and address these constructs of power. It is also important to discuss the means by which we resist and create empowering spaces.

More importantly because the black woman is deemed invisible, her interpretation of these ideas is rarely respected, listened to, or valued. I believe that space for empowerment lies in questioning as well as creating dialogue around these stereotypes and creating a space of self - definition as well as acknowledging the collective and individual self - definition that takes place within communities of Black female sex workers.

This space must be created, and the acknowledgment of the existence of these spaces must be voiced. This research is personally important because I do not believe that it is sensible to expect the imposer of these ideals to create this space for Black women.

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

According to Patricia Hill Collins, "Because authority to define societal values is a major instrument of power elite groups in exercising power manipulate ideas about black womanhood." (Collins. 2000, 69)

For centuries those in power have taken it upon themselves to define the societal role of the "other." In this definition of the "other," negative stereotypes of the behavior, attitudes, physical appearance and intelligence of the "other" has been constructed as a means to discriminate against and dis-empower her/ him.

The binary of normality, being white and /or economically advantaged and "other" being non - white and/ or economically disadvantaged has been created by an elite in order to exercise their power in defining the role that the other plays in society. By creating this binary of normality and "other, " a power dynamic is constructed that allows the elite to create a space of the perpetuation and/ or justification of negative stereotypes, because they are applied to a people who fall into a category that is defined as one of non - normality.

The justification of these negative stereotypes lend to the rationalization of social exclusion which fosters/ perpetuates discrimination based on these stereotypes. An example of this would be the negative stereotype of Black's, which was quite prevalent in post - abolition Brasil, not being able to work industrial machinery because of their prior experience in forced labor working in the agricultural realm in the northeast of Brasil. This idea spoke to the stereotypical notion that Black's were not intelligent enough nor had the desire to learn a different form of work, this stereotype, which was created to justify the exclusion of Blacks from a specific form of labor, in turn fostered the racist encouragement of European immigration into the country to work industrial jobs that blacks "could not" perform while whitening the country.

By addressing how various stereotypes impact Black female sex workers and insisting on self-definition, Black women question not only what has been said about African - American women but the credibility and the intentions of those possessing the power to define.

It is crucial that the oppressive binaries of normality and other, as well as racist and sexist modes of discrimination perpetuated by those in power be confronted.

"When Black women define ourselves, we clearly reject the assumption that those in positions granting them the authority to interpret our reality are entitled to do so. Regardless of the actual content of Black women's self - definitions, the act of insisting on Black female self definition validates Black women's power as human subjects. " (Collins. 2000, 115)

For far too long spaces of resistance and the self definition by black women has been deemed invisible and / or been overlooked.

LOCATION OF RESEARCH/METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The methodology of research that I followed was that of ethnographic field research. My research entailed an investigation of how a group of four Black female sex workers in the city of Salvador, Bahia perceive, integrate and/or reject social notions regarding the nature and character of sex work and women engaged in this profession. I had particular interest in exploring social notions related to race, class and gender that are known to this group of sex workers and what reactions they have to these ideas, How they perceive the impact of these ideas on their work and lives and whether they believe that they are forced to integrate and behave according to these ideas?

Considering the fact that 82% of the population of Salvador, Bahia is made up of people of African descent, it was essential for my research that I traveled to Salvador.⁸ This was important to my research because it gave me access to a larger African - Brazilian female population. Once in Salvador I made contact with APROSBA (Associação das Prostitutas da Bahia) and conducted the majority of my observations in their space. Making contact with APROSBA was critical to my research because although the opportunity to meet with black female sex workers at various points throughout the city of Salvador was available, the amount of time available to carry out my proposed research was limited.

I felt that making contact with an organization that creates a space for sex workers would ease trustworthy rapport building with the women with whom I would be researching in a fashion that was less time consuming than meeting women in various points throughout the city and building rapport in that fashion.

APROSBA holds weekly meetings for sex workers to discuss issues relevant to the profession of sex work, as well as issues pertaining to sexual health, violence encountered in the profession, interaction with the police/ state, the rights of the prostitute, and local events around women's rights. I attended the weekly meetings at APROSBA and conducted observations. It was through

the weekly meetings that I was able to meet and build relationships with women engaged in sex work; the opportunity to arrange interviews was also made available to me through these meetings.

The majority of my observations took place in the Praca De Se area of Salvador, Bahia, which is in close proximity to Pelourinho, the historic center of the city. The Pelourinho and Praca De Se areas of the city had high concentrations of tourists, with the majority of them being from Europe and the United States of America. APROSBA is located within very close proximity of Praca de Se and many of the women in attendance at the meetings worked in that area.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Programa - - The act of engaging in sex with a client

Mulher do Rua - - Roughly translated as woman of the street; prostitutes are at times referred to as such.

Gato do Rua - - Roughly translate as girl of the street; prostitutes are at times referred to as such.

Putá - - Derogatory term used when referring to sex workers, equivalent to whore.

*It should be noted that throughout this paper I intend to use the terms Sex Worker, Sex Professional, and Prostitute interchangeably. I intended to research societal notions of the black female sex worker and how she interrogated and or rejected these notions. I also intended to explore the power dynamic of those in power defining the role of the black female prostitute as well as the act of self - definition creating an empowering space. Some of the women I encountered chose to define as prostitute and/or sex worker, therefore with respect to this space of self - definition I will use these terms interchangeably.

HYPOTHESIS OF RESEARCH

I entered the field with the expectation of gaining of understanding of how self - definition could serve as a space of empowerment. Upon entering the field I suspected that the women who I would research with would have interrogated varying societal notions of what it means to be a Black female prostitute as well issues concerning racism and sexism. In these conversations I suspected that these women in some form interrogated and or/ rejected these notions. I also suspected that in some cases pressure to assimilate to some varying societal notions would be present. Because I suspected that active dialogue with these preconceptions were taking place my time in the field was based on understanding what these conversations were, and how they were taking place.

APROSBA (Associação das Prostitutas da Bahia)

APROSBA was founded in 1997 as a Non - Governmental Organization that struggles for the rights and equality of Sex workers in the state of Bahia. The organization's office is located in Salvador, Bahia and is the first of its kind in the city to create a space that struggles for the rights of sex workers. While APROSBA offers services to sex workers in Salvador, APROSBA is also engaged in work within the interior of Bahia. The organization is located in Praça de Se, the tourist center of the city of Salvador. APROSBA rents two spaces in a building in this area of the city and is in close proximity to the lower city, tourist shops, museums, and cultural centers. This location is in close proximity to where a great deal of the women work, which lends to convenience in having access to the space and the services provided by APROSBA.

APROSBA holds weekly meetings in its office space, these meetings serve as a means to discuss issues relevant to the profession including but not limited to happenings within the community such as interactions with police, violence encountered while at work , and/or from the state , and sexual health. The meetings also serve as a space for condom distribution. Some additional work that APROSBA is engaged in includes conversations and distribution of literature around sexual health concerns specific to sex workers, offering of professional courses free of charge, legal services, free distribution of feminine and masculine condoms, distribution of condoms throughout the city, and access to healthcare, including OB/GYN appointments for the women involved. Currently APROSBA is working on the creation of a radio station. The women involved with APROSBA will have the opportunity to manage and produce all of the programs played on the radio station.

The offering of professional courses acknowledges the reality of some of the women being denied access to other avenues of work within the wage making economy.

Access to education through APROSBA as well as the offering of health care and courses in sexual health as well as professional courses is addressing the needs of these women that society

has historically ignored. Although the profession is legal and the city makes a sufficient amount of the tourist industry, which includes sexual tourism these women are viewed with little to no value and/ or rights.

APROSBA confronts the contradictory notions held by society of the sex worker while creating a space where they define what they have access to. Because Black females have little access to professional course work, formal education, and a space for the women to confront racism and sexism APROSBA turns this denial of access on its head by collectively creating this space despite the impact of racism and sexism affecting the availability of spaces like these for women in the profession.

This organization exists because the women want it to. The lack of funding speaks to that. The organization is still in existence only because of fundraising done by the women. This is an extremely empowering act, these women have created a space within society where there issues can be addressed head on. APROSBA is one of the only organizations of its type in Bahia, which speaks to a space being created in a society that attempts to deem these women invisible.

CONFRONTING PRECONCEPTIONS OF THE BLACK FEMALE SEX WORKER

This struggle for the rights of the sex worker that APROSBA is engaged in is relevant due to the amount of discrimination that the Black female sex worker encounters. These discriminations are based on the prevailing thought of what it means to be Black and female, these thoughts are often compounded with specific preconceptions of what it means to be a Prostitute in Brazilian society. In a study of preconceptions of prostitutes that students of Theology, Catholicism, and Evangelism hold several societal explanations for why Prostitution exists were revealed. These "explanations" of why prostitution exists, which are largely based on preconceptions, include:

Religious Explanations: The causes of prostitution are related to the non - execution of the word of God; the causes of prostitution are related to the lack of religious faith of society; The causes of prostitution are related to the spiritual weakness to resist temptations.⁸

Ethical and Moral Explanations: The causes of prostitution are related to the lack of respect; The causes of prostitution are related to the lack of character, The causes of prostitution are related to the lack of moral values of the subject.

Psychological Explanation: The causes of prostitution are related to sexual abuse suffered in infancy or youth. The causes of prostitution are related to traumatic situations experiences while a child. The causes of prostitution are related to bad conflict resolution with parental figures.

Psicosocias Explanation: The causes of prostitution can't be specified, since The causes of prostitution cant be specified since sexuality is a part of the identity of the subject which should

be understood in totality; The causes of prostitution cant be specified since she is not disease, nor disturbance, nor perverse, nor sin. (Pereira, Pereira, Torres. 2004, 221)

These explanations of why prostitution exists informs the way in which the profession is approached and impacts the assumptions that the women in the profession are approached with. Each of these explanations was derived from various surveys and study's, conversations with professors, and scientific theory. At no point is the Prostitute referred to for input on an explanation.

During conversations with the women interviewed I inquired as to how preconceptions such as these and other stereotypes were viewed. In response to societal preconceptions of prostitution Juliana* stated ,

"... There is much marginalization of people of African descent. We have no rights. So many of us are in the lower social classes, these classes are created so that so little of the world has everything and so many people have nothing. ..

Preconceptions only exist because of money, you see when there is no money we are all equal. So preconceptions have to be created so that everyone is on a different level, so that certain people keep and have the money." (Field Journal,)

In this response it is understood that the system of domination acknowledged and the defined preconceptions are deemed invalid because they are based on the premise of domination, oppression and greed.

In one meeting with Juliana upon entering her home she informed me that the holiday for Santa Barbara was approaching, at this she pointed to the altar made for Santa Barbara that was in her home. When I asked her what her relationship was with the saint she replied that " Santa Barbara e o santo da mulher do rua," meaning that Santa Barbara is the saint of the "Woman of the

Street." She explained that this specific saint protects the "woman of the street, and has her interests in mind. This appears to be the direct confrontation of the societal preconception that women involved in the profession are religiously immoral and have no concept of the word of God.

To acknowledge a Catholic saint as a saint of the woman addresses the authority of the Black female prostitute to define what her religious standing is. This speaks to a space where the Black woman who is a prostitute determines her individual relationship with spiritual worship although society tends to think that this space is non-existent or that it should be defined by those in power.

POLICE ASSAULTS ENCOUNTERED BY BLACK FEMALE SEX WORKERS AND HOW THESE ENCOUNTERS SPEAK TO THE DE- VALUATION OF THE BLACK FEMALE BODY BY THE STATE

In each weekly meeting that I attended conversations concerning police violence acted out against Black female sex workers were raised. Various women frequently spoke up to physical and/or sexual violence that was experienced at the hands of the local police.

“The jezebel image reinforces racial oppression by justifying sexual assaults against Black women. Gender ideology also draws upon the jezebel image- a devalued jezebel makes pure white womanhood possible. Overseeing these relationships are nation - state policies that because they implicitly see Black women as jezebels, deny Black women equal treatment under the law. “(Roberts 1997, 104 - 49)

The frequent sexual and physical assault of black women sex workers by local police officers speaks to the de- valuation of the black female body by the state and the use of the " jezebel, " overly promiscuous" "immoral" stereotype of the Black female prostitute to justify these actions. In addition in many cases “violence against Black women tends to be legitimated and therefore condoned while the same acts visited on other groups may remain non - legitimated and non - excusable." (Collins. 2000, 146.)

In response to frequent violent experiences with the police, at one of the weekly APROSBA meetings * Rosa spoke up to say ,

"The police aren't good for anything, if you are ever in trouble don't call the police they only stir up more trouble. For instance I was out once, and you know how there is envy between some of the girls sometimes. Well this one girl started to beat me up and the other girls called the police to get her off of me, well when the police got there they began to beat the other woman up, I

asked them to stop and it was of no use. And that is what happens when the police become involved. "(Field Journal)

At this one of the women in the meeting spoke up and said that she had been raped by the police, without a condom. She described the story in a very detailed way.

"I was out making *programmas* and a man came up to me, I didn't know he was a police officer," she said that he had been plain clothed. "He said that he was in a hurry so that they would have to do it really quickly, she said fine and they went to a motel. Once they got there he said that he didn't want to use a condom, she said no. He then pulled out his gun and his handcuffs and threatened to handcuff her if she didn't comply. He then proceeded to rape her at gunpoint for two hours. She then spoke to a fear of getting HIV/ AIDS testing.

At this * Flavia and Rosa encouraged her to get tested, spoke of former fears that they had around getting tested, and additionally shared their experiences with sexual assault with the local police, while they were working.

These experiences speak to the societal notion of the body of Black female sex workers being freely accessible to whomever wishes to dominate. The idea of the Black female sex worker not having control of her body, and existing in society to serve the role of fulfilling sexual desires is the without a doubt an underlying assumption that these women were approached with in these violent encounters. This speaks to the lack of respect of the profession, these men not being implicated further speaks to the non - value projected onto the body of the Black woman who is a prostitute. For, there is no reason to implicate the aggressor if the violence that he acted out against was a violence that he was entitled to.

In this space the women engaged in a dialogue was productive as a means of creating a space for empowerment for several reasons. This conversation speaks to the creation of a space that racist and sexist notions typically do not create for Black women, sex workers, one in which the police can be openly denounced. The existence of this space in it of itself is an act of resistance and empowerment, especially considering the history of the rape of Black women being ignored,

in addition to the very low occurrence of black women reporting sexual violence. The catalyst for a space of healing was created.

The opportunity to engage in dialogue about experienced sexual violence while discussing means in which to denounce the police publicly speaks to a very proactive confrontation to discrimination and violence encountered due to preconceptions and stereotypes.

In Rosa encouraging the other women not to call the police if they are ever in "trouble," opens up a space for women to converse about withdrawing from a forced dependency on a destructive, violent force. Addressing the fact that the police do not hold the "answers" to the problems, which was clear based on previous encounters with them is a critical confrontation because it creates a space where these women define how issues can be dealt with by and for a community of sex workers.

EMPOWERING SPACES OF SELF DEFINITION - CONFRONTING SOCIETAL NOTIONS AND PRECONCEPTIONS

APROSBA RADIO STATION

APROSBA is currently creating a radio station for the organization. Upon the completion of the project, APROSBA will offer free courses in media, radio production, and broadcast journalism. These courses will be taught by local university students working in these particular fields of study.

The APROSBA radio programs are critical to creating a space of empowerment and resistance through self - definition. When speaking with two women who were new to the APROSBA space and asking them what issues they felt were relevant to them as sex workers and what they needed from the organization, Flavia began to speak about the creation of the radio station, " The station will be up soon, so that if you have any problems that needed to be heard, you will be able to get on the air and voice these issues. .. for instance if you have any trouble with the police or encounter rape by the police and want to get on the air and denounce them this station will give you the space for that." (Flavia, Field Journal page....)

The women having the opportunity to have creative control over the radio programs is essential to the women addressing issues that are relevant to them and their profession that are not necessarily deemed visible issues or with importance in society. The creation of a space to denounce rape and other forms of violence that target Black female sex workers is essential to creating an empowering space. The opportunity to denounce sexual violence especially from the state is essential, in terms of the denunciation of rape on the air serves to confront the occurrence of sexual harassment on the job. Because of the negative stereotype of Black women being hypersexualized rape of the black, female, body is most often approached with question. Black sex

professionals being approached with the assumption that they are immoral compounded with the fact that their profession involves sex lends to the idea that complaints of sexual harassment and rape are not valid.

CREATING SPACE WITHIN ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL SPHERES

While distributing condoms and sexual health literature with APROSBA in the lower city, I observed that this particular part of the city appeared to be economically disadvantaged. The housing differed in outward appearance than those of neighborhoods with more wealth.

Approximately half of the homes that were visited during the condom distribution doubled as bars/ restaurants these restaurant/ bars also appear to be where many of the women who are sex workers procure clientele. This speaks to community creating means for their survival through entrepreneurship.

These bars serve as a space where a double economic advantage could take place, the bar owner, based on observations in most cases a sex worker as well, makes profit off of the bar space while being successful in procuring clientele. Juliana spoke on how she is self educated and how she went about doing this by purchasing novels and calligraphy books. Juliana also made it very clear that she is highly aware of her intelligence. I believe that speaks to economic and educational disadvantage being linked as well as the ability to self define her intelligence by not only teaching herself to read but defining herself as an individual who is intelligent despite societal notions of what it means to not have access to formal education (while being black and woman) serves as a very empowering space.

Juliana is self educated, left her home at the age of 10, and lived on the street for 13 years. This situation created a lack of access to economic market, as many black women in Brasil are denied access to. Juliana owning her own bar/ home can be perceived as Juliana defining her own access to the economic market, as well as defining her own access by creating her own business.

**CONFRONTING SEXUAL BINARIES (SEXUALITY OF THE OTHER) /- -
HETERONORMATIVITY AS PROJECTED ONTO BLACK WOMEN AND THE
PROFESSION**

Because African - American women express a range of sexualities, including celibate, heterosexual, lesbian, and bisexual with varying forms of sexual expression changing throughout an individual's life course, Black women's self - definitions become essential. It is important to stress that both the symbolic and structural dimensions of heterosexism are always contested. Individual African - American women construct sexual meanings and practices within this overarching structure of heterosexual power relations. Thus, the individual agency of any one U.S. Black woman emerges in the context of larger institutional structures and particular group histories that affect many others. For individual Black women, the struggle lies in rejecting externally defined ideas and practices, and claiming the erotic as a mechanism for empowerment. (Collins. 2000, 131)

The profession of sex work, where female sex workers are involved, is often met with the hetero - sexist notion of the heterosexual Male, engaging in sex with a hetero - sexual prostitute. These notions perpetuate the imposed notion of heteronormativity. This binary of normal sexual practices, which entails heterosexual sex, and the opposite end of the spectrum which entails the sexual practices of the 'other' also support a space where the idea of the overly sexualized sexual deviant other is in existence to fulfill the desires of the normal heterosexual male. In my research I found clear disruptions of these heterosexist notions of sex work.

In a conversation with Juliana in her home we began to discuss the intimate relationships that we were engaged in. At this she sighed, "I miss my woman." She went on to tell me that she has been in a relationship with her partner for four years, and that they live in different cities. When I asked if she dates men as well she said " no, I'm lesbian, men... only if they are paying."

Analyzing how heterosexism as a system of oppression victimizes Black women constitutes one major approach to examining sexuality. A second approach explores how sexualities constructed in conjunction with an unquestioned heterosexism become manipulated within class, race, gender, and nation as distinctive systems of oppression. For example, the controlling image of jezebel reappears across several systems of oppression. For class oppression, the jezebel image fosters the sexual exploitation of Black women's bodies through prostitution. ... each system has a vested interest in regulating sexuality and relies on symbolic and structural practices to do so. (Collins. 2000, 132)

Patricia, openly identifying as lesbian, confronts the notion of heteronormativity. In addition to addressing ideas of heteronormativity, the notion of the heterosexual, insatiable sex drive of the black female is then put into question. Is this profession fulfilling a particular "genetically inclined" drive if the woman has a majority male clientele but is queer? Absolutely not! This speaks to the profession serving as a means of income and not as one to fulfilling "over-sexed" drive.

In a discussion with Juliana, when asked if she has clientele that are women she responded " Yes, but very little. There are some women who pay for *programas*, but a very small amount. "(Field Journal...)

Body Image and the Diversity of such within the profession

As observed in tourist propaganda, mostly post- cards, the typical imagery of the Brazilian woman is extremely overly - sexualized. The imagery usually consists of a woman of African descent, wearing a bikini bottom that exposes most of her buttocks. In addition to this she typically has long hair, is thin, approximately US size 0 - 4, and she is not addressing the viewer. While not addressing the viewer her face is completely turned from the viewer, or the propaganda displays an extreme close up of her breast or buttocks covered in sand.

This propaganda not only objectifies the African Brazilian woman by making her the object of the "gaze" of the viewer, but it also renders her passive to this gaze. Because of the positioning of the woman on the card, it is sold as if she is in a sense inviting this gaze, while not being in control of the gaze.

This imagery not only renders the Black Brazilian woman as highly sexual and inviting sexual advances, but it also assumes her as passive to these advances, as if it is her place (societal role) to accept these advances and her place as over- sexualized non - being.

Tourist propaganda is not only successful in selling the Black Brazilian woman as sex, but it is also projects the image of what sex " looks like, " in terms of societal standards of beauty. This imagery exoticizes what it means to possess the phenotypical traits of the "other;" dark skin, large buttocks, etc, while celebrating conventional standards of beauty , such as being thin, young, and having long hair.

This imagery serves the purpose of defining what a woman who is engaged in sex "should look like."

I observed a great deal of diversity within the body type of the women who I came in contact with at the weekly APROSBA meetings. Many of the women present varied in body "type" ranging from petite to larger framed (approximately US size 0 - US size 30).

This observed diversity of body type confronts societal definitions of what a sex worker " looks like," the women I have come in contact with look very different than the women I have observed in tourist propaganda that over - sexualizes Brazilian women.

Although there is societal pressure to conform to standards of beauty such as being thin, and having long hair my observations speak to the reality of the diversity within the women in the profession that is not projected throughout society.

The diverse age range which I observed shows the diversity within people working in the profession the diversity of body type also spoke to societal notions of what is deemed beautiful and how those notions may impact the idea of beauty that society projects onto the profession of sex work. While the majority of society projects a standard of beauty that prostitutes are supposed to fit into that is simply not the reality of the profession. This does not go to say that there is no pressure to assimilate to societal standards of beauty, which are often Eurocentric; only to say that the diversity of body "type" and age within the profession speaks to sex workers... despite not portraying the physical appearance that they are told that they "should."

- - INTEGRATION AND/ OR ASSIMILATION OF PRECONCEPTIONS

‘Wouldn't they be surprised when one day I woke out of my black ugly dream , and my real hair, which was long and blond, would take the place of the kinky mass that Momma wouldn't let me straighten? ...then they would understand why I had never picked up a southern accent or spoke the common slang, and why I had to be forced to eat pigs' tails and snouts. Because I was really white and because a cruel fairy stepmother...had turned me into a too big Negro girl, with nappy black hair'. (Angelou 1969, 2)

In the creation of the binary of normal and "other, " Eurocentric standards of beauty have been deemed more valuable , "Prevailing standards of beauty claim that no matter how intelligent, educated , or "beautiful" a Black woman may be, those Black women whose features and skin

color are most African must "git back" Within the binary thinking that underpins intersecting oppressions, blue eyed, blond, thin White women could not be considered beautiful without the Other- Black women with the African Features of dark skin, broad noses, full lips and kinky hair. (Collins. 2000, 89)

The imposition of white standards of beauty in the Brazilian context is quite prevalent. I have observed that the majority of baby dolls owned by youth have blond hair and blue eyes.

Novelas, which are television series with varying plots, much like soap operas , have predominately White casts with blond hair. Blacks in these series often play roles which are deemed "inferior"; such as that of the domestic worker.

The image of what beauty and femininity should look like is made clear - young, White, and blond. Although I observed diversity within the amount of sex workers, I was interested in how these notions of beauty were interrogated. While having a conversation with Juliana I asked her how appearance affected the work and whether women who are younger, thinner, longer hair, lighter skin are deemed more valuable.

At this she responded that looks are very important. "If you don't look good then who is going to pay? I couldn't walk around with my hair all up (at this she pointed at my hair, which is non-chemically treated and is in the processes of locing) and long pants on, no! I go and get my long braids, wear my skirts that are short, make sure that my nails and toes are done. These things are important."

By United States Standards Juliana would be approximately a size 12 and wears her hair in a straightened style. Although she did not speak to the importance of being thinner, her response does speak to the idea of long hair that isn't "sticking up" existing as a beauty standard that she must assimilate to if she is to procure clientele.

CONCLUSION

In investigating how a group of four Black female sex workers in the city of Salvador, Bahia perceive, integrate and/or reject social notions regarding the nature and character of sex work and women engaged in this profession. In addition to social notions related to race, class and gender that are known to this group of sex workers and what reactions they have to these ideas, I found that active dialogue and confrontation of these notions take place regularly. In addition I observed the diversity of spaces created for this dialogue to take place. Found that how spaces of self - definition were created.

Although societal notions deem the black woman as invisible and powerless to define her own situation, the existence of the APROSBA space in it of itself speaks to a form of self – definition and empowerment. The APROSBA space is completely self – sustaining, the women conduct all of the fundraising for the organization. APROSBA existing as a safe space for dialogue serves as a catalyst for confrontation and rejection of societal discrimination and preconceptions that the Black female prostitute encounters.

How these women go about interrogating societal notions of their role and existence creates a space for self definition. Specific examples of these would include the creation of the radio station, the rejection of particular Eurocentric standards of beauty, such as being thin, and the denunciation of the police in the APROSBA space.

The organization is geared toward the struggle of the right of the sex worker and space for dialogue is opened, but it would be interesting to see how sex workers involved with APROSBA go about organizational outreach to other women in the profession.

ENDNOTES

** All names that have been included in this report have been changed*

1. This statistic was taken from [http://www. bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

2. According to the 1996 PNAD 69% of the northeastern population was of African descent. This statistic is a combined number of the Preta (which is roughly considered darker black) and Parda (which is roughly considered " morena" , brown, or " mulatto") population. This separation has often been put into place to make the population appear less " black."(Nascimento, Nascimento. 2001, 116)

3..The 1980 census shows that while 30% of the women living in the northeast region of Brasil were black only 9% of them were white, 91% of white women were living in the southern region of the country. While in 1980 47% of white women throughout the country of brasil received nine or more years of formal education, only 22% of African Brazilian women received the same. The connection between the lack of formal education and lack of access to job opportunities is made clear in the 1980 census which shows that while 65.8% of African Brazilian women worked in Blue collar positions 37% of white women held the same positions, leaving black women at a greater economic disadvantage.

4. 1994 (Nascimento, Nascimento. 2001, 111)

5. 46.5% of Black women (preta combined with parda) received no formal schooling/ less than one year of formal schooling , compared to only 11.2% of white women and 16.2% of white men. While merely 2.5% of black women received 15 or more years of formal education compared to 5.9% of white women and 6.2% of white men.

6. In 1980 while 63.1% of White women worked in White collar positions , 34.1% of Blacks worked in the same positions. In the same year while 65.8% of Black women worked in Blue collar positions, 37% of white women worked similar positions.

Afro- Brazilian women employed in white collar occupations averaged R\$3368 less than white women in 1960 and R\$4747 less by 1980 (Lovell. 1999, 142)

7. As of 2002 the population of Salvador, Bahia was 2.54 million with 82% of this population is Black. Recent census data (IBGE, 2000)

8. "Explicacoes Religiosas: As causas da prostituicao estao relacionadas ao descumprimento da Palavra de Deus; As causas da prostituicao estao relacionadas a falta de fe religiosa caracteristica das sociedades atuais; As causas da prostituicao estao relacionadas a fraqueza espiritual para resistir a tentacoes. (Nascimento, Nascimento. 2004, 221)

9. Explicacoes Etico - Morais : As causas da prostituicao estao relacionadas a falta de respeito; As causas da prostituicao estao relacionadas a falta de carater, As causas da prostituicao estao relacionadas a falta de valores morais do sujeito. (Nascimento, Nascimento. 2004, 221)

10. Explicacoes Psicologicas: As causas da prostituicao estao relacionadas a abusos sexuais sofridos na primeira infancia; As causas da prostituicao estao relacionadas a situacoes traumaticas vividas na infancia; As causas da prostituicao estao relacionadas a ma resolucao de conflitos com as figuras parentais. (Nascimento, Nascimento. 2004 221)

11. Explicacoes Psicossociais: As causas da prostituicao nao possuem uma natureza especifica, pois se trata de uma profissao como outra qualquer; As causas da prostituicao nao podem ser especificadas , pois a sexualidade faz parte da identidade do sujeito, a qual deve ser compreendida na sua totalidade; As causas da prostituicao nao podem ser especificadas, pois ela nao e doenca , nem disturbio, nem perversao em nem pecado .(Nascimento, Nascimento 2004, 221)

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ALL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES USED

Almeida, Sandra and Noonan Raymond, J. 2004. " Basic Sexological Premises." International Encyclopedia of Sexuality. <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/ccies/br.php#religeth>.

_____ 2004. " Religious, Ethnic, And Gender Factors Affecting Sexuality." International Encyclopedia of Sexuality. <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/ccies/br.php#religeth>.

Angelou, Maya. 1969. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York: Bantam.

Birdsall, Nancy and O'Connell , Lesley. 2001. "Race, Human Capital, Inequality, and Income Distribution." In *Beyond Racism - Race and inequality in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States*. ed. Alexander Neville, Hamilton Charles , Huntley Lynn , Guimaraes Alfredo, James Wilmot, and Sergio Antonio. 290 - 303. CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought - Knowledge , Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. NY: Routledge.

De Queiros Mattoso, Katia. 1989. *To Be A Slave in Brazil 1550 - 1880*. NJ: Rutgers.

Fulbright, Leslie. " Poverty Linked to Exploitation of Women" Oakland Tribune April 16, 2000

Harris, Cheryl. 1993 . *Whiteness as Property*. Harvard Law Review

Hasenbalg, Carlos A. 1985. " Race and Socioeconomic Inequalities in Brazil" *Race , Class, and Power in Brazil*.

_____ and do Valle Silva. 1999. In *Racial Pilitics in Contemporary Brazil*. 154 - 177. NC: Duke University Press.

hooks, bell. 1989. *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist , Thinking Black*. MA: South End Press

_____.1990. *Yearning - race gender and cultural politics*. MA: South End Press

Lovell, Peggy A. 1999. "Women and Racial Inequality at Work in Brazil." In *Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil*. 138 - 151. NC: Duke University Press.

McNall, Scott G. 1983. "Pornography: The Structure of Domination and the Mode of REproduction." In *Current Perspectives in Social Theory, Volume 4*, ed. Scott, McNall, 181 - 203. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Patterson , Orlando. 2005 . *Slavery and Social Death*. MA: Harvard Press.

Pereira, Annelise Soares , Pereira, Cicero, Torres Ana Raquel Rosas. 2004. *Preconceito Contra Prostituetas e Representacoes Sociais da Prostituaicao em Estudantes de Teologia Catolicos e Evangelicos*. ed. Lima, Marcus Eugenio Oliveira, Pereira , Marcos Emanuel. 209 - 234. Direitos para esta edicao cedidos a Editora da Univesidade Federal da Bahia.

Roberts, Dorothy. 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon.

Triner, Gail D. " Race With or Without Color? Reconciling Brazilian Histography." Rutgers University.

INDICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While attending the weekly meetings at APROSBA I observed Fatima the founder of APROSBA takes up a great deal of space in the meetings. Each time that a woman present, including her colleagues would attempt to speak up she would ask them to save it until the end of the meeting. I observed that the meetings where the most sharing took place were where she was not present for an extended period of time. I found this form of silencing extremely problematic. In addition, the majority of the women who make up the weekly meetings at APROSBA are Black, with Fatima being a white woman facilitating this process of silencing I see a dangerous power dynamic surfacing.

The fact of Fatima being white and founding this organization to serve the interests of women who are sex workers , compounded with the meeting having a majority black demographic conveyed a very strong power dynamic that parallels other power structures (ie. white woman 'educating' the black woman. white woman 'guiding ' the black sex worker, etc.)

Indications for further research may include the issue of hierarchy within this organization, and power dynamic's within organizations that are involved in Black movements.

The majority of the organizational literature had imagery of White women with blond hair. This imagery seemed to form a "double edged sword," while the literature serves as informational, empowering even White standards of beauty are still reinforced. In addition all of the imagery was that of women. Exploring how identity is addressed within APROSBA and organizations with a majority Black make - up would be interesting. In addition to this research on the male population of sex workers would be interesting. How are they impacted by social inclusion, how do they interact with the notion of sex worker being woman?

Further research on the radio station that is being created by APROSBA and how it creates a space of self - definition and empowerment would be interesting

LEARNING ACQUIRED DURING ISP PROCESS

I acquired a great deal of knowledge in field study. I am not generally exposed to this field of study, as I am a Fine Arts major at an art institution. The ISP process exposed me to various methodologies of field study as well as assisted me in understanding how to successfully choose a narrow topic.

APPLICATION OF ISP LEARNING IN HOME ENVIRONMENT

I intend to apply my lessons learned during the ISP period in further field study that I am engaged in. In addition I intend to return to Salvador in order to investigate this subject matter in a longer period of field observation and by interviewing a larger pool of Black female sex workers.

APPENDIX

1. Could you have done this project in the USA? What data or sources were unique to the culture in which you did the project?

Within the United States of America there exists a reality of Black women experiencing disproportionate economic disadvantage, and denial of access to the academy which in some instances encourages forced sexual labor. The oversexualization of the Black female body is quite prevalent throughout the African Diaspora, and the world at large. Black women throughout the African Diaspora also regularly encounter negative preconceptions and stereotypes with these preconceptions and stereotypes defining societal roles. Therefore research exploring black female response to societal notions could have been possible in the United States of America.

I don't feel that I could have done this specific project in the United States because although prostitution exists it is illegal. Because of this factor the research would have had to have been approached differently and different questions would have arisen. There is a contradictory factor in the Brazilian context because Prostitution is a legal profession, and sexual tourism is a huge industry. Brazil actually benefits greatly from tourist dollars. With this in mind it is interesting that such negative preconceptions and stereotypes of what it is to be Black, female, and sex worker thrive while the benefactors of these stereotypes, namely white European men are not implicated. What this means in addition to how this impacts how the women interrogate and/ or reject these notions is specific to this context.

2. Could you have done any part of it in the USA? Would the results have been different?

How?

An exploration of how black women explore, interrogate, and assimilate to societal notions in a broader sense could have been completed. I think that addressing the issue of sex work in a context where it is illegal would have yielded different results and caused different questions to arise. Questions such as sex work as a forced profession would have had to be approached quite differently. Although due to disproportionate economic disadvantage and lack of access to the academy that black women in the United States encounter the question of force would have been present, but the factor of criminalization would have been more present in the work. How is it that these women would be "forced" into this profession and then criminalized for doing so? Also the community response to policy that criminalizes Black women in the profession of sex work would have to be addressed,

3. Did the process of doing the ISP modify your learning style? How was this different from your previous style and approaches to learning?

The greatest difference in my previous style and approach to learning was actually extracting data from the field, rather than relying on secondary resources. The experience of going into the field allowed me to approach my question with the understanding that I do not have the answer. I learned that although prior to entering the field one has to contextualize as well as hypothesize around their research topic, one must not approach the problem statement with the answer. The ISP process reinforces the fact that when you go into the field to extract data, it is important not to enter and project the answer onto the field experience, as you may miss out on important data while doing this.

4. How much of the final monograph is primary data? How much is from secondary sources?

The final monograph is balanced equally between primary data such as observations and interviews and secondary sources. Secondary sources are used in most instances to support the analysis of my observations and interviews.

5. What criteria did you use to evaluate your data for inclusion in the final monograph? Or how did you decide to exclude certain data?

My main criteria for the evaluation of inclusion of data were compiling recurring themes in my observations and interviews. Once these themes were compiled I evaluated how they interacted with my problem statement. It was based on this method that I went about the inclusion and / or exclusion of certain data.

6. How did the "drop - offs" or field exercises contribute to the process and completion of the ISP?

The field exercises such as the community project and MST ethnographic essay were useful in gaining practical field experience. Prior experience in the field was useful in terms of observational and interview skills.

7. What part of the MTFSS most significantly influenced the ISP process?

The field exercises were very influential. Although our FSS lectures were focused on methods of extracting data from the field and interacting with the communities in which you are researching, it was the actual exercises within the field such as the community project and MST ethnographic

essay that reinforced the skills that we learned in lecture. This experience in the field led to a more holistic approach to learning field methodology. The experience was useful in gaining practical knowledge on how to be flexible with the problem statement while in the field. Because of the experience with interviewing, observations, and recognizing the difference of specific contexts the ISP "drop - off" was not a total shock.

8. What were the principle problems you encountered while doing the ISP? Were you able to resolve these and how?

The principle problems that I approached while doing the ISP were adjusting to time constraints as well as difficulty with getting in touch with my advisor. There were lapses in communication where we would arrange a meeting and upon arriving I would be informed that the date and time that I was given was incorrect. November was an extremely busy month for APROSBA and organizations throughout the city, especially organizations around women's rights and the trafficking of women in Brasil; therefore I accredit the majority of the miscommunication and difficulty with meeting with my project advisor to strains in terms of capacity to perform tasks that were important to the organization. I resolved these problems by conducting observations independent of APROSBA.

9. Did you experience any time constraints? How could these have been resolved?

I did encounter time constraints in the field. Upon entering the field I came to realize the weight of my problem statement in a more real way and became disappointed in the amount of time that I had allotted to address the issues at hand. I found that it was somewhat difficult to build the rapports that I felt were essential to my research. Because of my desire to return to Salvador and

my interest in this subject matter I felt that I was engaged in a constant battle of attempting to procure enough information to produce an ISP monograph and building genuine relationships with women in an organization that I would like to return to for future research. I felt that my entering the APROSBA space and asking for multiple interviews with women who did not know or trust me would have yielded data that did not wholly speak to the intended problem statement, nor would it have been helpful in my end interest of understanding self - definition and spaces of empowerment. Although I felt that the time I was allotted was limited I resolved the issue by talking with a group of women who I would see regularly outside of the meetings. Even if it were a brief walk to Pelourinho, the tourist center, or a walk to the bus stop I attempted to use every interaction with the women as an opportunity to genuinely get to know them. These issues were also resolved by narrowing my research further, and interviewing a smaller group of women.

10. Did your original topic change and evolve as you discovered or did not discover new and different resources? Did the resources available modify or determine the topic?

My topic evolved as I discovered the resources available to me in terms of interviews with Black female sex workers. I had to modify my research by interviewing a smaller group of women. While in the field I decided that due to my time constraints it would be far more valuable to my research to interview a small group of women who I had built relationships with through my regular attendance at APROSBA meetings, than to be overly obsessed with the amount of women whom I interviewed. At each meeting there were new women, and many of the women went directly to work after the meetings. I found it more valuable to my research to interview with women who were used to seeing and speaking with me and had time to speak, rather than women who I did not know without very much flexibility in her schedule although this was a very small number of women.

11. How did you go about finding resources: institutions, interviewees, publications, etc?

Many of the resources that I used to contextualize my problem statement were found in institutions such as libraries. I also found publications such as Fale! and internet research helpful. The majority of resources used while in the field were found through APROSBA organizational literature as well as my observations and interviews while in the field . I also had contact with CHAME (Centro.....) and used some of their organizational literature as a resource.

12. What method(s) did you use? How did you decide to use such method(s)

My key methods of extracting data from the field was observing the weekly meetings at APROSBA as well as condom distribution. When I wasn't at APROSBA I spent time in Praca de Se observing sex workers procuring clientele. When conducting interviews I alternated between depth type and highly structured. I found that with depth type interviewing many of my questions were answered in the conversation that took place. I would often would switch structures in a different interview session, or ask specific questions if they weren't answered in the depth style approach.

13. Comment on your relations with your advisor: indispensable? Occasionally helpful? Were there cultural differences which influenced your relationship? A different understanding of educational processes and goals? Was working with the advisor instructional?

Although there were lapses in communication, I would say that my relations with my advisor

were helpful. It was in the first weekly APROSBA meeting that I attended that my advisor introduced me to the women present and asked for volunteers to take me around the city. APROSBA has very little funding and is in the process of creating a radio station, with this said I believe that my advisor was busy with organizational work . When my advisor could not meet with me, she did infact arrange meetings with women within the organization and myself.

14. Did you reach any dead ends? Hypotheses which turned out to be not useful?

Interviews or visits that had no application.

All of my interviews and observations contributed to over - arching themes that were included in my final product.

15. What insights did you gain into the culture as a result of doing the ISP, which you might not otherwise have gained?

16. Did the ISP process assist your adjustment to the culture? Integration?

The ISP process assisted me in my adjustment to the culture a great deal. During the ISP period I lived in a neighborhood that was predominately tourist. The ISP was essential in assisting me in cultural integration, the process took me out of the context the "tourist" and exposed me to various Salvador realities, and a wider range of people as well as experiences in Salvador.

17. What were the principle lessons you learned from the ISP process?

Attention was called to the preconceived notions that I carried into the field with me.

During my first informal interview I spoke with a Black woman who didn't feel that she was

discriminated against by Whites, but by her own community.

Although my research was geared at understanding how Black women in the profession of sex work interrogate and/ or reject societal notions, I found it necessary to address the idea of the invisibility of spaces of resistance.

It is equally problematic that all Black female sex workers are perceived as powerless, not resisting, and feeling discriminated against. While feelings of discrimination may be the experience of some women it in no way speaks to the experience of all black female sex workers. In addition a principle lesson in language barriers was learned.

Academic language can serve as a barrier while interviewing. It essential to be yourself, but it is also important to be aware of alienating language that may impact your interaction with the interviewee as well as the information that you procure.

An example of this is when I was having a conversation with a youth and I said the word oppressive, he then asked me what it meant. I attempted to explain, and he again asked what it meant - he then said it had no meaning and that it was not a word of the people. That was a principle lesson in the language I use and how that lends to the perception of who I am while in the field.

18. If you met a future student who wanted to do this same project, what would be your recommendations to him/ her?

If I were to meet a future student who wanted to do this same project I would recommend that they be extremely proactive in terms of engaging with the women who they meet who are sex workers. I would recommend honesty and that although they are researching the response of these women to societal notions that they be aware of the preconceived notions that they may bring into the field; and that these notions be examined throughout the process. In addition I would recommend flexibility while in the field. Based on experiences in the field, particular

events specific to the city, etc your topic may change. While focus on the problem statement is essential in observations and interviews it is not a good idea to close yourself off to other problems which may arise in the field.

19. Given what you know now, would you undertake this, or a similar project again?

Given what I know now, I would undertake this project again. I actually plan on pursuing this project in more depth in the future. While in the field a number of sub- questions arose , which I am interested in an more in depth exploration of. In addition to this I am interested in interviewing a larger pool of women.